



## **Somerset Wildlife Trust Volunteering Policy**

See also **VOLUNTEER SAFETY POLICY INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE HSP-14 ISSUE 1**

### **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

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*in the county where you live*



- f. clarify the roles of volunteers and address the relationship between volunteers and staff
- 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 Agreement](#)

#### 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 and/or when significant organizational changes require review.
- 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>Date:</p>	<p><b>Signed by Volunteer Coordinator</b></p>  <p>Date:</p>
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Date last reviewed	Name
24/10/19	Rhiannon Route
20/04/19	Bryony Slaymaker





## Volunteer Expenses Policy

- 1.1. Somerset Wildlife Trust will reimburse out-of-pocket expenses, properly incurred, to volunteers as agreed beforehand with their staff contact.
- 1.2. As an organisation, we encourage our staff and volunteers to use SWT resources carefully, with consideration for the environment and charity finances.
- 1.3. The expenses policy does not apply to Trustees and Area Groups.

### **2. Travel expenses**

- 2.1. We encourage local volunteering and the use of public transport wherever possible. We appreciate that some of the locations in which you volunteer may be remote and only accessible by car. Please try to lift-share when public transport is not available.
- 2.2. We will only reimburse travel expenses above and beyond travel to the **volunteers normal meeting point**. Travel expenses must be agreed beforehand and incurred wholly and exclusively for the purpose of volunteering with Somerset Wildlife Trust.
- 2.3. If a volunteer is asked by a member of staff to travel to a site and they are using public transport, SWT will reimburse tickets. The maximum value is agreed on a case by case basis, please do not book before confirming with your staff contact.
- 2.4. Where a volunteer is asked by a member of staff to travel to a site and there is no alternative but to drive, then SWT will reimburse volunteers at a rate of 45p per mile. The maximum distance of travel is decided on a case by case basis, please do not incur costs before confirming with your staff contact. **It is your responsibility as a volunteer to ensure your vehicle is road worthy and you are covered by appropriate insurance.**
- 2.5. Cycling mileage is paid at a rate of 20p per mile, The maximum distance of travel is decided on a case by case basis, please do not incur costs before confirming with your staff contact.

### **3. General Expenses**

- 3.1. Additional out-of-pocket expenses incurred wholly and exclusively for the purpose of volunteering with Somerset Wildlife Trust will be reimbursed but must be agreed with your staff contact beforehand. This may include but is not limited to training, refreshments and resources. You must retain proof of purchase.

### **4. How to claim**

- 4.1. Your staff contact will give you an expenses sheet. Fill and complete this and return to the staff contact with any relevant receipts. Expense claims are usually made via BACS within a couple of weeks from the end of the month; however payments can also be made via cheque on request. Please ensure claims are made promptly, expenses must be claimed within 6-months of incurring.

## **Volunteer complaints procedure**

We aim to make all volunteering experiences positive and enjoyable, but we recognise that problems may arise occasionally. You might be unhappy about your experience or a complaint may be made about an individual. Sometimes complaints are in relation to breaches of policy or procedure.

We encourage due process in resolving problems:

1. The first thing you should do is talk to your designated contact and speak with all of those involved, away from the immediate task. Most issues can be resolved in this way.
2. If this proves unsuccessful or you feel the matter is more serious please contact the Volunteering Team, who will mediate between those involved.  
[Volunteering@somersetwildlife.org](mailto:Volunteering@somersetwildlife.org)  
Taunton Office: 01823 652400
3. In rare circumstances, issues can also be referred to the Chief Executive and finally to the Board of Trustees, whose decision will be final. If it is decided that a volunteer is at fault and the matter is irresolvable, they could be asked to cease volunteering, but most issues are resolved before this.
4. Conduct which causes immediate danger to others will be handled swiftly by those leading on the day, and you may be asked to leave immediately. You will have the opportunity to discuss the incident before a final decision is made.