

# Bristol Avon Rivers Trust

Information for individuals considering becoming a trustee



“I never cease to be amazed at the quality and impact of the work BART does across the region, particularly in education, engagement and partnership-building to improve our river and streams. It gives me a deep sense of pride to support this important work.”

Julian Greaves, Trustee & Chair, BART

“I really enjoy being a Trustee for BART. It’s a privilege to apply my skills and experience supporting such a great organisation which is delivering so much for our rivers.”

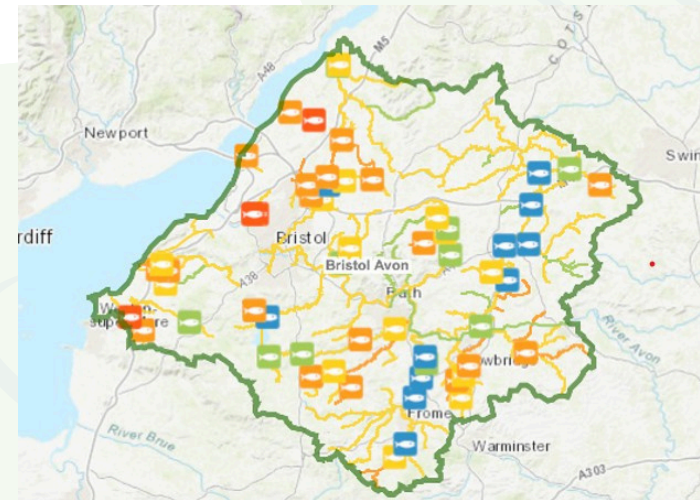
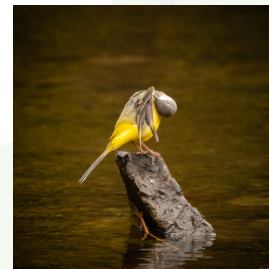
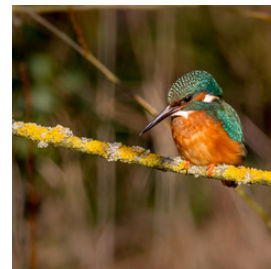
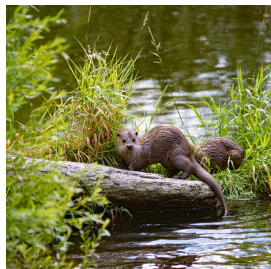
Peter Coleman-Smith, Trustee, BART

[www.bristolavonriverstrust.org](http://www.bristolavonriverstrust.org)

# Our vision

Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) is a charity which delivers education, land and river management advice and practical river restoration work throughout the Bristol Avon catchment.

BART aims to conserve and enhance the status of waterbodies for current and future generations, to re-connect communities to their local rivers and help them better appreciate what they have, also to deliver improvements - to benefit of people and wildlife.



# How BART does this

Since it was set up in 2012 BART has grown substantially. We have succeeded using the expert insight of our staff, the knowledge of our volunteers and through partnerships with a wide range of interested parties (such as Wildlife Trusts, water companies, planning authorities and regulators, the Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership and others). We have also actively engaged with land-owners, community groups and river users (such as anglers and walkers). Essentially we adopt a data driven, collaborative, practical approach.

Recent deliverables include: Natural Flood Management solutions; re-wiggling rivers; action on weirs; farm visits and landowner education; schools work (eg Eels in the classroom); citizen science data gathering (Riverblitz, Riverfly) and creating a Fish Recovery Strategy. BART leads the country in relation to use of eDNA (novel fish sampling methodology) and establishing a comprehensive hub for river related data.

BART is focused on the Bristol Avon catchment, a unique and beautiful network of rivers, streams and lakes, with the Bristol Avon at its heart. Stretching 75 miles from its source in Wiltshire to its confluence with the River Severn near Bristol, the River Avon and its tributaries are the lifeblood of the area – but they are under constant threat, including from climate change and a growing population, with Bristol one of the fastest growing cities in the UK. BART is part of the wider rivers trust movement and aligned with (though separate from) the national Rivers Trust organisation.

Further information is available via the BART website: <https://bristolavonriverstrust.org>

**BART People** - A team of paid BART employees (including project managers and ecologists) work under our Chief Executive Officer. Oversight for BART is provided by the BART board of trustees. A large team of volunteers helps BART achieve its aims, coordinated by BART employees. For further information visit the BART website:

<https://bristolavonriverstrust.org/who-we-are/meet-the-team/>

**BART Governance** - BART is a registered charity plus operates as a private company limited by guarantee (incorporated 12th March 2012). Liability of members (i.e. the trustees) is limited to £1 each. The Articles of Association for BART articulate how it will regulate its operations and defines its purpose, laying out how tasks are to be accomplished within the organisation, including the process for appointing trustees and the handling of financial records. The Articles are available on request and are held on the BART trustees' sharepoint site. Further official details about BART, including filing status and directors are available via the BART entry on the Companies House website:

<https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/07986475>

As good business practice and in line with Charity Commission guidance BART maintains a comprehensive risk framework which is subject to regular review by the board. A suite of BART policies, plus in places discrete specific controls, are operated with the BART management and board committed to learning from risk events and near-misses, so all controls are subject to continuous improvement and adverse outcomes are minimised.

