



SOCIETY OF LEADERSHIP FELLOWS,
ST GEORGE'S HOUSE, WINDSOR CASTLE



NATURE IS CALLING, ARE WE LISTENING?

6PM ON SUNDAY 23RD – 12 NOON WEDNESDAY 26TH MAY, 2027

ST GEORGE'S HOUSE, WINDSOR CASTLE



WHY THIS CONVERSATION?

If you overplant, the soil is denuded. The nutrients diminish. The benefit to the human is less. Nature knows this. We seem to have forgotten it.

This Conversation will explore what we can learn - as leaders, as human beings - from the deep time and wisdom of the natural world. Not as metaphor alone, but as a living system that has been solving the problems we now face for millions of years: how to regenerate after depletion, how to sustain without exhausting, how to grow without destroying the conditions for growth.

This three-day retreat will take us into nature - literally and figuratively. We will spend time outside, attending to what the natural world is actually doing, and then bringing that attention back into our leadership lives. Nature has an intelligence about pace, renewal and interconnection that we urgently need to learn from - or perhaps to remember.

The wisdom of this conversation begins with the conscious remembering that we are part of nature, not separate from it. We can't think our way out of the complex state of things today, but we can connect to the life around us and see its wholeness, not just fragments. All we are asked to do is see it as it is, take our place and play our part. i.e. to take responsibility as leaders for what we have truly been entrusted with...

We will draw on research and writing on 'human nature' and its stages of development into maturity, we will also explore how our own inner nature mirrors the cycles and seasons of the world around us. When we align our leadership with these deeper rhythms, something shifts. We stop forcing and start allowing. We stop depleting and start regenerating. We rediscover a quality of patience, rootedness and perspective that the relentless pace of modern leadership has almost entirely eroded.

This is also a Conversation about breaking free – free from the false norms that imprison us and into the freedom of our true evolutionary purpose. Wisdom as the discerning of our true nature. Not as a retreat from responsibility, but as a deeper engagement with it.

With three days in the extraordinary setting of Windsor and time spent in the Great Park and surrounding natural landscape, we will have the rare opportunity to slow down enough for nature to speak, and for us to listen.



CORE THEMES

Deep Time:

The wisdom of natural systems – pace, cycles, renewal, depletion. What nature knows about resilience and sustainability that we have ignored.

'Nature and the Human Soul'

What it teaches us about surviving, thriving, mutuality and generativity.

Interconnection and inter-dependence

We are nature, wholly. What happens when we stop and attend to the natural world? What does it mirror back to us about how we are living?

Reflection

"True Nature" – examining and questioning the patterns we are complying to. Nature as a mirror, calling us into a different relationship with pace, productivity and ambition.

Evolutionary purpose

Playing our proper part in the unfolding of our times and valuing nature as part of the balance sheet

Wisdom as discernment

Directly applying what nature teaches us to our own leadership: when to plant, when to sow, leave fallow, prune...

CONVERSATION FLOW

All our conversations follow a robust three phase process which not only yields powerful insights but also engenders sustained shift in leadership focus and impact.



'See'

Helping each other as leaders to 'see our seeing':

- Enquire into the honest reality of our own experience.
- Notice the lens through which we are viewing things.
- Grasp the full significance of what we are in.
- Identify new invitations and possibilities for our leadership.



'Be'

Helping each other embrace the deeper invitation to change:

- Identify our own blocks and resistances - emotional and/or practical.
- Explore the deeper dynamics of the situation we are in.
- Access a wisdom and inner clarity that can shape new intention.
- Mobilise the energy, resources and belief to step into real change.



'Do'

Helping each other move from intention into committed action:

- Find new and sustainable focus, grounded in practical action.
- Engage significant others in this.
- Ground the practical resolve to overcome old patterns that may resurface.
- Learn powerfully and positively as we step into change.



