



**Leicestershire  
& Rutland**  
Wildlife Trust



September 2023

# Volunteer handbook



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## Welcome to Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust (LRWT)

Welcome to Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and thank you for registering to volunteer. Now you have agreed to volunteer with us, you will become part of our army of volunteers who help us to make a real difference for nature.

Volunteering with us is your chance to make a real contribution to local wildlife conservation, helping to preserve and protect the natural world now and for future generations. For over 65 years, volunteers have worked alongside our staff in just about every aspect of our work. Volunteers are at the heart of what we do and we could not continue without them.

This handbook will provide you with all the vital information you need to know about volunteering for Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

We hope you enjoy volunteering with us and feel part of our team.

**Welcome and thank you for your support!**

**Mat Carter**

Chief Executive Officer– Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust



# About Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

## Who we are

Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust was founded in 1956 and is one of 46 Wildlife Trusts across the UK working together to conserve the UK's unique natural heritage.

## What we do

With over 18,000 members, 650 volunteers, 35 special nature reserves (of which 19 are sites of special scientific interest SSSI), we have been protecting local wildlife for over 65 years and are proud to be one of the leading wildlife conservation charities in the UK.



## Our Purpose

Our purpose is to bring wildlife back, to empower people to take meaningful action for nature, and to create a society where nature matters.

## Our Vision

Our vision is of a thriving natural world, with our wildlife and habitats playing a valued role in addressing the climate and ecological emergencies, and people inspired and empowered to take action for nature.

To find out more go to [www.lrwt.org.uk](http://www.lrwt.org.uk)



## LRWT Online Volunteer Hub

As a volunteer, you will have access to our online volunteer hub. The hub will provide you with all the information you need to succeed in your volunteering role including policies, risk assessments, rotas, as well as an events calendar, volunteer blogs and copies of our volunteer newsletters.

On the hub, you will also be able to find useful contact details and further updates about LRWT. The hub will be updated regularly and will be your first port of call for all volunteer information.

Once you have registered as a volunteer, you will be provided with details to access the hub.

### Contact details

**For all volunteering enquiries, please contact our Volunteer & Events Coordinator at:**

Email: [volunteering@lrwt.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@lrwt.org.uk)

Tel: 01572 720049

Mobile: 07539 201204

Once you have established which volunteering role you will be taking up with us, you will have a direct contact assigned to you who will support you on a regular basis throughout your volunteer experience with us.



## Volunteer Policy

*For the purposes of this Handbook 'LRWT' is the organisation 'Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust' as a whole including Trust council, staff, volunteers and members.*



**Through working with LRWT, we hope that volunteers will gain:**

- Knowledge, skills, training and experience
- Enjoyment of working to help protect nature
- The opportunity to meet people with similar interests
- The knowledge that they are contributing to nature conservation
- The chance to improve their local environment
- A better understanding of the wider work of LRWT
- The opportunity to share skills, knowledge and experience with others
- Skills that may improve employment prospects in this field





## Through working with volunteers LRWT gains:

- Knowledge, skills and experience
- The ability to further our work and do more for nature
- Local and specialist knowledge
- Ideas and enthusiasm
- The opportunity to make more people aware of LRWT's work.

## The process of becoming a volunteer

We ask all volunteers to complete an application form which covers information essential for the role and also for monitoring and profiling to ensure we are delivering the best experience for everyone. Following successful registration, we will then be in touch to invite you to a taster session or an interview to see what volunteering with us is all about. This will help us to get to know you and for you get to know us before committing to the role and will also give you the opportunity to ask any questions before you are fully enrolled with us.

You will have a direct contact who will be in touch with you regularly for any feedback, problems or concerns that you may have. They will also help with any training requirements such as first aid courses or equipment training and will be with you every step of the way. In addition to this, you will also be given support from the Volunteer Co-Ordinator who will be there for you from the day you register to the day you leave.

## Volunteering for All

LRWT believes that volunteering should be open to all, we welcome anyone who wishes to volunteer with us and we will try our very best to accommodate every request wherever possible. Our recruitment, selection and involvement of volunteers is consistent with our Equality and Diversity Policy. With this in mind, some volunteers in certain roles may be asked for references or to complete the relevant security checks. This will be discussed further at the taster session or interview.



## Our Commitment to Volunteering

New volunteers will be given an induction to their role, which will take place at the first taster or volunteering session. This will help you to understand our organisational aims and objectives, health and safety procedures and risk assessments.

Volunteers are covered by Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance when acting under our instruction.

The value of volunteers to our work will be recognised regularly with training opportunities, volunteer newsletters, volunteer celebrations and regular engagement opportunities such as exclusive events and presentations.



We will provide training appropriate to and relevant to the tasks and duties that volunteers will be undertaking.

We will give references, whenever necessary, to volunteers who have attended regularly and following a minimum of a year of service.





