



Appointment of

**CHIEF CONSERVATION OFFICER / DEPUTY CEO**

November 2024 | Ref: JBRFA

Saxton Bampfylde

# CONTENTS

3	Welcome from the Chief Executive
4	About Chester Zoo
6	A united strategy to prevent extinction
7	Our Conservation Plan 2021-2030
8	Regions where we work
10	The role
14	The person
15	Terms of appointment
16	How to apply



# WELCOME FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Thanks for your interest in joining the team at Chester Zoo as Chief Conservation Officer/Deputy CEO. This is an exciting new position spearheading our vital conservation work, both in our role as a national conservation zoo and also through our field projects around the world.

As Deputy CEO, this role will also support me as we move into the next stage of our growth, leading the team of over 1,000 staff and 200 volunteers in all aspects of the work which makes us a leading conservation education charity and top visitor attraction, with over 2m annual visitors and 156,000 members.

Zoos like ours are conservation powerhouses and play a unique and crucial role in global efforts to tackle the biodiversity crisis. Bringing our science, field programmes, animal, plant and education engagement objectives all under one conservation team is vital to drive the change we need, at the speed we require, to support the vital work we do to recover nature and protect the natural world.

2025 marks the next major step change in our development as we open both Heart of Africa, an exciting new zone of the zoo, and, later in the summer, our 51-lodge hotel. These two brand new concepts will then support our ambitious conservation investment plan and its six key targets through to 2030, as well as the next stage of physical development of the zoo as we approach our centenary in 2031.

This role will support me in turning that strategic intent into reality. The successful candidate will work within a small, well-established team of executive directors and alongside our fantastic board of trustees. They will promote our work and act as an ambassador for our mission externally, at a national and international level, with the public, other NGOs and with policy makers. It's a role that will test and challenge leadership skills, will be exciting and at pace but will ultimately mean the role holder will have the ability to make a real difference to the world in which we live.

I am excited to read your application and hopefully look forward to meeting with you.

**Jamie Christon**, Chief Executive



## ABOUT CHESTER ZOO

Chester Zoo is the UK's favourite zoo as well as an international conservation charity. The North of England Zoological Society – the charity that runs Chester Zoo – is a not-for-profit organisation managed by a board of trustees, with an annual income of £63 million.

We work with 62 partners in 6 key regions across the world to protect key species and landscapes that are under threat. We take a 360 approach to conservation, working with species at our hub in Chester as well as in the field, protecting landscapes and working with local governments, communities and NGOs to deliver lasting impact.

What began as a family run zoo in 1931 has grown into a globally-renowned centre of excellence for conservation and scientific research, and one of the UK's biggest and most popular visitor attractions, with more than 2 million annual visitors. The zoo's 128-acre site in

Chester, which is home to more than 37,000 animals and more than 500 species, is where this species-saving work is made possible.

Experts from the zoo are recognised by governments and NGOs across the world as leaders within the global conservation community, from our expertise in social sciences to our international Centre for Zoo Science.

Educating and inspiring the conservationists of the future is one of our key focuses. In 2024, 128,000 school children visited the zoo and we provided extensive teacher training and professional development. Our work with fellows and scholars includes 293 science outputs, including 31 peer-reviewed publications and 100 scientific presentations.

[chesterzoo.org](https://chesterzoo.org)

