



Candidate Information

PEAT + Peatlands Conservation Ranger

Eastern Mournes and Slieve Gullion Special Areas of Conservation

Introduction

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for expressing your interest in the newly created position of Peatlands Conservation Ranger that is part of the team delivering the PEAT+ project in the Eastern Mourne and Slieve Gullion sites. This booklet supports applicants for this post.

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 an additional staff member 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.

The new post is 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.

This role has been created as part of 4 new posts to deliver the PEAT+ project in both the Mourne and Slieve Gullion:

- The MHT team includes a Project Coordinator, a Senior Technical Officer (both in post) and a Peatlands Conservation Ranger.
- Our local Partner Newry Mourne and Down District Council, covering the Slieve Gullion area will 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.

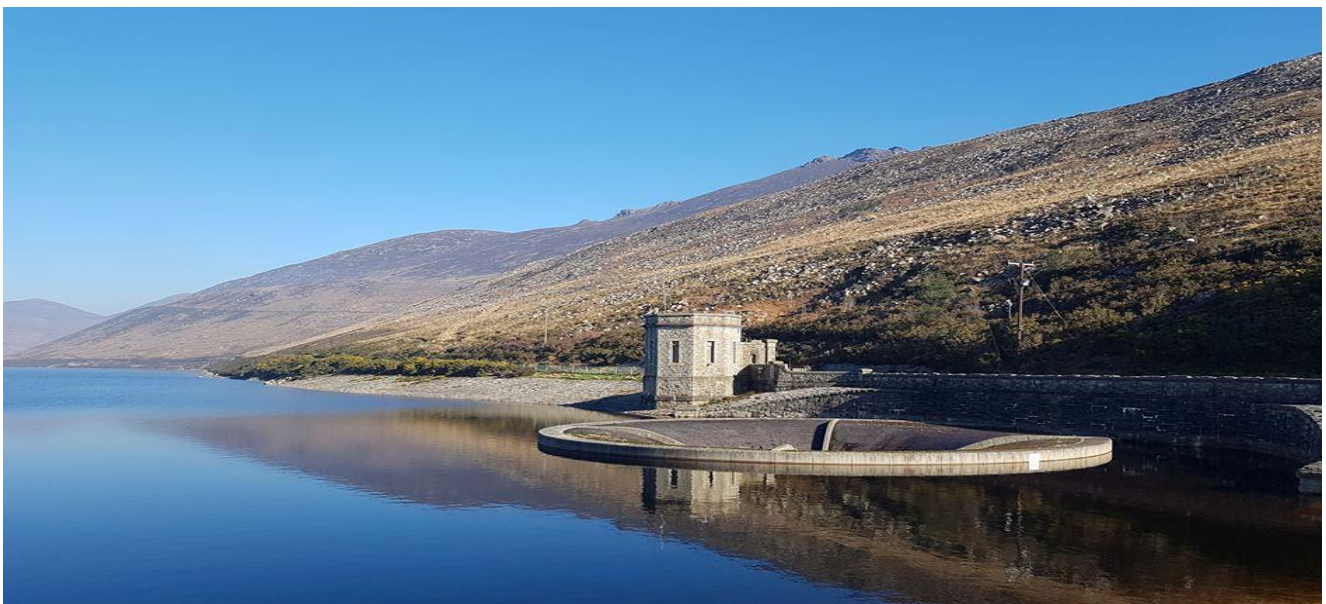
If you are attracted by the idea of using your skills and experience to help improve the Mourne Area of Outstanding Beauty and its impact on the community, we warmly welcome your application.

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 17 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 Mournes 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 Mournes
- 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.

Engagement Rangers

The Engagement Ranger project started as a pilot in late 2021. As the name implies, the rangers engage with visitors in the Mourne, promoting safe and positive experiences for walkers while encouraging them to minimize their environmental impact. Our message aligns with the “Leave No Trace” principles, emphasizing the importance of keeping dogs on leads to protect livestock and native species.

