



Appointment of

CEO

March 2026 Ref PBYHA



Saxton Bampfylde

About

Mount Stuart Trust is an independent charitable trust dedicated to safeguarding and sharing one of Scotland's most remarkable historic houses, landscapes and collections. Established in 1989 by John Crichton-Stuart, 6th Marquess of Bute, the Trust was created to secure Mount Stuart and the former Bute Estate for public benefit, ensuring that this extraordinary neo-Gothic house, its world class gardens and the wider rural estate could be enjoyed by visitors and communities for generations to come.

At its heart, the Trust's mission is conveyed through its four strategic pillars:

- Conservation
- Engagement
- Sustainability
- Community

It provides exemplary stewardship of the house, gardens, rural estate and the Bute Collection, one of the UK's foremost private historic collections, loaned by the current Marquess of Bute. Alongside the focus on heritage, Mount Stuart has become an important platform for contemporary culture and since 2001 has hosted an acclaimed Contemporary Visual Arts programme that bring exhibitions of international standard to Bute. The Trust seeks to deepen its contribution to the wellbeing and economic life of the Isle of Bute, collaborating with local partners and using Mount Stuart's unique setting as a catalyst for creativity, learning and enterprise.





MOUNT STUART TRUST

STRATEGIC AIMS & OBJECTIVES TO 2028



CONSERVATION

Develop and promote best practice in the care of the House, Gardens, Collections & rural sector

Develop and deliver a financially viable model for the long-term maintenance and conservation of Mount Stuart House and Gardens.

In partnership with the island community, develop and support a thriving and diverse rural sector with a commitment to best agricultural practice and enhanced biodiversity.



ENGAGEMENT

Provide access & high quality experiences to a diverse audience; onsite, offsite & online

Develop and deliver a financially viable model for innovative visitor experiences.

Review, develop and deliver a wide-reaching learning programme across the Trust.

Continue to develop & deliver a high-quality impactful arts programme which compliments the visitor experience: inspired by the house, gardens & island, and working in collaboration with the Bute Collection.



SUSTAINABILITY

Create a resilient & sustainable organisation, investing in people & technology to deliver Net Zero by 2045

Build and nurture a team that fits with the Trust's core vision.

Understand MST's carbon footprint to ascertain green targets and timeline to achieve net zero in line with government guidance.

Optimise the trading activities to support the core charitable business function.



COMMUNITY

Develop our networks of supporters and work collaboratively with the island community for the benefit of Bute

Play a central role in sustaining the economy across the Isle of Bute (both direct and indirect).

Deliver the property repairs and maintenance programme to improve the quality of living standards across the residential portfolio.