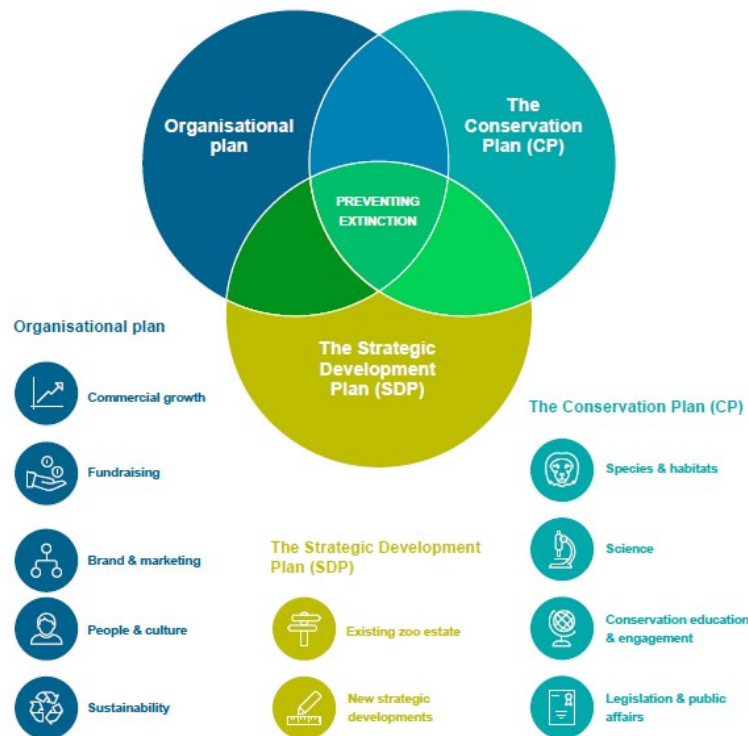


**Our unique combination of the species in our care, millions of visitors, scientific support and wide ranging skills can be harnessed to make a substantial contribution to prevent extinction.**

# A UNITED STRATEGY TO PREVENT EXTINCTION

Chester Zoo has an ambitious strategy that takes the charity to its centenary in 2031. This strategy looks to ensure the zoo maximises its contribution to conservation and education, delivering tangible and lasting change across six key conservation targets.

The delivery of the zoo’s conservation work is intrinsically linked with the strategic development of our zoo site and the development of our organisation more broadly.



## The Strategic Development Plan (SDP)

The SDP sets out a plan to transform the zoo through the development of habitat-themed environmental zones, aligned with and supporting our CP, while ensuring the zoo is in the best position to attract visitors to the site. The plan focuses on two key strands of activity:

- New strategic developments to the zoo
- The management plan for the existing zoo estate

## The Conservation Plan (CP)

The CP focuses on a holistic approach to deliver lasting impact, focusing on four Ps: the protection of animal and plant populations, the places that need to be protected to allow species to thrive, the people that impact these environments and the policy areas which affect conservation outcomes at a wider level. The zoo has six key targets that it’s pledged to meet by 2031, which are enabled by the following plans:

- Our species plan
- The zoo’s science plan
- Our conservation, education and engagement

## The Organisational Plan

In order to achieve the mission and deliver the Strategic Development Plan (SDP) and Conservation Plan (CP), Chester Zoo needs to remain financially successful, as well as grow and diversify its income streams. This plan maps the key elements of activity to achieve this:

- The zoo’s commercial strategy
- Our fundraising strategy
- Brand strategy
- People strategy
- Sustainability strategy
- Public affairs strategy

[You can read more in our Annual Report here.](#)

# OUR CONSERVATION PLAN

## 2021-2030

Our unique combination of the species in our care, millions of visitors, scientific support and wide-ranging skills can be harnessed to make a substantial contribution to the transformative environmental change required. We at Chester Zoo are already at the forefront of tackling biodiversity loss and leading behaviour change amongst our visitors and supporters. Our work is evidence-based, grounded in the interlinking of science and practice.

However, transformative change requires new and more integrated approaches to tackling the biodiversity crisis. We must bring together our skill sets and combine them with those of a wide range of partners to tackle both the biological and anthropological causes of extinction in order to ensure that our planet remains diverse and vibrant.

This Conservation Plan for Chester Zoo aims to build on our success and sets out a road map for the delivery of our mission of preventing extinction through close integration of our many different types of conservation work. At its heart are a set of bold targets that clearly set out the significant contribution we plan to make to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the successor to the CBD, the post-2020 biodiversity framework.

This forward looking plan covers an initial period of 10 years from 2021 – 2030, and seeks to implement significant parts of the Society’s Strategic Plan. It sits alongside the visionary ‘Strategic Development Plan’ for the physical zoo site over the same time period.

