

Volunteer guidelines



**Leicestershire
& Rutland
Wildlife Trust**

Welcome

Welcome to the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust (the Trust) and thank you for your support. Volunteering for the Trust is your chance to make a real contribution to local wildlife conservation.

A Partnership

The Trust acknowledges and greatly appreciates the dedication and hard work of all its volunteers who contribute to the work of the Trust with a wealth of different skills and experience. People volunteer for many different reasons but whatever the motivation, both the volunteer and the Trust should benefit. The partnership between the Trust and its volunteers has enabled us to advance nature conservation and awareness in the counties and we are committed to continuing this vital work, which is essential in achieving our aims for the future.

Guidelines

These Guidelines are intended to share information, which will ensure that the time you spend volunteering is safe, enjoyable and constructive for both yourself and the Trust.

The Trust

The Trust was founded in 1956, and is one of 47 County Wildlife Trusts working together to conserve the UK's unique natural heritage.

Our Aim:

The Trust is working for the protection and enhancement of Leicestershire and Rutland's wildlife and wild places. We are dedicated to securing a better future for wildlife and improving people's understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of wildlife.

We achieve this through:

- managing nature reserves
- campaigning for wildlife and the environment
- protecting threatened habitats and species
- helping people to understand and enjoy wildlife
- involving children through Wildlife Watch
- providing advice on nature conservation to local authorities, businesses, farmers and the public

The Trust's work and the way in which it carries out this work is defined by its policies and guidelines, which should be followed by all.

Reserves

The Trust manages 34 nature reserves covering nearly 3,000 acres. From woodland to meadows, wetlands to heaths, they contain some of the richest variety of animal and plant species in the country.

Natural England has designated a large number of our reserves as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). SSSIs are the country's very best wildlife and geological sites and are given legal protection.

Detailed five year management plans are written for all our reserves, which outline the aims for the site and the management work to be undertaken. Feel free to contact Trust Office or Rutland Water Office if you wish to take a look at a particular management plan. Management plans are especially important for SSSIs, as all work must be agreed by Natural England before any management can be carried out on the site.



Trust Staff

Trust Office:

Brocks Hill Environment Centre,
Washbrook Lane, Oadby,
Leicestershire, LE2 5JJ.

Phone: 0116 272 0444
Email: info@lrwt.org.uk

Director
Head of Conservation
Senior Conservation Officer

Simon Bentley
Michael Jeeves
Jenny Harris
Neil Pilcher
Neill Talbot

Conservation Officer

Katie Field
Andrew Lear
Chris Hill
Nathalie Cossa

Reserves Officer

John Bristow

Education Officer

Rachel Ibbotson

Finance & Support Services
Communications
Membership

Georgina Boonham
Beverley Heath
Steve Perkins

Rutland Water:

Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre,
Rutland Water Nature Reserve,
Egleton, Oakham,
Rutland LE15 8BT

Phone: 01572 770 651
Email: awbc@rutlandwater.org.uk

Manager
Senior Warden
Warden
Assistant Warden

Tim Appleton
Martyn Aspinall
Martin Kerman
Lloyd Park
Frances Payne
Julia Fisher-Robins

Administrator

Trust Council

The Trust is managed by a Council of Trustees (elected from its members) who provide the overall direction for the development of the Trust. The Trust Chairman Andrew Moffat can be contacted via the Trust office.

Gift Relationship

The relationship between the Trust and its volunteers is a gift relationship. Volunteers offer their time freely and without obligation. Equally, the Trust cannot be compelled to provide regular work, payment or other benefits for any activity undertaken. Arrangements between the Trust and volunteers are typically binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding and are not intended to create a legally binding contract.

The high standard of the Trust's work relies on a presumption of mutual support and reliability between the Trust, volunteers and staff. Volunteers are important ambassadors for the Trust and should always try to represent its best interests

Named Contact

Each volunteer should have a named contact within the Trust. This will be either a member of staff or an experienced volunteer. The named contact will be available to provide support and guidance on all aspects of volunteering.

Review System

An optional review system gives volunteers the opportunity to discuss their role and development with their named contact. An informal meeting provides a chance to raise any concerns or ideas that the volunteer may have, as well as allowing the named contact to give constructive feedback. Please speak to your named contact if you would like to arrange a review meeting.

Training and Development

The amount and nature of training volunteers receive will depend on their role and existing levels of experience and skill. The Trust will endeavour to provide appropriate training to help the volunteer carry out their role to the best of their ability. You should feel confident and capable when carrying out your volunteering tasks. If you would like to discuss any training issues, please talk to your named contact or the Volunteer Coordinator.

