



## **Volunteering Policy for the Cotswolds National Landscape Board**

This policy outlines the Cotswold National Landscape's (CNL) commitment to volunteering and explains the CNL's approach to involving volunteers in its work.

### **Introduction**

The CNL has an inclusive and welcoming culture that invites volunteers from all backgrounds to give their time in furthering the aims of the CNL to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Cotswolds, increase understanding and enjoyment of its special qualities and to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities.

Volunteers were established in the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1968 and remain a highly valued and essential part of the ethos and success of the CNL.

The CNL are extremely grateful for all voluntary support and want to make sure that all volunteers have a rewarding, enjoyable and safe experience with them.

### **Mutual Expectations**

Volunteers give their time and expertise freely but both volunteers and the CNL, as an organisation, have a mutual responsibility of respect and understanding to each other. The role of volunteers does not seek to replace the role of paid employees but complement and support the paid employee role.

Volunteers are one of the main public faces of the organisation, giving up their time for the benefit of the Cotswolds and those living and working in the area. To achieve the best volunteering experience possible, it is important to build a positive relationship between all volunteers, employees, Board members and other organisations and individuals that we work with, and respect will be shown to others at all times.

### **CNL's commitment - volunteers will be:**

- Valued and respected at all times
- Able to easily understand what is expected of them in terms of their role, commitments and behaviours
- Provided any training relevant to their chosen activity
- Given a named volunteer / employee contact with whom they can raise concerns or request additional support and advice
- Recognised for their volunteering contribution
- Provided out of pocket expenses and a contribution towards mileage costs
- Provided with insurance cover whilst working in their voluntary role as CNL volunteers
- Provided with clear guidance on safety and relevant risk assessments
- Provided with the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) and training to carry out their work safely.

## **Volunteer's commitment:**

- To respect all other volunteers
- To work within the agreed CNL Health and Safety policy and volunteer activity risk assessments, and to take responsibility for their own safety and those working with them at all times
- Attend compulsory first aid and safety training every 3 years and, if appropriate, power tool training every 5 years
- To report any accidents, incidents or safety concerns to their nominated volunteer / employee contact and inform the Access and Volunteers Lead, who records these circumstances and may be required to take action on these reports
- To report any concerns regarding inappropriate behaviours to their nominated volunteer / employee contact first, then the Access and Volunteers Lead if the issue cannot be resolved
- To let their nominated volunteer /employee contact know if they are unable to continue with their volunteering for any reason, whether on a temporary or permanent basis
- To be an ambassador for the CNL whilst carrying out their volunteer activities.

## **Recruitment**

All applications and expressions of interest will be acknowledged. The CNL aims to find a suitable volunteer role where possible to meet the needs of the individual and area of activity but, in some cases, it may not be possible to offer a suitable opportunity to an individual at that time. In which case, they will be placed on a waiting list and contacted should a suitable role become available in the future.

## **Insurance**

Volunteers working on agreed activities on behalf of the CNL will be covered by Public Liability Insurance up to the value of £10million and limited personal accident insurance, providing they follow CNL policies and procedures and any instructions or guidance provided by the CNL. This includes cover for the use of equipment such as chainsaws, brushcutters, etc. providing volunteers are competent to do so, and having received appropriate training and obtained the relevant certification.

There is no set upper age limit to volunteering, but individuals must be able to carry out their volunteering activity in a safe manner.

## **Equal opportunities**

All volunteers are expected to treat everyone with equal respect regardless of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, access to technology, religious and political beliefs or seen or unseen disability. The CNL has an equal opportunities policy to support this <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/about-us/corporate-documents-reports/>

## **Health and safety**

All volunteers are responsible for their own safety and those with whom they are working with at all times. The CNL holds a Health and Safety policy <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/about-us/corporate-documents-reports/> and will support safe working through the provision of PPE and appropriate training. Risk assessments will be carried out by nominated activity leaders for every individual activity and sent to the appropriate nominated contact.

All accidents and incidents should be reported immediately to their volunteer / employee contact with a copy sent to the Access and Volunteers Lead using the appropriate form available on the volunteer's area of the website. Accidents and incidents involving hospitalisation or members of the public should be reported directly to the Access and Volunteers Lead who will report the accident / incident to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as legally required.

## **Lone Working**

Volunteers using power tools should never work alone. If any volunteer is working alone as part of their activity, then they must ensure they inform someone of where they are going and an estimated return time. Volunteer ID cards are provided for them to carry in case of an emergency. The detailed Lone Working policy can be found at <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/about-us/corporate-documents-reports/>

## **Safeguarding**

Volunteers may work within a school environment or with children on walks or events. At no time should volunteers be left alone with anyone under the age of 18 or a vulnerable adult. Volunteers working on education projects will need to complete a basic vetting and barring check on the website <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/basic-dbs-checks-guidance> at a cost of £23 and send a copy of their certificate to the Access and Volunteers Lead, together with a character reference. The costs for the checks can be claimed back through the expenses system. CNL has a safeguarding policy <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/about-us/corporate-documents-reports/>

## **GDPR**

The CNL takes the confidentiality of all its volunteers very seriously. Volunteers are asked to respect and keep safe the personal information of fellow volunteers, employees and other individuals that they work with on behalf of the organisation.

Volunteers are asked to sign a GDPR form on application for the organisation and if they are happy for their personal data in photos, film and imagery to be used to promote the work of the organisation they will be requested to complete a photo consent form. The CNL holds a GDPR policy <https://www.cotswoldsaonb.org.uk/about-us/corporate-documents-reports/>

## **Expenses**

All volunteers are entitled to claim a contribution towards reimbursement for out-of-pocket expenses incurred as part of their CNL volunteering activities at the agreed rates as shown in the volunteers handbook.

## **Reporting and Dismissal**

The Access and Volunteers Lead will provide support and guidance in partnership with volunteer activity leaders and is the main contact for the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens. Volunteers working on specific projects may be provided with an alternative main employee contact.

Any concerns or complaints should be raised firstly with the nominated volunteer or employee contact and if unresolved, with the Access and Volunteers Lead who may then refer to the Chief Executive Officer for the CNL, depending on the nature of the complaint.

In rare cases a volunteer may be asked to leave due to behaviour that is inappropriate, puts other volunteers or employees at risk or risks the reputation of the organisation.

## **Recognition**

The CNL aims to support its volunteers and recognise and celebrate their valuable contribution at all times. An annual volunteer conference will be organised to acknowledge the importance of volunteers to the organisation, together with assisting individuals with their personal and professional development where appropriate through training.

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