

17th September 2020



ORN to appoint new Chair to succeed Fiona Groves

The Outdoor Recreation Network (ORN) is now seeking to appoint a new Chair to succeed Fiona Groves who will step down as Chair in mid-October. Fiona was recently appointed as the Education and Learning Policy Manager for The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts and the demanding nature of this role means she is unable to contribute as fully as she would wish to the position of Chair.

Fiona has been Chair of ORN since the start of October 2019, and in that time has embraced and provided strong leadership in taking forward the [ORN Action Plan 2019 – 2022](#). Reflecting on her time in post, Co Vice-Chair, Bridgette Hall (Forestry England) said:

“Fiona was a great appointment for ORN, and she has led the reinvigoration of the Network. In her time as Chair we have added energy and clarity of purpose to ORN, increased our membership, and had two very important conferences on Future Trends and Insights, and Engaging Children and Young People with Nature and the Outdoors, as well as rolling out a series of very informative webinars.”

Since the last ORN conference, COVID-19 has brought tremendous change and challenge for the outdoor recreation sector. ORN has kept abreast of the situation, the implications for how people enjoy and engage with the outdoors and took a lead in coordinating the reopening of the outdoors.

ORN Co Vice-Chair, Pippa Langford (Natural England) said:

“I’d like to express my thanks for the huge amount Fiona has done for ORN over the last year. It feels as if she has been Chair for much longer because Fiona has led us to achieve such a lot in that time. In terms of ORN’s response to COVID-19, we are very appreciative of her dedication in representing ORN at the Defra and Natural England meetings and contributing to ORN webinars. We will miss her wise council, energy, and commitment. We wish Fiona all the best in her new role.”

Reflecting on her time as Chair, Fiona said:

“I’ve really enjoyed my time as Chair of ORN and I will miss working closely with Members, the Executive Committee and the Secretariat. The highlights for me have been around the value of making professional connections, whether that is listening to the most insightful presentations, sharing approaches on a Dartmoor rock or planning huge things for the future over a drinks reception. The open and sociable nature of the Network has also impressed me. COVID-19 has illustrated the importance of cooperative working in our sector and this ethos of sharing information, finding common solutions and supporting a diverse range of organisations has shone through in this time and is one of the key benefits of being part of ORN. I am very proud of all that we achieved collectively over last year, and the new Chair will come in at an exciting time to play a key part in taking forward the growth and future development of the Network.”

This is an important moment in the growth and influence of ORN as we continue with our renewed focus and purpose as set out in the 2019-2022 Action Plan. The ORN Executive Committee is now

seeking to recruit a driven and enthusiastic Chairperson to this exciting role. It will be essential to secure an individual of the right calibre, experience, and outlook to the role of Chair who can take a strategic lead in the development of ORN.

Applications are invited from anyone, including members and non-members. Further information on the position, person specification and selection process are included within the Chair Recruitment Pack. Applications should be submitted to elizabeth@outdoorrecreation.org.uk before the deadline of 16:00 on Monday 19th October 2020.