**BART Financials** - Turnover and assets have grown rapidly in recent years. BART is working to continue building the scale and impact of its work whilst operating in a dynamic and fast changing world. This, plus regulatory direction and long-term planning challenges, poses material strategic risks which the BART board and CEO work hard to manage appropriately. BART seeks to secure funding from diverse sources to limit risk exposure and is now looking to grow its core funding. For further information of BART's financial performance visit the Charity Commission website:

<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5040771/financial-history>

## What BART requires from a Trustee with Legal Expertise:

### Key Responsibilities

As a Trustee, you will:

- Fulfil the legal duties of a charity trustee under Charity Commission and company law
- Contribute to strategic direction and long-term sustainability
- Ensure BART operates in line with its charitable objectives
- Support oversight of financial health and risk management
- Act in the best interests of the Trust and its beneficiaries

In addition, the Trustee with legal expertise will:

- Provide strategic guidance on:
  - Partnership agreements and MOUs
  - Commercial contracts and procurement
  - Employment and HR compliance
  - Land access and restoration agreements
  - Trading subsidiary governance
  - Data protection and regulatory compliance
- Help the Board determine when external legal advice is required
- Contribute to the Finance & Risk Committee (or equivalent sub-committee)

### Person Specification

#### Essential

- Qualified solicitor or barrister (current or former practising certificate)
- Strong understanding of governance and regulatory frameworks
- Ability to interpret and explain legal risk in clear, practical terms
- Strategic mindset with the ability to operate at Board level
- Commitment to environmental restoration and public benefit

## What BART requires from a Trustee with Legal Expertise - Cont.

### Desirable

Experience in one or more of the following:

- Charity law
- Environmental or planning law
- Commercial and contract law
- Employment law
- Public sector contracting
- Land agreements or conservation covenants
- Governance of trading subsidiaries

### Time Commitment

- Approximately 4–6 Board meetings per year
- Participation in relevant sub-committees
- Occasional ad hoc strategic input between meetings

The role is voluntary and unpaid, though reasonable expenses may be reimbursed.

### Strategic Importance of the Role

Over the next 3–5 years, BART anticipates:

- Increased delivery of capital river restoration projects
- Greater engagement in development and planning contexts
- Expanded citizen science and community programmes
- Growth in commercial activity via BART River Services Ltd
- More formalised multi-agency partnerships

Legal expertise at Board level will ensure that growth is matched with strong governance, proportionate risk management, and organisational resilience.

## **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

BART is committed to building a diverse and inclusive Board. We actively welcome applications from individuals who bring varied backgrounds, lived experience, and perspectives.

It is strongly recommended that trustees and those interested in becoming a trustee take time to read the guidance provided by the Charity Commission for England and Wales, including becoming familiar with the Essential Trustee publication:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>

It is also very important that whilst operating in a challenging and open manner, the board of trustees consists of individuals who share a common purpose and can work collaboratively as an effective team.

## The recruitment process onto the board of trustees

1. Applicant reads and considers the BART on-line information plus supporting information (including looking at the Charity Commission guidance)
2. Applicant indicates interest to BART – through a phone call or email to: [info@bristolavonriverstrust.org](mailto:info@bristolavonriverstrust.org). At the same time they submit a CV, short supporting statement (1 side of A4 maximum) and a completed Information to be Disclosed & Declaration Form
3. Interview – informal interview with Chair and CEO
4. BART board consider the applicant joining the board as a trustee – in light of the challenges faced by BART plus also the applicant's CV, supporting statement, interview outcome and content of the Information to be Disclosed & Declaration Form
5. Where the board is supportive, the applicant will be asked to provide 2 references and may be asked for a satisfactory Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check if they will work with volunteers or young people. DBS check costs will be covered by BART
6. Assuming these checks are met, a formal resolution will be tabled for approval by the board at the next board meeting. Once agreed, the appointee will then hold office as a trustee until the next AGM, at which time the board may reappoint the trustee – subject to both parties agreement



[www.bristolavonriverstrust.org](http://www.bristolavonriverstrust.org)

Charity number: 1154348

Company number: 07986457

Image credits: Mark Briscoe, Steve Field,  
Hunter Bramels & Andreas Schantl

## We are on



Bristol Avon Rivers Trust



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