

MOURNE HERITAGE TRUST



PEACEPLUS
Northern Ireland - Ireland

Co-funded by the



European Union



UK Government



Candidate Information

PEAT + Programme in

Eastern Mourne Special Area of Conservation

Introduction

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for expressing your interest in the newly created positions that are core to the delivery of the PEAT+ projects in the Mourne and Slieve Gullion sites. This booklet supports applicants for Mourne Heritage Trust positions.

Mourne Heritage Trust (MHT) aims to be an excellent provider of locally based strategic management of the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We do this by safeguarding the area’s biodiversity, providing opportunities for the public and tourists to enjoy it sustainably in the interests of the local community; whilst protecting and enhancing its built and cultural heritage; and promoting understanding of this special area, locally and globally.

We are looking for 3 additional staff members to join our existing dedicated team of people who care deeply about the difference our organisation makes to the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In our first round of recruitment we have now filled two posts in the programme; the Peat + Mourne & Gullion Project Coordinator and the Conservation Ranger and are now seeking to fill the third post, the Senior Technical Peatlands Officer.

These new posts are supported by PEACEPLUS, a programme managed by the SEUPB. In collaboration with cross-border partners, the project will focus on restoring peatlands across Northern Ireland and Ireland’s border counties.

This initiative integrates climate action, biodiversity enhancement, and community engagement to reduce emissions from degraded peatlands and increase their carbon capture post-restoration. It also aims to improve biodiversity, protect historical features, and contribute to flood prevention, water quality, and wildfire risk reduction.

The new posts have been created to deliver the PEAT+ projects in both the Mourne and Slieve Gullion. The MHT team includes a Project Coordinator, a Senior Technical Officer and a Peatlands Conservation Ranger.

Our local Partner Newry Mourne and Down District Council; delivering the Slieve Gullion area will in shortly recruit an AONB-Geopark PEAT+ Project Officer. Both teams will collaborate.

You can learn more about what MHT does by visiting our website at

www.mournelive.com.

If you are attracted by the idea of using your skills and experience to help improve the Mourne Area of Outstanding Beauty and its impact on the community, we warmly welcome your application.

Nigel Mc Kinney
CEO

Who we are and what we do.

Mourne Heritage Trust was established in 1997 as a charity trust to meet an identified need for locally based strategic management of the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Spanning 570 square kilometres in the southeast of Northern Ireland, this diverse landscape includes the Mourne mountains, a beautiful coastline, the ancient uplands of Slieve Croob and the foothills and drumlin country in between.



The Trust works collaboratively with government agencies, the local authority, local business, tourism, farming, environmental, recreational and local community interests. As an independent limited company and registered charity, the Trust is committed to protecting and enhancing this special place.

Our board of 12 Volunteer Trustees governs the activities of our team of 21 staff.

We deliver on our mission through taking action under the strategic themes below.

Natural Environment Enhancement and Protection

Safeguard, enhance and promote appreciation of the quality and diversity of the landscapes and biodiversity of the Mourne Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and to manage and influence change appropriately.

Visitor Management and Services

To provide and maintain opportunities for public enjoyment, education and recreation within the Mourne AONB in ways which safeguard the environment and protect land management and community interests.

Built and Cultural Heritage

To identify, promote, safeguard and enhance the built and cultural heritage of the Mourne AONB.

Sustainable Tourism

We work to promote regeneration through the development and facilitation of appropriate sustainable tourism initiatives in the Mourne AONB. Creating, awareness and promoting a greater understanding of the Mourne AONB as a unique and special area to local, regional, national and international audiences.

We deliver on our strategic aims through these key objectives implemented by the activities outlined below.

Strategy, Policy Development and Partnerships

Mourne Heritage Trust's 'Caring for Mourne' framework is guided by the [Mourne AONB Management Plan 2023-2027](#) which sets a vision to protect and enhance the landscape through collaboration with key partners.

Four interconnecting themes form the basis of the management plan:

- Mountain, Countryside and Coast
- Historic Environment
- Sustainable Communities
- Enjoying, Appreciating and Understanding the Mourne AONB

The Trust represents landscape priorities in local, national, and international forums, and contributes to policy development and sharing best practices. MHT is an active member of the [Landscapes NI](#) Network, working together with 15 other organisations to promote landscapes and associated policy and practice in Northern Ireland.

As part of the [Forever Mournes Partnership](#) with the National Trust, NI Water and Woodland Trust we work on developing more coherent and comprehensive approaches to management of public lands in the high Mournes. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency, Forest Service and Newry, Mourne and Down Council anticipate in the Partnership as observer members.

Here is a flavour of what we are currently working on

Countryside Services

Our Countryside Service team carries out a variety of tasks across the AONB. Their day-to-day activities vary by season and, increasingly, by weather conditions.

Activities include:

- Invasive species control
- Post-storm tree clearance
- Monitoring user numbers and events
- Litter management, high Mourne car parks
- Maintenance of the Play Parks in Tollymore and Castlewellan Forest Parks
- Maintenance of a number of green lanes/rights of way
- Stile, fence and bridge maintenance in the high Mourne
- Maintenance of a number of Interpretive Panels across the AONB

Erosion Control

The Trust has a long-standing commitment to erosion control in the area, particularly associated with path work, fire management, heathland management, and grazing management.