PHASE ONE:

See: Using Nature as a Mirror to sense our state

We begin by naming honestly where we are. How disconnected have we become - from ourselves, from each other, from the natural world and its deep rhythms, from the pace that our bodies and minds actually need?

In the opening phase we will share our own experience, sensing deeply and honestly into where and how we find ourselves in disconnection and depletion on the one hand and in flow and 'aliveness' on the other.

We will also spend time outside - walking, observing, simply being present to the natural life force around us. This is not incidental to the Conversation; it is the Conversation. What we notice in nature will become the material we work with as we deepen the enquiry.

As we share, we will start to see the parallels: between the soil that is denuded by overplanting and the team that is denuded by pathological productivity; between the ecosystem that collapses when diversity is lost and the organisation that stagnates when dissent is silenced. Nature has been doing systems thinking for a very long time.



PHASE TWO:



Being in nature's time

Having opened our eyes to the distance between our pace and priorities and those of nature, we will go deeper. This phase will include extended time outside - in the Great Park, in the gardens, or simply in quiet contemplation by a window - attending to what the natural world is doing and what it might be teaching us.

Drawing the work of Bill Plotkin's work, we will explore the stages of the human soul and how they map onto nature's own developmental cycles.

- What is the 'inner season' as well as the 'outer'?
- Where are we in our own wisdom journey and what is this asking of us?

As we start to presence in our own true nature, we can start to sense into the significance of our place in the system – where and how we truly belong and what we are being invited into. And are we honouring the season we are truly in, or force-fitting ourselves into something that does not belong to us?

We will explore the concept of the 'field' - the energetic quality of natural spaces, what is in flow and how it is being channelled in and through each of us. Again, we will explore how and where this is inviting us into a different relationship with our context, noticing for example where there is abundance, where there is scarcity and our response to both. We will sit with the uncomfortable question: what must we stop or start doing in order to allow the regeneration that we - and our organisations - desperately need?



PHASE TWO:



Being in nature's time

Much of this is learning to work with deeper 'flow' and the necessary wisdom of discernment that comes with this. It moves us away from the linearity of management method into the liminality of endless flow, where things are rarely 'completed' or 'achieved' and tied up in a neat bow, but rather flow in a continuity that it takes a trained eye to discern – the seeds of the 'new' present and rooting well ahead of the decline of the 'old'.

We will also look at finance as flow, how it is channeled to release new growth into being, versus 'stagnation', and how 'hoarding' and 'sharing' play their parts in this. Again, as we sense into these dynamics it can cause us to think quite differently and with much more generativity and freedom about how we play our leadership part.

As we gather the fruits of the deeper discernment of this phase of the conversation and sense into what life is really inviting us into in our leadership, this takes us inevitably into the territory of 'hard choices'....

- What do we accept or encourage and what do we challenge or oppose in the patterns in play around us?
- How powerful do we feel about our capacity to do this?



PHASE THREE:

✓ **Doing** Embracing complexity and acting. What do we do?

As the Conversation moves into its final phase, we will bring the wisdom of nature squarely into the language of leadership.

- What would it look like to lead with the rhythms of the natural world rather than against them and to bring these into the patterns of our own working life?
- What single change could we make to bring nature's intelligence back into our practice?

We will also look at leadership decision making as the locus for this. What new criteria/mindsets do we bring to our decision-making that will serve the wisdom we are discerning? For example, what might it mean to make more decisions from a place of inter-connectedness rather than (often artificial) separateness? Or more consciously keeping a focus on longer term impacts/consequences, however unpopular or inexpedient it may be to do so...?

Working in small groups, we will help each other translate what we have learned into practical intentions: rhythms to restore, habits to release, spaces to protect. We will also explore what it means to be advocates for nature's pace within our organisations - not as an act of rebellion, but as an act of leadership.



