

The “Green King”

by Jochen Ressel



If you search Google for "Job Description Prince of Wales", the first result will take you to a web page (<https://www.princeofwales.gov.uk/royal-duties>) that gives the following answer:

“The main part of The Prince of Wales's role as Heir to The Throne is to support Her Majesty The Queen as the focal point for national pride, unity and allegiance and bringing people together across all sections of society, representing stability and continuity, highlighting achievement, and emphasising the importance of service and the voluntary sector by encouragement and example.” And the header explains: *“Some information on this website may be out of date, following the recent announcement of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.”* Obviously, this is the case...

Another webpage offering an answer (providing the same remark as a header) seems more current. On <https://www.royal.uk/the-prince-of-wales> it states:

“...His Royal Highness undertakes a number of charitable activities and projects and carries out public and official duties in support of The King, in the UK and overseas. ... Protecting the natural environment for future generations is one of Prince William's key priorities. His Royal Highness is Patron of a number of charities which are focused on conservation and through The Royal Foundation of The Prince and Princess of Wales, he has spearheaded global initiatives to protect our natural world.”

This definition is the legacy of the former Prince of Wales, now known as King Charles III. Having been promoted to this position in 1958 at the age of 10, with his coronation as Prince of Wales on 1 July 1969, no job description for this role was defined. However, as it was clear that he would hold this office for a while, he was well aware of the need to define his role and function as an essential part of his personal identity as heir to the throne and, therefore, the second most important member of the Royal family. Moreover, it is not a role for which one can apply - one is born into this position and finds oneself in it - whether one likes it or not - without the possibility of escaping or neglecting it.

After his military training, during his service in the armed forces, especially in the Royal Navy, until 1976, and parallel to his marriage to Lady Diana Spencer, he developed an area of interest that was to become of worldwide interest in times when no one was talking about it. Hence, in doing so, he proved how far-sighted he was. Craig Prescott, a Constitutional historian, said in October 2022: "What the Monarchy is meant to do is perhaps reflect the nation back to itself." King Charles III believed from his youth that environmental concerns and sustainability would be the key issues on which the Monarchy, namely in his person, could reflect the nation!

The starting point: The Prince's Trust

From 1999, when he started with a budget of just £7,500 for initiatives to improve the lives of young people, he developed the Prince's Trust into a globally respected organisation that has "changed the lives of millions of people", as Wesley Kerr, Royal commentator, said in a documentary about King Charles' activities (www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpFuTCZ05p4). His motivation is a genuine desire to make the world a better place for people, which automatically leads to the question of the state of nature from which we derive our livelihoods. It is about changing the attitudes of individuals and entire institutions - a vital prerequisite for sustainability awareness. To indicate scale: The Prince's Trust spends £38 million a year on its activities - what an achievement, considering the small beginning.

Environmental protection is the centre of his concerns

King Charles III began to address environmental issues when they were not yet on the agenda but are now the primary concern the whole world cares about. Biodiversity was one of the first issues he addressed, as early film documents of his speeches show. He decided very early on to use his position as heir to the throne as best he could for the good of the world. In this, he even followed the example of the Austrian Archduke Rudolf. Until his tragic death in Mayerling, he wrote numerous publications on environmental issues, biotopes, and natural habitats for wildlife. But back to King Charles III.

He spoke about climate change even before the term became fashionable, creating awareness and credibility as an international leader in the field, addressing these crucial issues from the 1970s to the present day.

Charles owns, among others, estates belonging to the Duchy of Cornwall and Highgrove House with a production facility for food, which is produced according to organic-ecological principles and the proceeds used for charitable purposes. He has been running the Duchy Home Farm, part of the Highgrove estate, in Tetbury, in organic farming since 1985. He promotes organic agriculture and food produced in this way as far as he can and has been advised by the German organic farming pioneer Hartmut Vogtmann since the 1980s. Since October 2007, he has been involved in the protection of rainforests through The Prince's Rainforests Project. In Cornwall, he is also eager to run biological wineries, where the Austro-British Society member and famous Austrian winemaker Willi Opitz gave his consultancy to the Prince's winemakers. At the opening address of the international conference on climate impact research, Impacts World 2013, Prince Charles spoke forcefully in favour of action against climate change.

In his position as Prince of Wales, he used his reputation to discuss with business leaders worldwide what can be done to enhance environmentally friendly and sustainable production and has earned a highly respected reputation as a keynote speaker at the world's largest conventions, such as the World Economic Forum in Davos or the Climate Change Conference COP.

He has contributed reasonably to making biodiversity, environmental protection, and climate change mainstream issues that no one can argue against today. Therefore, he could become known as the first "Green King", with an excellent opportunity to use his outstanding reputation in this field as a puzzle piece to transform the Monarchy and adapt it to the needs and concerns of our modern times. This will undoubtedly require a rethink of the Royal lifestyle - of wealth and how it is used, of palaces and the ecological footprint of travel, and much more. Suppose he becomes the first "Green Monarch" in history. In that case, the Royal family could be at the forefront of tackling one of the most critical issues of our days and transforming the future Monarchy into something that is not only relevant but crucial. Prince William, as the current Prince of Wales, inherits the practical activities initiated by his father, and there is no doubt that he will follow this forward-looking direction set by King Charles III.

The ABS is looking forward to receiving your views and comments!



About the author

Jochen Ressel is the Secretary General of the Austro-British Society. He worked several years for a UK company and its HQ in London. In his previously held professional position as Executive Director-Operations at the Senate of Economy, he supported companies to align their strategies with sustainable, eco-social, and global development goal requirements. He served as Editor-in-Chief of the "Senate" magazine, highlighting eco-social topics. As a tenor, he is a member of the choir ensemble of the Vienna Cathedral Music, which provides regular musical accompaniment to high masses, masses, requiems, and concerts in St. Stephen's Cathedral.

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