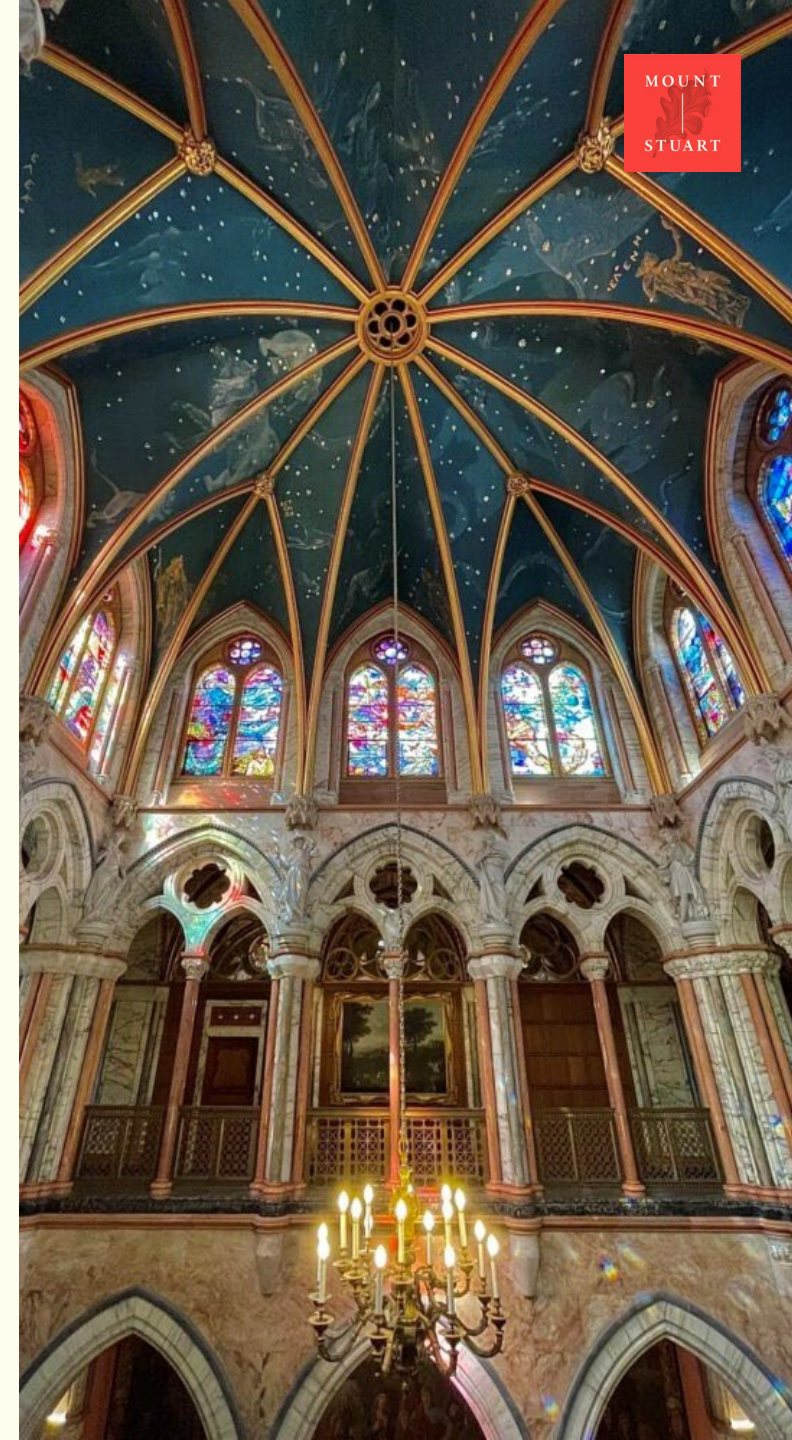
The Opportunity

The Trust now seeks a Chief Executive Officer to lead this unique estate into its next chapter of growth and stewardship. The Trust owns and manages a complex portfolio of over 12,000 hectares, 36 tenanted farms, 89 residential properties and two tenanted commercial office buildings within its endowment. Alongside this are self-catering properties and visitor operations welcoming over 30,000 people each year.

Following COVID, the Board reshaped operations to match the breadth of strategic and operational demands, reducing workforce and moving from a single CEO to a senior executive team comprising of a Head of Visitor Operations, Head of Buildings and Facilities and Head of Rural Operations.

The Board have now taken a significant strategic decision to reinstate the CEO role in order to provide clear, unified executive leadership across the Trust's diverse portfolio and to ensure that Mount Stuart has the strategic and commercial direction required to thrive in the years ahead.

The new CEO will have the opportunity to maintain and further develop the Mount Stuart Trust as a progressive, modern estate, honouring its heritage, while innovating in land use, visitor experience, community engagement and environmental responsibility.





The role

Working in partnership with the Board to shape and deliver the organisation's strategic direction, the CEO will hold overall responsibility for the leadership, management and performance of Mount Stuart Trust. They will be answerable to the Board for the Trust's financial health, operational effectiveness, charitable compliance and long-term strategic development. Providing visible, collaborative leadership across every area of activity, the CEO will work closely with the senior leadership team and serve as the Trust's principal external ambassador, championing its vision to partners, stakeholders and the wider public.