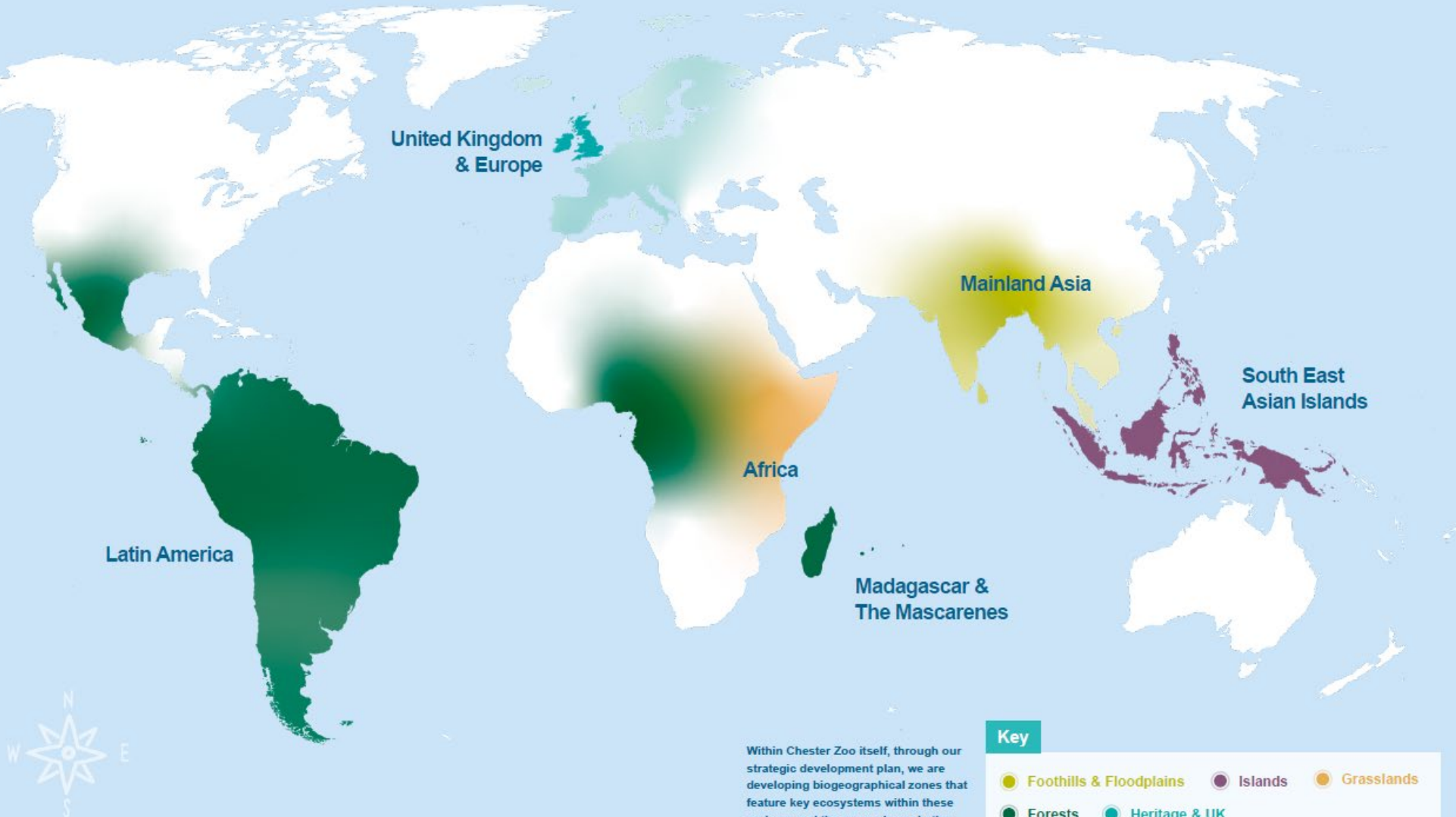
Read our Conservation Plan in full [here](#).

By 2030, we will have:



# REGIONS WHERE WE WORK

We focus our conservation work on the six regions shown on this map which were designed to prioritise the planet's biodiversity hotspots where high biodiversity is combined with the greatest degree of threat.



Within Chester Zoo itself, through our strategic development plan, we are developing biogeographical zones that feature key ecosystems within these regions, and these are shown in the coloured key.

**Key**

- Foothills & Floodplains
- Islands
- Grasslands
- Forests
- Heritage & UK





# THE ROLE

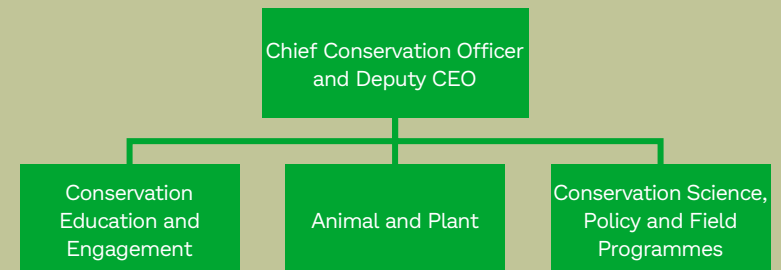
The Chief Conservation Officer and Deputy Chief Executive (CCO) at Chester Zoo will be a mission focused, strategic leader responsible for directing and further developing the conservation plan and leading and integrating the Animal and Plant, Conservation Education & Engagement, and Conservation Science and Policy and Field Programmes departments into one ‘Conservation’ directorate.

