



## Somerset Wildlife Trust Volunteering Policy

### 1. Introduction

*Somerset Wildlife Trust (SWT)* and its subsidiaries recognise the enormous value of volunteer support and strives to involve volunteers in all aspects of its work. We seek to provide our volunteers with a quality volunteering experience and this policy sets out our intentions to do so.

- 1.1. The aim of *Somerset Wildlife Trust* (hereafter *SWT*) is to create and maintain an environment rich in wildlife, where people live happier, healthier lives.
- 1.2. *SWT* volunteers are vital to achieving our aim. We intend to encourage, develop and support volunteer involvement in our work, in which volunteers are already important stakeholders. In so doing, we recognise that the roles of volunteers complement the roles of paid staff.
- 1.3. The time, energy and skills offered by our volunteers benefits our work and helps us achieve our aims. This vital contribution is gratefully acknowledged, as the Trust would not be able to achieve all that it does without it.
- 1.4. *SWT* volunteers carry out such diverse and vital work as looking after reserves, educating children, surveying fauna and flora, providing local events for members and looking after the interests of the Trust as Council members.
- 1.5. In *SWT*, a volunteer is understood to be a person who undertakes voluntary activity on our behalf. Volunteering is undertaken by choice and it is unpaid.
- 1.6. *SWT* believes that our relationship with our volunteers is one of mutual accountability and commitment. We hope that volunteers will enjoy their involvement and gain from it in terms of their own personal objectives.

### 2. Purpose and advantages of policy and procedures for volunteers

2.1. *SWT's* purpose in adopting this policy is to:

- a. highlight and acknowledge the value of the contribution made by volunteers
- b. reflect the purpose, values, standards and strategies of *SWT* in its involvement of volunteers
- c. recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers within *SWT*
- d. confirm *SWT's* commitment to involving volunteers in its work
- e. establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers
- f. clarify the roles of volunteers and address the relationship between volunteers and staff

**Protecting the species you love**  
in the county where you live



- g. help to ensure the ongoing quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the activities carried out by our volunteers

### **3. Statement of principles of good practice**

#### 3.1. General

- 3.2. In involving volunteers, *SWT* will be guided by the Volunteering Code of Practice:  
[S:\Volunteering\Volunteer Induction Pack 2019](#)

#### 3.3. Recruitment and selection

- 3.3.1. *SWT* Equal Opportunities Policy will be adhered to when recruiting and selecting volunteers.
- 3.3.2. To ensure that all volunteering opportunities are widely accessible, they will be promoted appropriately.
- 3.3.3. Role profiles will be used for all volunteer opportunities and will cover task descriptions, define time commitment, necessary skills and actual duties.
- 3.3.4. Placements will match the volunteers' skills, talents and interests with the voluntary role to be carried out.
- 3.3.5. Once placed, *SWT* will expect volunteers to adhere to our H&S policy and other policies and procedures.
- 3.3.6. Volunteers will be required to complete a volunteer registration form when joining, to ensure they are covered by insurance.
- 3.3.7. *SWT* will request references for volunteers, where this is seen to be appropriate.
- 3.3.8. People who offer to volunteer will be responded to as quickly as possible.
- 3.3.9. *SWT* will regularly review how potential volunteers can make contact with us.

#### **3.4. Support for volunteers**

- 3.4.1. *SWT* will invest financial and personnel resources for the management of volunteers.
- 3.4.2. *SWT* will provide an induction period and a review session for volunteers, to assess the progress of their placements and to resolve any problems at an early stage.
- 3.4.3. *SWT* will provide funding for out of pocket expenses. Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.
- 3.4.4. All volunteers are covered by *SWT* insurance arrangements, including employment and public liability policies.
- 3.4.5. Volunteers will be given information on other legislation or policies, which may affect them, e.g. Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities.
- 3.4.6. All volunteers will have a staff contact for their roles.

- 3.4.7. Where essential to their role, all volunteers will be offered access to appropriate training, to enable them to develop their capabilities and personal competence.
- 3.4.8. Volunteers will be encouraged to provide each other with mutual support.
- 3.4.9. Volunteers will be made aware of the organisation's complaints procedures, and of who to contact if they have a complaint about any aspect of their role.
- 3.4.10. The Volunteer Coordinator will be assigned responsibility for dealing with complaints about a volunteer's conduct, in accordance with the general procedures of *SWT*.

### **3.5. Rights and responsibilities of volunteers**

3.5.1. In engaging volunteers, *SWT* recognise the rights of volunteers to:

- a. know what is expected of them, and to be given clear information and induction
- b. have clearly specified lines of support and supervision
- c. be shown appreciation
- d. have safe working conditions
- e. be insured
- f. know what their rights and responsibilities are
- g. be paid out of pocket expenses as appropriate
- h. be trained in their tasks and receive appropriate ongoing opportunities for learning and development within their role
- i. be free from discrimination
- j. experience personal development through their participation as volunteers
- k. ask for a reference for future employment or further volunteering opportunities
- l. be consulted on decisions that will affect what they do
- m. withdraw from volunteering

**3.5.2. We expect that volunteers will:**

- a. carry out their tasks in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of *SWT*
- b. work within agreed guidelines and remits
- c. be reliable
- d. adhere to H&S policy and other policies
- e. respect confidentiality
- f. attend training and support sessions, where agreed

### **3.6. Relationship with paid staff**

- 3.6.1. Steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff at all levels are clear about the role of our volunteers, and that good working relationships are fostered between paid staff and volunteers.
- 3.6.2. The roles of volunteers and paid staff will be complementary and mutually supportive.
- 3.6.3. Appropriate training, support and resources will be provided for all those who work alongside volunteers and for those who have a managerial role in relation to volunteers.
- 3.6.4. Volunteers will also be given clear information about the roles undertaken by paid staff and their value to *SWT*.

**3.7. Reviewing the policy and procedures**

- 3.7.1. *SWT* will monitor and review the Volunteering Policy and procedures annually.
- 3.7.2. *SWT* will nominate a trustee to undertake this monitoring and review role, alongside the Volunteer Coordinator.

**3.8. Responsibility**

- 3.8.1. Overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of the policy and procedures lies with the trustees and, on a day to day basis, with the senior paid staff.

<p><b>Signed by Chief Executive Officer</b></p>  <p><b>Date:</b></p>	<p><b>Signed by Volunteer Coordinator</b></p>  <p><b>Date:</b></p>
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Date last reviewed	Name
24/10/19	Rhiannon Route

