



Avon

Avon Wildlife Trust Volunteer information and support



Our pledge to Avon Wildlife Trust volunteers

Avon Wildlife Trust is committed to the principles of:

Choice, Inclusion, Support, Safety and Reimbursement

Choice:

Volunteering is undertaken as a matter of free choice. Volunteers are not obliged to undertake tasks they are not comfortable with.

Inclusion:

Volunteering is open and accessible to all with fair, simple and consistent processes. Volunteers have influence in how things are organised.

Support:

Volunteers are properly introduced to their role and provided with on-going support and training appropriate to their individual needs, abilities and skills.

Safety:

The safety and welfare of all volunteers has been considered and adequate public liability insurance is in place. Volunteers are aware of how to report concerns and how they will be handled.

Reimbursement:

Volunteers may be, from time to time, appropriately and promptly reimbursed for genuine agreed out-of-pocket expenses incurred whilst carrying out their role.

The Trust values each and every one of those who give their time to volunteer with us.

Thank you.

Ian Barrett, Chief Executive

The role of a volunteer

Volunteers play such an important role. Without them we would achieve a fraction of what we do to protect wildlife and inspire people.

Volunteers gave a total of 8,484 volunteer days in 2015/16 (9,534 in 2014/15). These were crucial to the success of the Trust's work, covering conservation, education, community and office activities. Voluntary work ranges from providing specialist expertise, hands-on scrub bashing and magazine distribution to fund raising, organising events and taking photographs.

We hope that you will enjoy your volunteering time with us. No matter what type of volunteering tasks you agree to undertake you will be working alongside other people – staff, other volunteers or members of the public.

As a volunteer you are an important ambassador for the Trust and should always try to represent its best interests. Volunteers are often seen as "the face" of the Trust and offer the first point of contact for many members of the public who are potential new Trust members and supporters.

It is important that you have been given the right information about your role and that you are able to speak confidently about the Trust's aims, objectives and visions.

- We understand that there may be particular tasks you don't enjoy and we ask you to let us know about this as soon as possible.
- We ask you to work reliably to the best of your ability, and to give as much warning as possible whenever you cannot volunteer when expected.
- We also ask you to follow any relevant rules and procedures of the Trust, including health and safety, equal opportunities, Data Protection and confidentiality.

It is our intention that these guidelines will answer some of the questions you will have while carrying out your role with us. More specific information, depending on your choice of role and location, will be provided later.

Volunteering for Avon Wildlife Trust

As a volunteer you have a designated member of staff or fully-trained volunteer to guide and advise you in your role. Office based volunteers will have a designated member of staff to guide and advise. A Partnerships and Volunteering Manager is also available to give advice, information and support and to deal with any complaints by or about volunteers.

We also aim to hold at least one social event for all volunteers each year. This is an opportunity to meet other volunteers and Trust staff.

Attendance

Attendance is not compulsory in voluntary positions but it is important to inform us if you cannot attend so that alternative arrangements can be made. Some projects will need regular commitment from volunteers. If you feel you can only offer occasional volunteering please let us know as we can offer more flexible opportunities. The Trust realises that volunteers can decide to leave their voluntary position at any time. If you feel unable to continue volunteering for the Trust, we would be grateful if you could let us know as soon as convenient. Likewise, we will inform you if we can no longer make good use of your time, effort and contribution

Confidentiality

As a volunteer you may be party to non-sensitive information about other volunteers or Trust members or information that is not to be made public, for example, emergency contact details. This information must be kept confidential and not be misused.

Communication

It is vital to ensure that such a large organisation works effectively. Communicating with volunteers is usually done through each volunteer's designated member of staff. Avon Wildlife Trust also provides regular volunteer newsletters to keep volunteers up to date with our work, new opportunities, training and social events. All volunteers will be invited to join the mailing list. Volunteer opportunities are also regularly updated on our website.

Claiming Expenses

Volunteers can claim out-of-pocket expenses but these must be agreed with your supervisor when you start volunteering. You are asked to complete an Expenses Form and submit this to your contact for authorisation on a monthly basis if using a vehicle for work related journeys.

Emergency contact form

When you join Avon Wildlife Trust as a volunteer you will be asked to complete an emergency contact form. This will be kept by the Trust while you are volunteering with us. It is necessary in the unlikely event that we need to get in touch with your next of kin.

Equality Opportunities Policy

The Trust is committed to 'Equality and diversity' in all its dealings with staff, volunteers, and members of the public. It is important that you understand what the policy says because the Trust will expect you to behave in a way that shows that, you too, share and support these beliefs.

Health & Safety

The Trust is committed to providing a safe environment and will provide appropriate instruction, supervision and training to ensure the health and safety of its volunteers. As a volunteer, you have

a duty of care for your own safety and that of others around you. You will be sent a copy of the Trust's Health & Safety policy electronically.

You should always ensure that your own actions do not affect the safety of other volunteers and staff with whom you are working. You should always report any defects to equipment, any near-misses or accidents that have occurred to the person in charge.

If you wish to report a concern, complaint or compliment

We hope that you will enjoy your time as a volunteer with the Trust and we value feedback. If you would like to report a concern, complaint or compliment, you should speak to your designated member of staff in the first instance. If you're having a problem that involves this individual, then you should speak to the Partnerships and Volunteering Manager.

Your problem will be taken seriously and dealt with as quickly as possible. Any final decision rests with the Chief Executive.

Recording your contribution

Your time, effort and contribution to the work of the Trust is greatly appreciated. In order for us to allocate resources to volunteers and the work that is carried out, it is helpful to know the amount of time you spend volunteering. If you are working out on site then we can track your contribution through the daily sign in register. Office based staff use a volunteer time sheet to log their hours.

Training

The Trust will provide a general induction to all volunteers about the volunteering role when many key issues will be covered. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions you have about being a Trust volunteer.

You will also be given more specific information according to the role you have chosen to take. At times, training or instruction may be offered to help you carry out your role more effectively.

Vehicle Usage

Avon Wildlife Trust has a limited pool of vehicles that may be made available for use by volunteers for certain tasks. Volunteers who wish to use a Trust vehicle should ask their supervisor for further information. Any person who drives a Trust vehicle must submit a DVLA code for his/her license for inspection, have an acceptable claims and conviction record and sign a copy of the Trust's vehicle policy.

Volunteers will also be given a staff list to which to refer.

Julie Doherty, Partnerships and Volunteering manager
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