Sustainable Paths

The long-term sustainability of paths is crucial. They must accommodate growing visitor numbers and be robust enough to endure extreme weather, which is increasingly common. Additionally, paths should provide a comfortable experience for users, while helping to protect the surrounding delicate habitats.

Forest Rangers

Our Forest Rangers work in Castlewellan Forest Park and Kilbroney Park, Rostrevor. They are responsible for maintaining the mountain bike trails in both parks, ensuring they are clear of debris and fallen trees.

Their on-the-ground presence allows them to engage directly with trail users, leading to practical improvements. For instance, a fallen tree was placed at a popular resting spot for tired riders, blending seamlessly into the natural surroundings.

Healthy Heathland

A key part of caring for the Mourne landscape are the ongoing peatland management projects. Increased recreation, climate change, and wildfires have damaged the area, affecting the habitat and their species.

Eroded blanket bog and wet heath are an increasing concern in the Mourne Special Area of Conservation. Early interventions began in 2016-17 with Heritage Lottery funding, we used dams and slow the flow techniques to begin to improve water retention and promote regeneration in two small areas in the Annalong Valley.

The PEAT+ funding will allow review and repairs to earlier works completed by MHT, development of management plans using digital technology and an extension to the earlier restoration sites and deliver new restoration work at new locations. In these high Mourne locations, we will use stones and coir rolls and revegetation techniques along with geo textiles. These dams help control erosion and support faster vegetation growth.

Sustainable Tourism

“Caring for Mourne” involves working with local businesses to promote Sustainable Tourism principles. The Trust’s focus on sustainability began with the Natural Resource Rural Tourism Initiative (2003-2007), during which the area earned the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism—the first in the British Isles to do so.

Over the years, funding has supported additional projects. For example, the Mourne Mountains Landscape Partnership (2013-2017) invested around £3 million into local projects focused on the Mournes’ natural, built, and cultural heritage.

Wildfire Management

The Mourne uplands have endured a long history of wildfires, impacting the area in various ways over the years. In 2007, the Safer Mournes Partnership was formed to improve coordination among different organisations. Its goal is to address fire and crime issues through education and community fire safety advice. The partnership includes representatives from the Mourne Heritage Trust, NI Fire & Rescue Service, PSNI, Forest Service, National Trust, and Newry, Mourne and Down District Council.

Our Team

Our team currently comprises 23 people, including the two recently appointed Peat + staff, working across teams including Countryside Operations, Projects and Participation and Coordination and Support. Further details are available on our website.

Our staff encompass diverse skills ranging from leading edge practical landscape and visitor infrastructure management, through development and management of conservation strategies and projects, to engagement and participation.

Application Process and Advice

The application process uses Microsoft online forms. **Please note that you are advised to complete the form in one session as there is no option to save your progress and return later.**

All questions highlighted with an asterisk must be answered; otherwise, the form will not be submitted. We recommend you create your answers offline and cut and paste into the form or copy type into the form.

Space to address essential and desirable questions have character limits, which also includes spaces and punctuation marks. So it is best to use concise clear answers; the table below shows the text limitations for the questions.

Timeline & How to Apply	
Applications submitted online along with Monitoring forms	23.00 hrs Sunday 22 nd February 2026
INTERVIEW DATES Senior Technical Officer Peatland Conservation Ranger PEAT+ Project Coordinator	9 th & 10 th March 2026 appointed appointed
Interviews (may include a seen or unseen task)	
Below are the essential and desirable criteria for each position. The numbers correspond with the application form. It is your responsibility to demonstrate clearly and concisely with specific examples and dates how you meet the criteria. In addition to the essential criteria, desirable criteria may be used for enhanced short listing purposes.	

Equality Monitoring

Along with the Application Form, you will be asked to complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring. The shortlisting panel will only consider employment history and the essential and desirable criteria questions. Mourne Heritage Trust is an Equal Opportunities Employer, and all applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit.

Disability

In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act a person is disabled if they have, or have had, “a physical or mental impairment which has, or has had, a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day to day activities”.

If you consider yourself to have a disability relevant to the position for which you are applying, please contact so that we can process your application fairly, make any specific arrangements for your interview, and make any necessary reasonable adjustments or adaptations, or provide any aids to assist you in completing the duties of the post if appointed.

GDPR

By submitting an application for this position, you are consenting your personal information to be processed and exclusively used for the duration of this recruitment campaign.

Mournes & Slieve Gullion Peat + Project Team members An overview for both sites

Mourne & Slieve Gullion Project Coordinator (MHT) - (working across both Slieve Gullion and Mournes)

The Coordinator will lead a dedicated team in the delivery of research, data collection, data analysis, development of peatland restoration management and restoration plans in the Eastern Mournes and Slieve Gullion Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). Lead the team in the issuing of tenders and bids for the delivery of base line surveys, monitoring and contracted restoration works across both sites. In addition, assist with the selection of a contractor to deliver a wildfire management plan for Slieve Gullion.

