

*"I have the highest regard for Robin's qualities - both professional and personal. He is smart, dedicated, hugely experienced and very creative."*

Jonathon Porritt, CBE, co-founder of Forum for the Future, formerly chair of the Sustainable Development Commission.

*"We, and particularly Population Matters, will miss you. PM has benefited from your leadership in turning it from a slightly eccentric group to an effective mainstream campaigning organisation."*

Lord Hodgson of Astley Abbots CBE, January 2024

## SUMMARY

**Seasoned, forward-thinking professional with experience in leading organisations through strategic growth, achieving operational excellence, and delivering impactful initiatives.**

Diverse expertise across the environment and development movement, spanning grassroots activism to senior leadership roles in key NGOs: **Friends of the Earth, The Soil Association, Population Matters** and **The Wildlife Trusts**. Able to transition seamlessly between sectors, including media (BBC), commercial enterprises (Forster, Carlton TV), and public sector (Forestry Commission).

Excellent communicator with strong interpersonal, and public speaking skills, adaptable/flexible and attuned to different audiences and media. Track-record in driving positive, impactful environmental and social change through strategic leadership and innovative solutions. Championing environmental sustainability and biodiversity for the wellbeing of people and planet. Good knowledge of and familiarity with the conservation, environmental and philanthropic landscapes.

Direct experience of global environmental 'hotspots' worldwide, including Chernobyl, Bhopal, the Indian Himalayas, and Malaysian rainforests.

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Population Matters** | Executive Director | Oct 2016 - Sept 2023

Led a comprehensive, high-level strategic review enhancing organisational competency, modernising governance, and resulting in greater impact. Acted as main public and media spokesperson raising positive public awareness, enhancing PM's reputation, and brokering international partnerships.

### Key Impacts:

- Professionalised administrative structures and grew the staff team from 2 FTE posts to 12.
  - 'Detoxified' the challenging issue of human population growth, reduced reputational risk through emphasising PM's commitment to a rights, choice, and justice framework.
  - Increased organisational income and support from £316k in 2016 to nearly £3 million by 2023, driving sustainable financial growth and expanding impact.
  - Recognised for transforming the organisation from a niche group to an effective mainstream advocacy body (see quote below).
  - Brokered global partnerships with campaigners and organisations across Africa, S.E. Asia, Latin and Central America. Notably the '[Population Conversation](#)' gathering in Kenya in 2022, fostering cross-sectoral dialogue on population issues and enhancing the organisation's international presence.
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**Wiltshire Wildlife Trust** | 2015 - 2016

Engaged by WWT to scope-out and develop a proposal for 'Nature and Wellbeing' hub, implemented through the establishment of the Lakeside Care Farm in November 2015.

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**Severn Vision Partnership Project** | 2015 - 2015

Alongside 4 day per week role with Avon Wildlife Trust, provided strategic communications and policy input to The Severn Vision partnership drafting the report setting out that Vision.

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## **Avon Wildlife Trust** | Director of Community Programmes | 2013 – 2015

Led AWT's community engagement and education team and programmes, focusing on building connections between nature access and activities improving physical and mental health and well-being for a diverse range of groups and their needs.

### **Key Impacts:**

- Integrated nature-based solutions into health and wellness programmes increasing awareness of nature's relevance to people's health and well-being.
  - Working with colleagues, launched AWT's 'Nature and Wellbeing' programme, delivering 'nature prescriptions' in collaboration with GP practices, social care, and probationary services, resulting in improved client wellbeing.
  - Input to The Wildlife Trust Network's national 'Nature and Wellbeing' programme, contributing to its development and expanding its reach and impact.
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## **Independent Consultant and Campaigner** | 2010 – 2015

Delivered strategic, campaigning, and communications support for **Compassion in World Farming, Countryside Restoration Trust, and Population Matters.**

### **Key Impacts:**

Researched and wrote, 'Case Study of a Health Crisis - how human health is under threat from the over-use of antibiotics in intensive livestock farming,' a report for the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics. Launched report and campaign at European Commission.

