

HP_P12 Volunteering Policy

POLICY

1. Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust places volunteers and their contribution at the heart of our activity. This policy, along with the Volunteer Handbook (reference guide for volunteers) and the Staff Guide to Recruiting and Managing Volunteers demonstrate our commitment to our volunteers which is:
 - to recognise our volunteers and their contributions;
 - to ensure our volunteers feel supported and appreciated;
 - to provide a welcoming and inclusive experience for volunteers;
 - to promote the effective and efficient management and development of volunteers;
 - to ensure best practice for volunteer health, safety and wellbeing.
2. The Trust relies on the commitment, hard work and enthusiasm of our volunteers and we are committed to maintaining best practice in the management, promotion, development and celebration of volunteering. The Trust will encourage, develop and support volunteer involvement and ensure that the roles of volunteers compliment and add value to the work of the Trust.
3. The Trust has a duty of care towards volunteers and will recruit, support and manage volunteers through clear and consistent procedures.
4. Volunteers are defined by the National Council of Voluntary Organisations as people who 'give time, carrying out activities that aim to benefit community or society. Volunteers are unpaid and choose freely how they wish to give their time.'

Our definition of Volunteering:

- The volunteer role is a gift relationship. Volunteers are not obliged to attend, provide a fixed amount of their time, or carry out all the tasks requested. Likewise, the Trust cannot be compelled to provide regular work, or payment or other benefit for any voluntary activity undertaken. The arrangements are based on trust and mutual understanding and are in no way intended to create a legally binding contract.
 - Volunteers must complete a registration form in order to access Trust volunteering opportunities and roles. Some roles may require an additional application process.
 - Volunteers are split into 'support volunteers' and 'principal volunteers', the latter group including Trustees and Nature Reserve Wardens. The division is to recognise the differing levels of responsibility and approach to recruitment and management.
 - Only those volunteers formally approved to do so are entitled to act in the Trust's name.
5. Equal Opportunities
 - Trust has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and is committed to promoting equal opportunities creating a workplace culture in which diversity and inclusion is valued and everyone is treated with dignity and respect.
 - We are committed to providing equal opportunities for all volunteers and ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly.

- We believe that no volunteer should be excluded from volunteering because of the personal costs they might incur, and the Trust will reimburse reasonable approved expenses. There may be defined limits for claims, which will be made clear to volunteers in advance.

6. Health and Safety

- Staff and volunteers have an ongoing duty to comply to our Health and Safety policy.
- The Trust ensures a safe and healthy working environment by ensuring volunteers are made aware of the relevant Safe Working Procedures and identifying potential risks relating to their activities.
- The Trust will provide access to appropriate personal protective equipment, information and guidance, and where necessary, training so that volunteers undertake a task safely and with confidence.
- Our Volunteer Code and further guidance is stated and reviewed regularly in our Volunteer Handbook.

7. Volunteering by Children, Young People and Adults at Risk

- Organisation and management of volunteering by children, young people and adults at risk will be carried out in accordance with our Safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The Trust has an extra duty of care for children under the age of 18. Volunteers under 16 cannot volunteer without parent or guardian supervision, unless as part of a special event organised for a specific age group or work experience activity.
- All volunteers under the age of 18 must have a consent form completed by a parent or guardian.

8. Safeguarding

- We have Safeguarding Policies and procedures for working with young people and adults at risk.
- It is everyone's responsibility to implement good safeguarding practice.
- Volunteers in certain roles will be required to undertake safeguarding training.
- All volunteers will be made aware of our safeguarding policy and given access to basic awareness training.

9. Data protection

- Volunteer details will be kept on our central database and Volunteer Management System in compliance with our Data Protection policies.
- Volunteers will be contacted in compliance with our Data Protection policies with information about relevant volunteer activities, training and other updates.

10. Insurance

- All volunteers who carry out work on behalf of and at the request of the Trust are adequately covered by the Trust's Public Liability and Employers Liability insurances.
- Personal accident cover and cover for volunteers' personal possessions are not included by the Trust's insurances.