Liaise across all programme partners and report regularly to Ulster Wildlife (UW) Programme Manager for all aspects of reporting, to enable UW's effective and timely reporting and funding claims to SEUPB. Maintain regular and efficient communications with all relevant MHT staff including Countryside Services, Corporate, Financial and HR. Set up and facilitate Mourne/Gullion project steering group.

Senior Technical Peatlands Officer – (Working across both Slieve Gullion and Mournes)

Assist the Mourne and Gullion Team Lead in all aspects of the project including the development and delivery of the content for tender invitations and their assessments relating to the research, data collection, development of management plans for wildfire (Gullion) and peatland restoration planning and restoration works both Mourne and S Gullion sites.

Provide relevant peatland/wetland ecological and land management skills to support the project the team, ensuring that CDM and relevant peat restoration techniques are clearly articulated in tender bids and contractor quality monitoring. Liaise with relevant statutory bodies associated with habitat and water regulations.

Provide regular reporting to the Project steering group. Liaise with the wider project partners and remain abreast of technical guidance and best practice across the Peat+ partners.

Essential Criteria Senior Technical Peatlands Officer

No	Question	Character Limit
30	At least a Level 6 qualification in a relevant subject such as Environmental Science, ecology or other biological science and at least 2 year's relevant full-time (volunteer experience may be considered) OR 5 year's relevant full-time (or equivalent part-time experience) in an environmental/ecology/land management role. (It is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate the relevance of qualifications and work-related experience.)	800
31	Good knowledge and understanding of biodiversity on the island of Ireland and the management requirements associated with designated sites and priority habitats and species in either NI or ROI.	800
32	Demonstrable technical knowledge of GIS software use for habitat and species recording or peatland restoration projects.	800
33	Experience of managing contractors.	800
34	Technical knowledge of peatland restoration practices including Construction Design Management (CDM) requirements and appropriate risk assessments/compliance.	800
35	Demonstrable experience of building and maintaining effective relationships with landowners and land managers.	800
36	Experience writing or co-writing conservation or habitat restoration management /action plans/reports to strict deadlines.	800
37	Demonstrable experience of working as part of a team.	800

38	Ability to communicate effectively, both written and verbally – effective presentation skills, report writing and the ability to converse with a diverse range of people at all levels.	800
39	Effective organisational skills including the ability to plan, manage and prioritise workloads for self, meeting strict deadlines, plan and organise site meetings and events.	800
40	High level of computer literacy with a good knowledge of Microsoft Office suite.	200
41	Driver's license and access to transport for business purposes to allow the post holder to carry out the full requirements of the role	Yes/No

Desirable Criteria Senior Technical Peatlands Officer

No	Question	Character Limit
42	Experience of developing tender documentation and supervising contractors on site in upland environments.	800
43	Experience of following financial procedures and procurement processes associated with public funding, such as EU or Government (NI) funding.	800
44	Experience of technical report writing/ management plans for upland or peatland habitats.	800
45	Knowledge of environmental and agricultural issues that impact site management.	800
46	Experience of Peatland/bog monitoring equipment and software, such as Eyes on the Bog, water table monitors or Flux monitors.	800
47	Experience of presenting complex conservation land management approaches to key stakeholders.	800

Peatlands Conservation Ranger - (Working across both Slieve Gullion and Mournes)

Lead on all stakeholder engagement; including landowners, graziers, contractors and other key partners. Be the eyes and ears across all projects on the ground. Collect data from monitoring locations and provide photographic or drone footage as required. Provide input into the education and awareness raising with MHT/NMDDC and across Peat+ project partners.

Participate in the NI Peatland Collaborative Network, ensuring that practical peatland restoration and monitoring techniques at Slieve Gullion and Eastern Mournes are consistent with best practice, and contribute to the recovery networks overall project objectives. Support the Senior Technical Officer in monitoring compliance with all relevant legislative requirements such as CDM and HIA.

AONB and Geopark Peat+ Project Officer (NMDDC) (Working across both Slieve Gullion and Mournes) The NMDDC recruitment process announced in early 2026.

The postholder will act as the primary liaison for NMDDC between Ulster Wildlife, Mourne Heritage Trust, landowners, and contractors. They will lead on the development of procurement and manage all procurement processes for restoration works in Mourne and Gullion, ensuring compliance with Council procedures and funding requirements. The role will also oversee all project communications within the Slieve Gullion area, working with partners to share progress, promote public engagement, and highlight the environmental and community benefits of peatland restoration; essentially the eyes and ears of the project.

In addition, the postholder will be responsible for preparing and submitting all NMDDC financial and performance claims associated with the project, ensuring accurate reporting, audit compliance, and timely coordination with Ulster Wildlife and SEUPB requirements. The position requires strong skills in coordination, procurement management, partnership working, and communications, along with experience in environmental project delivery and reporting.

**Mourne Heritage Trust is a Registered Charity (105840) and a
Company Limited by Guarantee (NI032946)**