Equal Opportunities

The Trust's Equal Opportunities Policy provides a framework for ensuring fair treatment and the absence of discrimination in all the organisation's employment, volunteering, and membership-related policies, practices and procedures.

Insurance

Volunteers are covered by the Trust's insurance policy while undertaking authorised voluntary work for the Trust. This section is a summary guide to insurance arrangements only and any actual claim will depend on the precise terms and conditions of the Trust's insurance policy.

Employer's liability – provides cover against claims for damages arising from the illness, injury or death of an employee or volunteer, which results from negligence by the Trust or failure to take reasonable care

Public liability – provides cover against injury, loss or damage caused to any third party and their property arising from acts of negligence or failure to take reasonable care by the Trust or someone acting with the Trust's authority

Personal accident – provides compensation for permanent injury or disablement sustained by the Trust staff and volunteers during the course of their work duties for the Trust

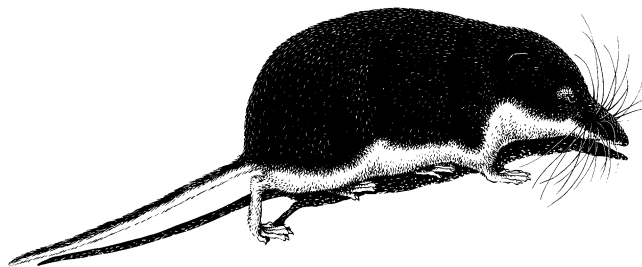
Please note that no cover is provided for the loss of or damage to your personal possessions while volunteering.

Expenses

As a local charity the Trust cannot afford to pay travel expenses, except in special circumstances and only when agreed previously with a member of staff. We appreciate that you maybe supporting the Trust by paying for your own transport. Claims for certain other expenses may be eligible. However they must be agreed in advance by a member of staff.

Problem solving

Volunteers generally find their time with the Trust enjoyable and fulfilling, but occasionally problems do occur. We hope that problems can be sorted out through honest, open and sensible discussions with all concerned. If you are not happy with the way things are going, discuss the problem with your named contact within the Trust. If the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, the process can be repeated with the Trust's Head of Conservation or the Reserve Manager at Rutland Water.



Similar steps will be taken if we are unhappy with any aspect of your volunteering. If problems cannot be resolved, or in the case of serious misconduct, we reserve the right to end any volunteering arrangement.

Health & Safety

The Trust's policy is to provide, as far as is reasonably practicable, a safe and healthy working environment with safe equipment and work systems for its staff and volunteers, whilst providing information, training and supervision to ensure this happens.

To assist the Trust in achieving these health and safety aims we ask staff and volunteers to:

- take responsibility for their own Health and Safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do or do not do.
- co-operate with the Trust on Health and Safety matters
- inform the Trust of any problems
- not undertake tasks for which they have not been properly trained
- only undertake tasks for which they feel physically able

Accidents, Dangerous Occurrences, Dangerous Diseases, other Injuries or Incidents:

Any of the above relating to any Trust activities or persons (staff, volunteer or visitor) should be reported to Trust office or Rutland Water office as soon as possible and within 7 days.

The Trust's Health & Safety Policy and guidelines are available from Trust Office and the Rutland Water Office.

Lone Working

It is important to assess any additional risks related to working alone and to take appropriate precautions to reduce these risks. Lone working is unacceptable in high-risk situations, for example when using power tools, ladders or working in/near water.

If you decide that it is safe to work alone we advise that you leave your location and expected time of return with a friend, relative or member of staff who will act if you do not return. It is also recommended that you carry a mobile phone when lone working and know what to do in an emergency.

First Aid

There must be an Appointed Person at any Trust work place or activity who will take appropriate action if there is an illness or injury. The Trust recommends that the Appointed Person has attended a First Aid Course.

The Appointed Person must ensure that:

- they have access to an appropriate First Aid Kit
- they know the location of the nearest telephone
- they know the best route to the nearest Accident & Emergency Unit
- all accidents are reported to Trust staff as soon as possible

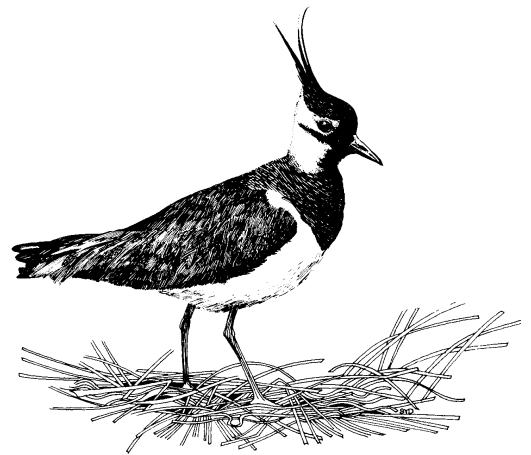
Please consult Trust staff when using power tools to discuss the specific first aid requirements.