As part of the Executive Team the CCO will also work as part of a collaborative and cohesive team to support the development of and ensure effective delivery of the strategic plan. In particular the CCO will support the development of the sustainability agenda and associated plans, ensuring that the organisation takes steps to reduce the global threats to biodiversity presented by climate change and over exploitation of natural resources. In addition the CCO will play a key role in creating a positive and strong culture at Chester Zoo.

The CCO will also act as Deputy CEO, overseeing day to day operations and decision making in the zoo in the absence of the CEO and supporting the CEO to ensure all Trustee expectations are met. In deputising the CCO will also be expected to represent the zoo externally at times on behalf of the CEO.

This role is pivotal in driving the zoo’s conservation efforts and supporting our mission of Preventing Extinction.

**Reporting to:** CEO  
**Responsible for:** Conservation Education and Engagement  
 Animal and Plant  
 Conservation Science, Policy and Field Programmes





## The principal responsibilities over the role are outlined below:

### Leadership

- Provide strategic guidance and leadership to the Conservation directorate, developing standards and ensuring effective collaboration between departments, evolving the 'ONE team' approach both within these departments and across the wider zoo.
- Lead, support, engage and inspire your team through an empathetic, authentic and empowering leadership style.
- Drive a collaborative and progressive culture through leading by example – creating an environment of psychological safety and innovation.

### Culture Development

- To develop a culture of excellence and continuous improvement in animal welfare and husbandry, in plant care and in conservation breeding based on sound scientific principles.
- Embed a culture of excellence through promoting the use of scientific data and best practices to enhance the overall welfare and conservation impact of the animals and plants in our care, and in the delivery of our field programmes.
- Along with the rest of the executive team and CEO, to develop an exceptional, positive and collaborative culture with a 'ONE Team' ethos.

### Strategy and planning

- In conjunction with the other Directors, to develop the organisation's overall strategy and direct its implementation.
- To be accountable for the development and implementation of the zoo's conservation plan, ensuring alignment with our mission and values and ensuring progress is constantly evaluated and consistently communicated, maintaining a focus on the objectives of the organisation.

- Oversee the strategy for science and field programme activity in alignment with the overall Conservation Plan and mission.
- Support the Animal & Plant Director in determining key conservation priorities, including species preservation, habitat restoration, collection planning, and initiatives to support in situ and ex situ conservation and maximise impact, ensuring these priorities translate through to the Conservation Plan and key objectives.
- Support the Conservation Education and Engagement Director in development and delivery of the organisation's plan for education and engagement, in line with the targets of the Conservation Plan, the Strategic Development Plan and our aspiration to be a global leader in conservation education.
- Support the Head of Sustainability in the development and delivery of initiatives which will enable us to achieve our sustainability goals including carbon net zero by 2030, zero waste operation by 2030 and procurement of deforestation free commodities in all major supply chains.
- To support the development of conservation policy working in collaboration with the Public Affairs team.
- Play a proactive role in the overall governance of the organisation to ensure success, credibility and sustainability.

### Delivery/ Impact

- Lead the development of comprehensive plans for the management and conservation of animals and plants within the zoo, working closely with other departments such as the Facilities and Development team to deliver practical and operational solutions in line with needs.
- Champion and engage in sustainable breeding programs for endangered species and ensure our relationships across the zoo and wildlife community are strong, collaborative and impactful.



## Responsibilities (continued):

### Innovation and Influence

- Encourage innovative scientific approaches to conservation challenges and support research that contributes to species preservation and habitat conservation.
- In conjunction with the other Directors, to promote Chester Zoo as a key player in zoo led conservation through networking, representing the zoo in the media, involvement in national, regional and international committees and other activities which will improve the zoo's profile and influence.
- To play a significant role in species and taxonomic management at national and international level
- To develop the mechanisms to provide accurate and up-to-date information and inspiring stories relating to the animals and plants within the zoo for marketing and educational purposes.
- Cultivate and maintain strong partnerships with governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and other conservation entities.
- Strategically engage with local and global conservation networks to advance collaborative conservation efforts and advocate for policy changes.

### Budgeting and Resource Management

- Develop and manage the directorate budget in coordination with the zoo's executive leadership to ensure the efficient and effective use of resources.
- Identify potential funding sources, grants, and philanthropic opportunities to support conservation initiatives and departmental operations.

### Monitoring, Evaluation and Governance

- Establish key performance indicators and monitoring frameworks to assess the impact of conservation programs and initiatives.
- Regularly evaluate progress towards conservation goals and adapt strategies based on scientific evidence and successful outcomes.
- Ensure the Society delivers its charitable objects, licensing and accreditation obligations in relation to education and becomes a global leader in Conservation Education, in line with the zoo's One Plan Strategy.

