

Springhead

a rural centre for creative and sustainable living



Information Pack, Trustees

January 2026

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Introduction from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

Dear applicant,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a trustee of the Springhead Trust.

This application pack provides an overview of the role of Trustee of the Springhead Trust and outlines some specific areas of expertise that we are currently seeking. However, expertise is not the only quality that you may be able to offer. Equally important, of course, is your enthusiasm for the place, its heritage and ideals, and how these are reflected in Springhead's activities, and your willingness to support our brilliant staff.

I first visited Springhead nearly seventy years ago. Then it was the nucleus of an extraordinary enterprise which comprised a working farm, a family home and a network of Friends, members of the Springhead Ring. Ring members included such luminaries as the economist EF Schumacher (*Small is Beautiful*), the pioneer of wild gardening Dame Sylvia Crowe, and the politician Sir Richard Body, *Private Eye's Old Muckspreader*, who waged Parliamentary war on industrial agriculture's use of pesticides and a range of other environmental issues.

Clearly, I was in good company, and over the years my enthusiasm for the place and its purpose has not diminished. It is one hundred years since Springhead was acquired by the painter Harold Squire in 1926: if, like Harold and me, you feel the pull of Springhead, please give serious thought to becoming involved as a trustee to help guide this special place through the next one hundred years.

The Trust's staff, my fellow trustees and I are readily available to answer your questions or to facilitate a visit to Springhead.

Thank you again for your interest.

Nikolaus Boulting
Chair of the Board of Trustees

About the Springhead Trust

Fontmell (Fontmell Magna) is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, where it is listed as belonging to the Abbess of Shaftesbury with 15 hides of land and three mills, one of which can be presumed to be today's Springhead, then known as Higher Mill or Estmill, being situated at the east end of the village.

In **1665** it was a fulling mill operated by Henry Monkton. Fulling was the process of washing, shrinking and then drying the long lengths of woven cloth on racks or reeds. However, by the late 18th century it was owned by Samuel Bishop and run as a corn mill by Samuel and his sons, Richard and Joseph until 1832 when the mill passed to Robert Hussey.

By **1881** the corn mill was closed and the buildings were used by the Eclipse Bottle Stopping Machine Company for making Crown bottle tops. But in 1907 its use changed again when it was occupied by the Blackmore Vale Dairy Company for making cheese.

In **1911** Springhead became a private residence, owned by Humphrey Springfield.

In **1926** Springhead was acquired by the painter Harold Squire, a member of the London Group. He took on a place that was run down and wildly overgrown. Old photographs show a garden bleak and windswept with few trees. Squire recruited a talented gardener, Harold Woolridge, whom he came across gathering moss on the downs for a local florist. Springhead was so overgrown that Woolridge had to cut his way in with a billhook when he first arrived for work.

The two Harolds got on famously. With a shared vision and energy, they created the structure of today's garden: enlarging the mill pond to form a lake; terracing its sloping banks to reflect the iron age lynchets of Coombe Barrow to the south; and sculpting the area encircling the springs with grotto-like banks. Many trees were planted and long borders constructed. These tasks were accomplished over four short years, until Squire met with sudden financial disaster and was obliged to leave, broken hearted.

In **1933** Rolf and Marabel Gardiner bought the estate. As well as being a family home for the couple and their three children, it became a nucleus of a widely extending farm and forestry operation and a centre for the arts and revival of traditional cultures. Rolf Gardiner was one of the pioneers of the organic farming movement and a founder member of the Soil Association.

While Rolf farmed and planted woodlands, Marabel, together with Woolridge, took up the task where Squire had left off, creating a magical garden in a sublime setting. Marabel also used the garden, and the Mill Room, for imaginative theatrical and musical productions: seasonal celebrations, mimes, masques, operas and children's plays, all of which she designed and directed. Sadly, as Marabel grew older the garden again went into decline.

In 1973 on the death of Rolf Gardiner, the family set up a trust to take forward Rolf and Marabel's vision for Springhead and to secure it in perpetuity for people from all walks of life.