Safe Lifting

Safe lifting is commonly ignored or forgotten - 25% of all industrial accidents are caused by unsafe lifting, which can cause serious and recurring injury, especially to the back. Remember, lift with your legs and not your back, and don't forget that awkward lifting can be as dangerous as trying to lift excessive loads.

Tetanus

Anyone carrying out practical work on Trust reserves is strongly advised to have an up-to-date tetanus inoculation.



Feeling unwell after a task

If you feel unwell after a task with flu like symptoms (even several weeks afterwards) please contact your GP and let them know the nature of the activity you were carrying out. Please be aware of illnesses such as Lyme disease, caught from infected ticks, and Leptospirosis (Weil's disease) caught by contaminated water coming into contact with the eyes, mouth, nose or any unhealed cuts in the skin. Although both are rare, they can lead to serious illness. Please also inform the Trust.

Working with Children and other Vulnerable Groups

The Trust takes all practicable steps as an organisation to safeguard the safety and welfare of young and vulnerable people while they are in contact with the Trust, observing the recommendations of the Home Office code of practice Safe from Harm and conforming to all relevant legislation.

The Trust does not assume direct responsibility for the supervision of children (under 18) and other vulnerable individuals attending its events and activities, this responsibility remaining with the relevant adult(s) (eg parents, teachers, carer, etc). Therefore, unless specifically agreed otherwise the Trust will not accept the participation of children and vulnerable individuals at events and activities unless they are accompanied throughout by such responsible adults.

The Child and Vulnerable Person Safety and Welfare Policy is available from Trust Office and the Rutland Water Office.

Conservation tasks and work days

Tasks undertaken on Trust reserves are extremely varied and involve volunteers of widely differing abilities. The group or activity leader has overall responsibility for the organisation of the task but each member of the group also has a responsibility to look after their own safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do or do not do.

The start of the day

- new volunteers (who haven't already done so) must complete a registration form
- an introduction to the reserve and the work to be carried out will be given
- tools and any necessary safety equipment will be provided
- training in the proper use of tools will be given where needed
- there will be a first aid kit and an Appointed Person on site, who will take appropriate action in the case of illness or injury.

During the day

- safe working distances and practices should be maintained
- don't hesitate to ask questions if you are unsure
- stop if tired or if conditions become unsafe
- enjoy yourself!

End of the day

- the task must be safe to leave
- all tools must be returned and checked for repairs



Working with Hand & Power Tools

Volunteers should only use tools if they feel confident that they can use them in a safe and effective manner. Fellow volunteers and staff members will always be happy to help if guidance is required.

The following principles should underpin all work with tools:

- make sure that the tools you use are in a safe condition
- ensure an appropriate first aid kit is at hand
- always maintain safe working distances
- wear the correct personal protective equipment
- take care when carrying and leaving tools when not in use

Before using any of the tools listed below on a Trust reserve, you must have fully consulted with a member of Trust staff. They will take a copy of any relevant licences, ensure you have the correct protective equipment and provide you with guidelines on the use of the tool.

- Strimmer
- Winch
- Power Scythe
- Chainsaw
- Tractor

Guided Walks

Guided walks are an excellent way of introducing people to conservation and wildlife. Guided walk leaders are responsible for the welfare as well as the enjoyment of the walkers and therefore leaders should be aware of the main hazards including:

- slips, trips and falls
- extreme weather
- over-exertion
- plants and animals causing stings, diseases, allergic reactions etc.

Leaders should:

- plan the walk
- take a First Aid Kit
- give a short introductory talk mentioning the length of the walk, conditions and any hazards
- count the walkers at the start and during the walk
- warn of any hazards before you reach them
- watch for signs of tiredness

Volunteer Registration

Volunteers are asked to complete a short and simple Volunteer Registration Form. The information provided:

- enables us to contact you and support you whilst volunteering for the Trust
- helps to keep you safe whilst volunteering for the Trust
- does NOT oblige you to continue volunteering for the Trust

The information will be kept at Trust Office and only issued to appropriate staff/volunteers. Your details will be treated as confidential and will not be passed on to any other organisation.

Please let us know of any changes to your details so we can keep our records up-to-date

Moving On

We understand that there are many reasons why you may decide to stop volunteering for the Trust. If you decide that it is time to move on please let us know because we would like to say a big thank you, good-bye and good luck, but remember you will always be welcomed back.



We hope that this guidance has been helpful to you, please let us know if you think that the guidelines could be improved in any way.

Thank you.