

rECOrd - The Biodiversity Information Service for Cheshire, Halton, Warrington and Wirral

Information for job applicants

About BIS

rECOrd - The Biodiversity Information Service for Cheshire, Halton, Warrington and Wirral is a recently formed independent company, limited by guarantee, which is financially supported by the following partnership of government agencies, conservation organisations and local authorities:

- English Nature
- Cheshire County Council
- Chester City Council
- Cheshire Wildlife Trust
- Chester Zoo
- Congleton Borough Council
- Halton Borough Council
- Vale Royal Borough Council
- Warrington Borough Council
- Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council
- National Museums & Galleries on Merseyside
- RSPB

Funding from the above partners has been significantly augmented by a contribution from The Wildlife Trusts UK Office, using funds obtained from the Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust.

The Cheshire Region (Cheshire, Halton, Warrington and Wirral) was selected as a pilot local records centre (LRC) for the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) and the above partners formed a steering group to produce a development plan with the help of a LRC Support Officer. A key early stage in the implementation of this plan was the appointment of a Manager for **rECOrd**. Further major milestones will be achieved with the appointment of staff to fill the key posts of Information Technology Officer and Biological Recording Officer.

The role of rECOrd

Project partners undertake activities such as:

- preparing and commenting on strategies and plans,
- responding to and commenting on planning applications,
- preparing and monitoring biodiversity action plans,
- property management,
- education,
- recording, survey and research.

To do these activities, the partners need a range of biodiversity information services and products covering user-defined areas and larger regions such as local authority areas. Information needed includes inventories, summaries and contextual information for habitats and species; also inventories of sites and maps showing their boundaries.

The role of **rECOrd** will be to source, store, manage and disseminate data on species, habitats and sites. It will be responsive to users' needs and will work closely with volunteer recorders by supplying feedback, training and materials to aid their work. It will provide access to information not directly held by accessing data sources through the NBN.

Supporting local biodiversity initiatives

rECOrd will have a key role to play in servicing and supporting the emerging needs of new Biodiversity Action Planning and the Wildlife Sites initiatives in the Cheshire Region.

Participating in national biodiversity initiatives

The NBN is a partnership of local and national custodians of wildlife information providing access to all within a framework of standards.

A consortium of organisations, led by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, the Environment Agency, the Natural Environment Research Council, The Natural History Museum, the National Federation for Biological Recording, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, and The Wildlife Trusts, are combining their expertise to build a framework for the NBN. This challenging programme will develop the minimum standards for contributing data to the network and establish core "nodes" such as local record centres and national data-sets. As it grows, the network will find new and innovative ways of giving access to a diverse range of users.

As one of the pilot LRCs, the Pilot for England, **rECOrd** will form an important part of the development of the NBN. Its progress will be monitored and information from other projects, such as documented policies and procedures from existing LRCs, will be available for its use.

rECOrd organisation

rECOrd is being established over a 22 month establishment phase (which started with the employment of the Manager on 1st October 2000). During this phase the infrastructure to deliver the required services will be set in place, according to guidelines set out in the development plan.

The **rECOrd** Manager reports directly to a Board of Directors who, in turn, are responsible to the members of the company. The Manager is responsible for the recruitment and line management of an IT Officer, a Biological Recording Officer and short-term, potentially volunteer, data entry staff. It is intended that the posts of Manager and IT Officer will continue beyond the establishment phase on an annually renewed basis. The Biological Recording Officer is a temporary post which will end during the establishment phase. This officer's duties will then be assumed by the Manager and IT Officer.

An NBN LRC Support Officer is available for up to one day a month to support and advise the Manager during the establishment period.