Key Responsibilities

1. Strategic & Operational Leadership

- Lead the creation, delivery and regular review of the Trust's long-term strategy, ensuring it aligns with the four pillars of conservation, engagement, sustainability and community.
- Provide visible, collaborative leadership to the senior team building a high-performing, accountable culture.
- Work with the Head of Visitor Operations to maximise commercial income from the house, gardens and all visitor-facing activities while maintaining excellent visitor experiences and operational standards.
- Work with the Head of Rural Operations to oversee the rural estate, including 36 tenanted farms, agriculture, forestry and woodlands.
- Work with the Head of Properties and

Facilities to safeguard, maintain and develop the house, 89 residential properties and wider estate infrastructure, balancing heritage obligations with budget constraints.

- Champion the contemporary Visual Arts and Collections programme, backing its curatorial ambition and ensuring it strengthens the Trust's engagement, profile and reputation.

2. Financial Leadership & Commercial Development

- Take overall responsibility for the Trust's finances, including budgets, cashflow, endowment management and reporting to the Board and OSCR.
- Grow income across all revenue streams (visitors, events, weddings, filming, catering, self-catering, tenancies and grants), with a

strong focus on commercial growth and sustainability.

- Create and deliver a diversified income strategy so the Trust is not dependent on any single source and is financially resilient.
- Put in place and uphold robust financial controls to manage spend, secure value for money and manage financial risk appropriately.
- Work closely with the Finance Team Lead, Finance Subcommittee and Board to manage the endowment well, including income from the two London commercial properties.
- Proactively seek and secure grants and partnership funding, particularly from heritage, conservation and arts funders in Scotland and beyond.
- Develop a comprehensive business plan in due course.

Key Responsibilities

3. People Leadership & HR

- Take overall responsibility for the Trust's people strategy, attracting, developing and retaining talented, mission-driven staff.
- Stay up to date with employment law and HR best practice, ensuring compliance in all aspects of people management.
- Lead with warmth, fairness and collaboration, building a culture of accountability and high performance.
- Put in place and consistently apply robust HR policies and processes, covering recruitment, performance, wellbeing and equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Oversee the seasonal workforce (around 20–32 additional staff), making sure peak periods are well resourced without unnecessary cost.
- Support and develop senior colleagues, acting as a constructive, motivating leader across the organisation.

4. External Relations & Communications

- Act as the main public face and ambassador for Mount Stuart Trust, representing it with authority and warmth, and working closely with the Senior Executive Team.
- With the Senior Executive Team, build and maintain strong relationships with key stakeholders (e.g. Scottish Land & Estates, Scottish Land Commission, VisitScotland, NatureScot, NFU, local authority, Historic Environment Scotland and arts funders).
- Develop and sustain close relationships with the local community on Bute, ensuring the Trust is a responsible, engaged and positive presence on the island.
- Lead the Trust's communications strategy, ensuring clear, joined-up messaging across marketing, digital, press, branding and PR to grow profile, visitors and stakeholder engagement.
- Handle complex multi-stakeholder environments with diplomacy, strategic awareness and genuine engagement.
- Represent the Trust, with support from the Senior Executive Team, at sector events, forums and networks, raising its profile nationally and internationally.

5. Charity Governance & Legal Compliance

- Ensure the Trust complies with its governing documents, OSCR requirements, land reform rules and all relevant charity law in Scotland.
- Act as the main point of contact for the Board on governance, making sure trustees are well supported, informed and able to fulfil their duties.
- Keep up to date with charity law and governance best practice, advising the Board on changes and ensuring the Trust responds appropriately.
- Put in place and oversee strong risk management, so key risks are identified, monitored and managed across all operations.
- Oversee the Trust's legal and contractual obligations with the Senior Executive Team (e.g. tenancies, planning, heritage status, insurance), drawing on external legal advice where needed.
- Produce clear, timely Board reports covering strategy, finance and operational performance.
- Support the Chair to ensure the Board runs effectively, including recruiting, inducting and developing trustees.