DETAILED AGENDA

SUNDAY 23RD MAY

You are welcome to check in to St George's House from 3pm

16.30	Welcome refreshments in the Sitting Room
17.00	Evensong (<i>Optional</i>).
17.50	Vicars' Hall Introduction and context setting
18.00	Phase One: See Opening sharing: What is the 'season' we find ourselves in right now? How would we describe this in imagery of nature?
19.45	Break
20.00	Dinner in the Dining Room of St George's House.
21.30	Private Tour of St George's Chapel.

MONDAY 24TH MAY

07.30	Mattins – St George's Chapel (<i>Optional</i>)
07.45	Breakfast in the Dining Room.
08.00	Holy Communion – St George's Chapel (<i>Optional</i>)
08.45	Phase One (cont) Developing our enquiry. What are the questions that are arising for us as we start thinking of our leadership in terms of 'nature' and 'natural'?
11.00	Break and Refreshments
11.30	Accessing and discerning wisdom – time outside, helping each other hear the 'voice of nature' in relation to our own leadership questions. Noticing what it is like as a state and the conditions that give rise to it
13.00	Working lunch with informal networking and continued thematic discussion.



DETAILED AGENDA

14.00	Phase Two: Be Extended time outside: deep attention to nature. Walking, sitting, observing. Sensing into where there is challenge, discomfort, unease and welcoming these. Noticing the power of the 'radical' and what flows from the root. Sensing into excitement and possibility.
16.00	Sharing the fruits of our reflection time
17.05	Evensong (<i>Optional</i>)
18.00	Phase Two: (cont) 'Freedom' – Where are we being invited to embody something richer and more 'life-giving'? What is it like to inhabit this, however briefly? How does 'freedom' sit with the concept of the 'laws of nature'? What are the patterns in our leadership and our systems that serve/inhibit this?
19.45	Break and evening drinks
20.00	Dinner in the Dining Room.
21.45	Tea/ Coffee after dinner drinks

TUESDAY 25TH MAY

07.30	Mattins – St George's Chapel (<i>Optional</i>)
07.45	Breakfast in the Dining Room
08.00	Holy Communion – St George's Chapel (<i>Optional</i>)
08.45	Nature and the human soul: what season am I in? Plotkin's stages of development and what they invite.
11.00	Break
11.30	Work in pairs/threes to consolidate insights and to start to reflect on where the 'invitation to growth' lies for each of us in our different contexts, however we define 'growth'.
13.00	Working lunch with informal networking and continued thematic discussion.



DETAILED AGENDA

TUESDAY 25TH MAY

14.00	The transferability of nature's wisdom into our wider systems: overplanting and depletion; diversity and resilience; dormancy and renewal. What does this mean for our leadership, particularly our decision-making?
16.00	Personal Reflection Time.
17.00	Evensong (<i>Optional</i>)
18.00	Phase Three: Do What is nature asking of us? What needs to stop? What needs to begin? Where are we being invited to embody this? What will it take? Challenging and supporting each other with this.
19.45	Pre-dinner Drinks
20.00	Dinner in the Dining Room.
21.30	Tea/ Coffee and after dinner drinks in No.25

WEDNESDAY 26TH MAY

07.30	Mattins – St George's Chapel (<i>Optional</i>)
07.30	Breakfast in the Dining Room. <i>Please clear your luggage from your bedroom. You are welcome to leave bags in the Sitting Room or bring them to the Vicars' Hall.</i>
08.00	Holy Communion – St George's Chapel (<i>Optional</i>)
08.45	Phase Three (cont) Personal reflections and group check-in: what has nature taught me that I will carry forward?
10.45	Break and Refreshments
11.00	Action planning in small groups Consolidating leadership intentions and practices: one rhythm to restore, one habit to release, one space to protect.
11.45	Closing reflections – gathering the wisdom that has flowed.
12.00	Close and Departures.



DETAILED AGENDA

FOLLOW-UP

- **Virtual follow-up check-in within 4–6 weeks to review progress on commitments.**
- **Ongoing dialogue through a dedicated digital forum (e.g., WhatsApp).**
- **Share summary and any supplementary resources/readings on nature and leadership.**