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 Mourne’s 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 Mourne 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

Mourne Heritage Trust 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.

Projects and Participation Team

Landscape Services Development Manager

Sustainable Tourism and communications Manager (Part-time)

Area Ranger

Conservation Grazing Ranger

Volunteer Officer

Engagement Ranger (Part-time)

PEAT+ Project team x 3 fixed term contracts until March 2029

Countryside Operations Team

Senior Countryside Officer – AONB Services

Senior Countryside Officer – Forests

Senior Countryside Officer – Upland

Coordination and Support

Chief Executive Officer

Office Manager

Application Process and Advice

Timeline & How to Apply	
Application submitted online along with Monitoring forms	12 Noon, Monday 15 th June 2026
INTERVIEW DATE	during the week of 22 nd June 2026
Interviews (may include a seen or unseen task)	

The application process uses Microsoft Forms. You should complete the form in **one session**, as there is **no option to save and return later**. All questions marked with an asterisk are mandatory; the form will not submit unless these are completed.

We recommend drafting your answers offline and then pasting or typing them into the form. Sections for essential and desirable criteria have **character limits**, which include **spaces, punctuation and symbols**, so concise and clear responses are best.

A list of the questions and their character limits is provided below to help you prepare your answers in advance.

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 leads 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). Leads the team in the issuing of tenders and bids for the delivery of base line surveys, monitoring and contracted restoration works across both sites and assists with the selection of a contractor to deliver a wildfire management plan for Slieve Gullion. Liaises across all programme partners and reports 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. Maintains regular and efficient communications with all relevant MHT staff including Countryside Services, Corporate, Financial and HR. Set up and facilitates Mourne/Gullion project steering group.

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

Assists the 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.

Provides 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. Liaises with relevant statutory bodies associated with habitat and water regulations.

Provides regular reporting to the Project steering group. Liaises with the wider project partners and remains abreast of technical guidance and best practice across the Peat+ partners.

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.

Assist fellow MHT colleagues in relation to the facilitation of the Eastern Mournes SAC, Conservation Management Plan development and implementation, providing technical guidance and support the Forever Mournes Partnership in technical conservation advice on projects where appropriate.

Essential Criteria - Peatlands Conservation Ranger

- Q 30. At least level 6 (degree), in a relevant subject e.g. such as biology, ecology, geography, land management, hydrology or other related subject and at least 1 year's cumulative relevant full-time experience (including placement and volunteer experience) OR 4 years' 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. [600 characters]
- Q 31. Good knowledge and understanding of NI's biodiversity and objectives associated with designated sites. [600 characters]
- Q 32. Knowledge of Peatland habitats and their restoration. [600 characters]
- Q 33. Experience of carrying out conservation field work and data collection. [600 characters]
- Q 34. Knowledge of implementing and compliance with health and safety policies and procedures. [600 characters]
- Q 35. Ability to communicate effectively, both written and verbally – effective presentation, report writing and the ability to converse with a diverse range of people at all levels. [600 characters]
- Q 36. Effective organisational skills including the ability to plan, manage and prioritise workloads for self, meet deadlines, plan and organise meetings and events. [600 characters]
- Q 37. High level of computer literacy with a good knowledge of Microsoft Office software. [600 characters]

Q 38. Current Driving 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 Peatlands Conservation Ranger

Q 39. Two years' cumulative, relevant full-time experience (including student placement and volunteer experience). [600 characters]

Q 40. Experience in the use of GIS software for surveying and data analysis. [600 characters]

Q 41. Experience of procurement procedures and associated document management. [600 characters]

Q 42. Demonstrable experience of engaging with contractors, farmers and landowners. [600 characters]

Q 43 Training and/or experience of CDM for Peatland Management and restoration. [600 characters]

Q 44. Experience of working in remote or upland environments. [600 characters]

AONB and Geopark Peat+ Project Officer (NMDDC) (Working across both Slieve Gullion and Mournes) The NMDDC recruitment process will be announced mid-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)**