### Deputy CEO responsibilities

- To support the CEO and when necessary take responsibility for making critical decisions that impact the operations, employees and stakeholders.
- In the CEO's absence, to provide day-to-day strong leadership and ensure the organisation remains focused on objectives, mission and values.
- To represent the organisation at key meetings, industry events and other public platforms to promote and advocate for the zoo's interests.
- In the CEO's absence, to lead crisis management and decision making, maintaining a calm and strategic approach when unexpected challenges arise, and to work with the rest of the executive team and wider organisation to manage any issues effectively.
- To support the CEO in measuring and monitoring the performance of teams across the organisation, fostering a culture of accountability and high performance.



# THE PERSON

**We are looking for an exceptional organisation and people leader with a strong understanding of global conservation issues and a passion for conservation.**

## Essential

- Comprehensive understanding of wildlife conservation issues and a passion for the mission of Chester Zoo
  - Experience in broad, strategic leadership roles within a similar environment
  - Expertise in zoology/conservation, for example: population management, conservation techniques, in situ-ex situ conservation/field work, taxonomy, animal husbandry, welfare assessment
  - Expertise in utilising scientific methods in research, project design and scientific writing
  - The ability to communicate effectively and cultivate an open, honest culture
  - Strong people leadership skills with proven ability to lead, inspire and engage large teams and create effective people plans to maximise the potential of people and create a brilliant culture.
  - Experience of managing significant budgets and in development of long-term strategy to operational plans
  - Proven integrity, and experience in a senior management position (Scientific, Technical or in an applied professional capacity) with appropriate academic and professional qualifications
  - Proven experience in shaping a long-term strategic plan maintaining focus on the objectives to meet desired results
  - Able to network, build collaborative relationships and influence at a senior level both internally, externally and internationally, including political arena, conservation sector, public sector, visitor economy and business community
- Accomplished speaker and ambassador
  - Qualified to Masters level or above in zoology related discipline including field conservation/ zoology / animal welfare / conservation psychology or related disciplines

## Desirable

- Experience in zoo management, for example: collection management, staff training, national and international zoo networks. Site management, exhibit design, budget management, PR and media relations, Legislation and licencing
- Expertise in the strategic development of education for change programmes along with relevant experience
- Expertise in the sustainability challenges both within our industry and more broadly and able to contribute strategic thinking and leadership to this agenda
- Knowledge and understanding of the social dimensions of conservation
- Adept in overcoming the challenges of introducing continuous change
- PhD in relevant discipline

## TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

This is a full-time role based at Chester Zoo, Upton by Chester, Chester, CH2 1EU with occasional national and international travel.

The salary level will be commensurate with the role and agreed with the preferred candidate. Relocation allowance and immigration support are also available if required.

Director Benefits include:

- A Defined Contribution Pension Scheme, with high contribution levels paid by the employer (9% employer contributions when employee contributes 7%)
- Death in service benefit
- Health care cash plan
- Bupa Private health care (optional)
- Excellent company sick pay arrangements
- 30 days' paid annual leave, in addition to 8 bank holidays and any qualifying additional service days (based on an 8-hour day)
- Free admittance tickets - 20 in number per year for family/friends
- Staff Family pass – available on successful completion of probationary period
- Subsidised staff canteen
- Staff discount from restaurants and retail shops
- Free travel on the X1 Bus Service between Chester / Ellesmere Port train stations and Chester Zoo (whilst working only)
- Perks online discount scheme
- Cyclescheme
- Free entry to Chester Zoo and affiliated zoo's and collections through BIAZA
- Access to West Cheshire Credit Union
- Free Staff Association Representation
- Discounted Gym membership at Brio Leisure centres
- Discounted Microsoft Office 365 packages
- Electric Vehicle Salary Sacrifice Scheme

# HOW TO APPLY

**Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Chester Zoo on this appointment.**

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at [www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments) using code **JBRFA**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring\* form. [Read our guide to writing cover letters.](#)

The closing date for applications is noon on **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025**.

*\* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.*

## **Key dates in the process**

Preliminary interviews with Saxton Bampfylde will take place during the weeks commencing 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

Final interviews with Chester Zoo will be held on 11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

## **GDPR personal data notice**

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.







Upton-by-Chester  
Chester  
CH2 1EU

[chesterzoo.org](http://chesterzoo.org)

## Saxton Bampfylde

The Ministry  
79-81 Borough Road  
London  
SE1 1DN

46 Melville Street  
Edinburgh  
EH3 7HF

[saxbam.com](http://saxbam.com)