In 1997 Rosalind Richards, Rolf and Marabel's daughter, returned to the family home to take on the task of restoring the garden, the spirit of the place, and adapting it to the needs of the Springhead Trust.

In 2016 Rosalind died and the Springhead Trust took on management of the main house, securing funding for its renovation.

Today, rich planting and landscaping provide variety, colour and form for every season. Many trees, shrubs and bulbs have been planted, borders restored and new ones created. Vistas have been expanded, paths widened, new walkways constructed and bridges have been replaced.



Our Vision and Mission

Springhead's mission is to encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to experience and value the rural environment, and to learn about the sustainable use of natural resources; as well as to conserve the buildings and gardens as a special place for education, enjoyment of the arts, music and rural culture.

Our main areas of focus include:

- Provision of opportunities for environmental education and personal development through day and residential visits, particularly for school children and young people
- Conservation, protection and improvement of the natural environment using organic principles and the use of renewable energy technologies
- Enabling people to enjoy and learn about the arts, by staging productions in our open-air theatre, holding exhibitions, plays, concerts, workshops and classes
- Providing opportunities for everyone to enjoy and learn at Springhead through public open days, volunteering, and provision of spaces for community use
- Conservation and enhancement of the buildings, gardens and grounds of Springhead for future generations



Springhead Trust People

Patrons

Sir Jonathon Porritt
Romy Fraser O.B.E.
Sir John Eliot Gardiner

Board of Trustees

Nikolaus Boulting (Chair) first visited Springhead as a child in 1957. Over the last 60 years or so he has studied, taught, researched and written about aspects of the history of art, architecture and design; been involved in the architectural conservation movement, nationally and locally; and managed a London and Berlin-based design business. His work revolves around designing interpretive displays for museums and other heritage attractions, and ensuring that Springhead's listed buildings and gardens are preserved for the enjoyment of the public.

Lee Smith (Treasurer) worked as a qualified practising accountant and is now the retired senior partner. He is also the managing director of a family plumbing and heating business which has diversified into alternative energy supply. As well as overseeing the management of Springhead's finances, he takes a particular interest in the charity's green energy features such as the hydroelectric turbine and photovoltaic panel installation.

Ian Scott was Director of Artsreach, Dorset's cross-arts development agency for 25 years from 1990, delivering a professional performing arts programme to rural communities in Dorset, in partnership with volunteer local promoters. The role also involved touring contemporary visual arts exhibitions and hosted artists' residencies. He now coordinates Springhead's open-air theatre programme and other arts events.

Dr Julian Richards BA FSA is an archaeologist and educator with a particular interest in the prehistory of Wessex. Julian is also a broadcaster on TV and radio (*Meet the Ancestors*, *Blood of the Vikings* and *Mapping the Town*) and author, including of the current Stonehenge guidebook. Julian has also curated museum exhibitions, with a particular emphasis on ceramics and has devised and led a number of community archaeology projects. Julian has a particular interest in experiential learning and working with pupils with special needs.

Staff

Joanna Poole (Trust Manager) is a qualified science teacher, with a background in environmental biology. She has experience in conservation research both nationally and internationally. Working at Springhead enables Joanna to combine her passions for conservation, renewable energy technology and environmental education. Fundamental to this is enabling the community, of all ages, to have the opportunity to be involved at Springhead and benefit from spending time there.

Jonathan Pinder (Trust Manager) is a designer and maker with experience in performance, education, landscape, architecture, horticulture and ecology. Past projects have ranged from production design for theatre, film and television to historic house and garden restoration. Jonathan is passionate about the preservation and understanding of the natural environment, rural history, craft and sustainability. His research in performance history has given him a deeper insight into the tensions between preservation and sustainable development.

Helen Baker has a background in ecommerce and IT. Much of her career has been spent in bookselling, working for independents, Amazon and Ottakar's before becoming eCommerce and IT Director at Waterstones. More recently she was Managing Director of Neal's Yard Remedies, an international ethical and organic health and beauty company based in Dorset and London. A committed classicist, Helen has a particular interest in the Romans' relationship with nature.

