

## **Karen Blackport**

### **Biography**

Karen is Chair of the RZSS Engagement and Community Advisory Group and serves as a member of both the Conservation Advisory Group and the Business Advisory Group. A biologist by training, she brings over 20 years' experience in research and commercial partnership development across the biotech and pharmaceutical sectors, where she built and led collaborations between industry, research, and stakeholders.

More recently, Karen retrained in Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystem Health, a step that inspired her to establish the charity Bright Green Nature. Through this work, she leads initiatives to restore and reconnect habitats across the Scottish Borders, with a strong emphasis on community involvement. Karen and her team work closely with young people and local communities, supporting them to restore nature in their own spaces and to adapt to a changing climate.

Karen is also a co-founder of eco-estate Faldonside Eco and most recently, the charity JJ's Foundation, dedicated to enabling inclusive access to nature, music and literature for all children.

In addition to her charity leadership, Karen plays an active role in the wider environmental sector. She is Co-Convenor of the Scottish Rewilding Alliance and a Trustee of Scottish Environment Link, contributing to national conversations on nature recovery and environmental policy.

Outside of her professional commitments, Karen is a keen runner and a dedicated charity fundraiser, supporting causes including Down's Syndrome Scotland. She lives near Melrose with her husband and two children, along with a lively collection of animals including three dogs, nine chickens and five ducks.

### **Statement**

I bring over 25 years' experience in scientific partnership building, alongside expertise in biodiversity, ecosystem health and community-led nature restoration. I offer strong analytical skills, strategic thinking and a collaborative approach, with a proven ability to connect stakeholders across sectors to deliver impactful outcomes. As the links between nature, climate and societal wellbeing become ever clearer, I am committed to helping RZSS strengthen partnerships, drive innovation and maximise its impact at this critical time.