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## **Our Forests** | Founder & Coordinator | 2011 – 2012

Established and coordinated 'Our Forests' ginger group, joining forces with Jonathon Porritt, Tony Juniper, grassroots groups and forest activists. Partnering with 38 Degrees and The Roddick Foundation to marshal public and local opposition to the government's proposal to sell-off England's Public Woods and Forest Estate.

### **Key Impacts:**

- Forced then coalition government to make its first policy 'U-turn' and halt the disposal.
  - Drafted '[A Vision for England's woods and forests](#)' briefing for policymakers and media.
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## **Forestry Commission England (FCE)** | Head of Communications | 2009 – 2010

Headhunted to raise the profile and 'public benefit' of Public Forest Estate (PFE) in England. Member of Senior Management Team and Executive Board, managing a team of five at the FC England HQ. Resigned in September 2010 following the Government's stated intention to dispose of the entire public forest estate in England, which rendered the purpose of my role and the strategy I had drafted obsolete.

### **Key Impacts:**

- Tasked by FCE's Director to review and improve current communication methods, public awareness standards, and overall profile. Drafted strategic communication roadmap following the assessment, sanctioned by the Executive Board and the National Committee.
  - Ensuring consistency in communications and alignment with FCE objectives across all 11 English Forest Districts.
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*"We had a major coup at FARM, when we rang round all the insurance companies (including NFU Mutual!) to ask them if they would insure either a farmer growing GM crops against claims of contaminating his neighbours' crop, or an affected non-GM farmer for such contamination. The responses Robin and his team winkled out of the insurance companies were: 'No. We categorise GM in the same risk level as asbestos, thalidomide, nuclear power plant leaks and acts of terrorism.' I cite this example as one demonstrating Robin's creative, lateral thinking, campaign nous and nose for a story!"*

Zac Goldsmith, peer, environmentalist, former editor of The Ecologist

## ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

**The Soil Association** - worked in three stints for an overall period of 5 years as the organisation's first Campaigns Director, later Director of Communications and Campaigns, and also as a consultant. Notable campaigns included taking the UK Government to the High Court over GM seed trials, forcing a change to the law to protect neighbouring farms from GM contamination. Effectively ended planting of GM crops in UK.

**Forster Company** - In-house environmental lead. Drafted comms strategy for Anita Roddick, focusing on ethical trade, equity, and justice issues. Brokered partnerships between Anita and **Action Aid, People & Planet, and the World Development Movement**. Coordinated international press 'Seeing is Believing' trip to Nicaragua, visiting projects and community groups supported by the Roddicks and The Body Shop.

**FARM** - coordinator of this independent voice and platform for 'middle ground farmers' concerned about commercialisation of GM crops in the UK. Supported by JMG Foundation.

**BBC Radio 4, Farming Today** - Producer, presenter, 'Farming Today,' BBC Radio 4's daily early morning rural affairs programme. Also reported for BBC R4's 'Costing the Earth' and **World Service**.

**Friends of the Earth (FOE)** - Overall worked for FOE for 11 years, starting as a volunteer. Promoted to **Senior Campaigner on Agriculture, Countryside, Land-use, and Transport**. Ultimately serving as **Director of Local Campaigns** responsible for the outputs and impacts of FOE's network of 250 local groups.

**Trustee/Board member** - Countryside Restoration Trust (2013 -16); Environmental Investigation Agency (1994 -95); Population Matters (2009 -11).

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING

### Shift Bristol:

Practical Sustainability Course, Sept 2023 - Sept 2024

Undertaking 3-day per week [practical sustainability and permaculture design course](#) as part of personal development, alongside ongoing freelance research and consultancy projects.

Leadership Coaching	2023
Charity Governance, Bates Wells	2018, 2022
Wellbeing Championship Training	2016
Introduction to Project Management, Avon Wildlife Trust	2014

### National School of Government

Strategic Communication Planning	
Government Communications Foundation course	2009

### Central Office of Information

Engaging through social media	
Effective Public Engagement	2009

### Qualifications

English Language and Literature BA/MA, Oxford University