Person Specification

Essential

- Strategic leadership experience in the charity, heritage, arts or not-for-profit sector, ideally with good working knowledge of UK/Scottish charity law and governance.
- Excellent people leadership skills, with the ability to manage diverse, multi-disciplinary teams and leading in a collaborative way.
- Strong financial literacy, with full budget responsibility and a strong focus on income generation and commercial growth.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, able to engage and influence everyone from Board members to local community stakeholders.
- Commercially minded, with a track record of growing income, ideally in visitor attractions, tourism, events or similar environments.
- Clear understanding of charity regulation and compliance requirements (e.g. OSCR or equivalent).
- Solid HR experience, including handling complex people issues and ensuring compliance with employment law and best practice.
- Experience of working with and reporting to a Board of Trustees or non-executive directors.
- Able to work at both strategic and operational levels, delegating well while setting clear long-term direction.
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to delegate effectively.

Desirable

- Experience of rural estate, agriculture or land management, or a strong understanding of the issues they involve.
- Familiarity with the heritage, conservation or arts funding landscape in Scotland.
- Experience of working in an island or rural community, and an understanding of the particular dynamics and responsibilities this brings.
- Knowledge of, or a genuine interest in, the visual arts or heritage sectors.
- Understanding of planning, heritage designations and built-environment regulations as they relate to historic properties.
- Appreciation of Mount Stuart Trust's wider social and economic impact within the Island of Bute.

Organisational Structure

The CEO leads a senior team of four direct reports, each heading a principal area of the Trust's operations:

Head of Visitor Operations: Donna Chisholm

Events & visitor services; self-catering; contemporary arts & collections; business support; communications.

Head of Buildings & Facilities: Chris Pescod

Residential properties; house maintenance; joinery; painting; security; housekeeping.

Head of Rural Operations: Katie Warden

Agriculture; forestry & woodlands; gardens; firewood & biomass; rural coordination.

Finance Team Lead: Emma Fullarton

Finance team; management accounts; finance officer support.



The Board

Sophie Crichton Stuart, Chair, Contemporary Visual Arts

Toby Anstruther, Rural, Finance and Property (outgoing from 27 March 2026)

Lee 'Bil' Bilson, Heritage and the Built Environment (incoming from 27 March 2026)

Jack Bute, Bute Collection Owner (Ex Officio position)

Isobel Cockburn, Heritage and the Built Environment (incoming from 27 March 2026)

Anthony Crichton Stuart, Collections (on sabbatical)

Flora Crichton Stuart, Collections

Julie Christie, Funding, Sustainability and Community Engagement

Raoul Curtis-Machin, Gardens

John Dickson, Rural and Community Engagement

Samantha Embury, EDI and Community Engagement

Stephen Jenkins, Finance

Luke Syson, Museums and Collections (incoming from 27 March 2026)



Terms of Appointment

The Trust's operations are based on the Isle of Bute, with London connections through its commercial endowment properties.

The Board requires a CEO who is committed to living on Bute, ensuring day-to-day presence across the estate and genuine visibility within the community.

We recognise this is an important consideration for candidates and welcome open conversations at an early stage.

Salary: anticipated range of £80,000-95,000

Location: Isle of Bute, Scotland (residence on Bute desirable)

Contract: Permanent, full-time
Direct reports: Head of Visitor Operations; Head of Buildings & Facilities; Head of Rural Operations; Finance Team Lead

Total headcount: c.40 permanent staff; c.20–32 seasonal employees

Regulator: Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)

Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.



How to Apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the Mount Stuart Trust on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code PBYHA

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on Wednesday 22 April.

The Mount Stuart Trust is proud to be part of the **Disability Confidence Employer Scheme**. The Mount Stuart actively encourages applications from people from a variety of backgrounds with different experiences, skills and stories to join us and influence and develop our working practice.

* 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.

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.



MOUNT
STUART



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