Sarah King joined the Springhead Trust in April 2024, after 19 years in education, and now works closely with the school parties who stay with us. She says, 'Springhead is for me the perfect place to be, working with children in a beautiful and exciting outdoor environment'.

Volunteers

Our work wouldn't be possible without our dedicated team of garden and events volunteers.

Trustee Role Description and Person Specification

Trustees have duties under the various Charities and Companies Acts and under the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974. They have ultimate responsibility for the running of the Springhead Trust, dealing with all major policy decisions, strategic and constitutional matters. Trustees are responsible for the approval of the annual budget and accounts, ensuring the financial health and sustainability of the Springhead Trust and the safety of its assets. In a given year, Trustees should expect to attend at least four on-site meetings, as well as a number of online sessions and other meetings reflecting their particular spheres of interest or expertise.

As a Trustee you will:

- Ensure that the Trust carries out its charitable purposes and is compliant with its governing documentation
- Provide strategic vision and leadership to the Springhead Trust
- Act as an ambassador for the Springhead Trust locally and regionally
- Work to ensure good governance and financial stability, resilience and statutory compliance, managing resources responsibly and acting in the Trust's best interest
- Contribute to the recruitment and appointment of Trustees and management
- Review and sign off Springhead Trust policies
- Behave with integrity and in the best interest of the Springhead Trust

Trustees are required to:

- Work effectively as part of a team
- Communicate effectively
- Think creatively and exercise independent judgement
- Commit to the mission and values of the Springhead Trust
- Display a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Work with a diverse group of stakeholders and partners
- Have a good understanding of corporate governance

Beneficial areas of knowledge and experience for Trustees of the Springhead Trust:

- People management
- Local knowledge: understanding of the demographics and area in which the Trust operates
- Business or commercial knowledge
- Financial management/accountancy
- Legal knowledge (including charity and company law)
- Fundraising and grant applications
- Conservation and management of historic buildings and gardens (including recent legislation and broader issues)
- Delivery of cultural and artistic projects
- Local government
- Learning and education
- Sustainability and renewable energy technologies
- Charity or cultural sector management and governance



The Board of Trustees is currently seeking to secure support and experience in the following specific areas:

Fundraising and grants:

- The development of fundraising strategies and their implementation
- An understanding of different fundraising channels and their risks
- The identification of grant opportunities and writing of applications
- The role of fundraising and grant applications in the financial strategy of a charitable organisation
- Understanding of the sensitivities and best practice when engaging with local communities around fundraising activities
- Charity law

Conservation and the environment:

- Commitment to sustainable and sensitive approaches to managing and conserving a protected landscape, historic buildings and gardens
- Developments in the field of renewable and sustainable energy technologies
- Regenerative land and waterway management with a view to maximising biodiversity
- Organic and sustainable horticultural practices
- Community engagement

Education:

- Experience working in an educational environment
- A commitment to life-long learning and willingness to engage with experiential and outdoor learning activities
- An understanding of the varying needs of children of all ages, backgrounds and vulnerabilities
- Flexible and creative approach to communication and engagement with young people
- Knowledge of working with under-served and under-represented audiences
- An understanding of risk assessments and the necessity of maintaining a culture of safeguarding best practice across the Trust

Further Information

Please find a selection of websites offering advice and guidance for charity trustees:

<https://beingacharitytrustee.campaign.gov.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/trustee-board-people-and-skills>

The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do (CC3):

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

How to Apply

For more information about the role of Trustee please contact info@springheadtrust.org.uk to arrange an informal conversation with either the Chair or Trust Manager.

To apply, please submit your CV along with a supporting statement of no more than two pages of A4 demonstrating how you fulfil the requirements of the role.

Please send your application by email to info@springheadtrust.org.uk or post to:

The Springhead Trust
Mill Street
Fontmell Magna
Shaftesbury
SP7 0NU