## What we expect from our volunteers

- Inform us if they do not feel they have received the guidelines and information relevant to their role
- Make sure they abide by the health and safety procedures and risk assessment outlined to them
- Respect confidentiality of information which they may become aware of whilst volunteering for LRWT
- Be mindful that they are ambassadors of LRWT within their communities
- Advise their assigned contact or the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible if they are no longer able to volunteer at a previously agreed time/day.

## Code of behaviour:

- Responsible behaviour should be demonstrated at all times to ensure your own safety and those working with you.
- Everybody is expected to treat others with the same respect and dignity they would wish to be shown
- No alcohol or illegal drugs are to be used when volunteering
- Smoking is banned in all LRWT vehicles and buildings
- Please do not throw lit cigarettes or matches on site and take your litter home with you.



## Holidays and sickness

We are extremely grateful for any time that our volunteers can give us and we understand that there will be times you cannot fulfil a role due to a variety of reasons. Please try to give us as much notice as possible by letting your main contact know or by calling the head office on 01572 720049 or 0116 2629968.

## Lunch and breaks

If volunteering for a full day please bring your own lunch and plenty of drinks. Breaks will be given but please feel free to stop for a break whenever you need to. We will identify the nearest toilet facilities, but please be advised some areas may not have them.

## Expenses

As a local charity, we cannot afford to pay travel expenses, except in special circumstances and only when agreed previously with a member of staff. We appreciate that you may be supporting LRWT 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.

## Data protection, confidentiality and intellectual property

All personal data you disclose is kept in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. We ask you to respect other people's privacy and keep sensitive information confidential. Volunteers who deal with information or data as part of their role are asked to give LRWT copyright of this Information. When volunteering you automatically agree to these policies and procedures.



## Problem solving

Volunteers generally find their time with us enjoyable and fulfilling, but occasionally problems do occur. We hope that any 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 assigned contact. If the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, the process can be escalated to the Volunteer and Events Coordinator.

Similar steps will be taken if LRWT is not satisfied with any aspect of your volunteering. If problems cannot be resolved, or in the case of serious misconduct or anyone who poses a threat to safeguarding or Health & Safety, we reserve the right to end any volunteering arrangement with immediate effect.

Should any volunteer feel they are in an environment which makes them feel uncomfortable or threatened, please contact a member of staff as soon as possible. Please do not try and deal with this on your own. In the case of Anglian Water Birdwatching Centre, please call the Duty Ranger on 07885 484113 or a member of staff. We do not expect any of our volunteers to have to deal with difficult situations resulting in potential conflict or which could cause distress.



## Working with Children and other Vulnerable Groups

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

LRWT does not assume direct responsibility for the supervision of children (under 18) and other vulnerable individuals attending its events and activities, this responsibility remains with the relevant adult or parent/guardian. Therefore, unless specifically agreed otherwise LRWT will not accept the participation of children and vulnerable individuals at events and activities unless they are accompanied. The exception to this is when working directly with schools for work experience.





## The Social Aspect

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Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust aims to support its volunteers and to recognise and celebrate their valuable contribution to our work wherever possible.





## Social Events

We hold regular events for volunteers throughout the year across the Trust. You will be notified about these and they can also be viewed on the Volunteer Hub calendar.

## Communication

You can find all the latest news about LRWT on our website and by following us on social media. On the Volunteer Hub, you will find all of the information you need in order to help enhance your volunteer experience with us.

Health and Safety information including our policies and procedures will also be accessible from the Volunteer Hub.



By accepting your role with LRWT, it is the responsibility of each volunteer to access and read the information on our Volunteer Hub, especially as many of the areas such as Health & Safety are important aspects to help protect both yourself and LRWT. When these are updated you will be prompted to visit the hub to access the latest version.

## Personal Details

It is also the responsibility of all our volunteers to notify us of an update to personal records including any health issues that we need to be made aware of and emergency contact details.



## Photography and Filming

Occasionally, we will take photos and sometimes videos of activity across the Trust. This content is used to help promote the work we do and can sometimes be used on our website and across our social media platforms and throughout external publications.

By accepting your role as a volunteer with LRWT you are also giving consent for us to use photographs or videos of you from time to time. If you do not wish to participate, please let the member of staff/volunteer know at the time that you have asked not to be photographed or filmed.



## Feedback and Updates

We want your experience to be the very best it can be. If you would ever like to provide feedback, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteering@lrwt.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@lrwt.org.uk)

If you decide to stop volunteering, please do let your volunteering main contact or the Volunteer Coordinator know about this.

Please do get in touch with the Volunteer Coordinator if you change your address, telephone number, email address or any other personal information.

We thank you for offering your support and wish you a very enjoyable time as a volunteer with Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust.



This handbook is an agreement between Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust and yourself as a Volunteer. Should you not agree to any aspects of this handbook or any of our policies or procedures on the Hub, please get in touch with the Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteering@lrwt.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@lrwt.org.uk).



The LRWT Volunteer Handbook is kindly supported by our partners at Melton Building Society. To find out more go to [www.themelton.co.uk](http://www.themelton.co.uk)

# Map of LRWT Nature Reserves

