

# Volunteer Handbook



***Welcome to the team!***

*“Remember that the happiest people are not those getting more, but those giving more.”*



## About Us

**“Our vision is for a Herefordshire richer and more diverse in wildlife that is valued, and cared for, by its people to the benefit of all”.**

### What we do

- We manage 55 Nature Reserves - that's around 530 hectares of land reserved for wildlife
- We run projects within landscapes across the county restoring habitats and protecting wildlife species. Our projects also focus on wellbeing and connecting the people of Herefordshire to its wildlife.
- We work with children and young people in communities and schools engaging, inspiring and educating them about wildlife.
- We run events and workshops for adults and provide professional training for volunteers and trainees.

### How we do it

- We are supported by over 5,000 members from across Herefordshire and beyond.
- We are assisted in all elements of our work by our fantastic volunteers!

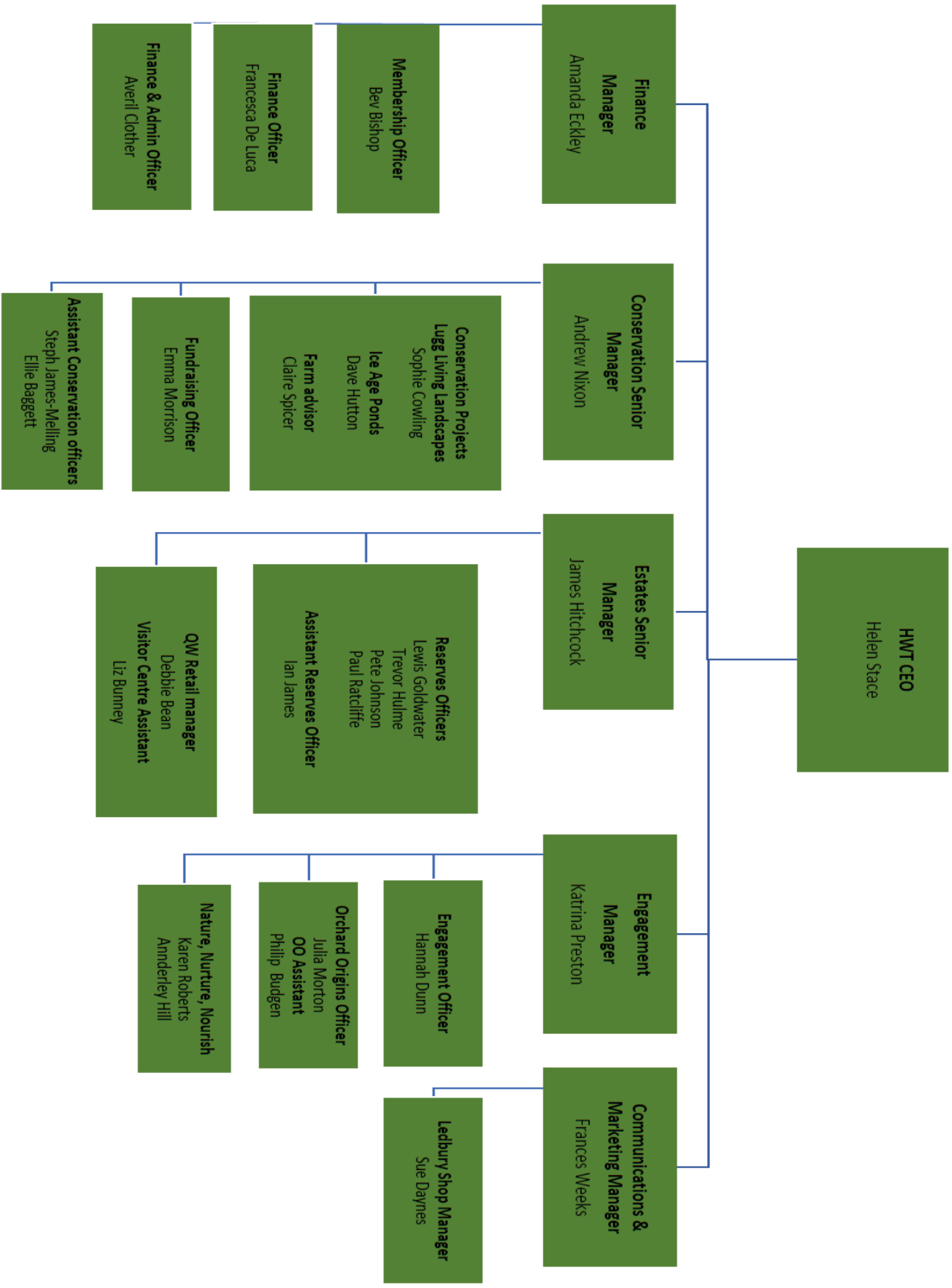
### The Wildlife Trusts

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust is part of The Wildlife Trust movement. There are 47 Wildlife Trusts across the whole of the UK, the Isle of Man and Alderney. With 825,000 members The Wildlife Trusts are the largest UK voluntary organisation dedicated to conserving the whole range of the UK's habitats and species.

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, along with each of the other 46 Wildlife Trusts, is an independent, autonomous charity with its own Trustees. We are a member of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT) which operates as an umbrella organisation for all 47 Wildlife Trusts and helps coordinate campaigns at a national level.



Who's Who?



## Volunteer Opportunities

We have many different roles for volunteers at Herefordshire Wildlife Trust. Some are very practical like our **Conservation Volunteers** or **Reserves Wardens**, others are customer facing such as our **Engagement Volunteers** and **Shop volunteers**. Below are a sample of roles across the organisation that you could get involved in. make sure you look at our website for the most up to date list including roles for specific projects.

### Retail

- Volunteer Shop Assistant
- Key Volunteer
- Book and/or Collectibles Research Assistant
- PAT Tester
- Social Media Volunteer

### Queenswood

- Garden Volunteer
- Lend'a'hand Group

### Engagement

- Visitor Centre Volunteer
- Family and Education Volunteer
- Wildlife Watch Leader
- Membership Packer and Deliverer
- Wellbeing support volunteer

### Conservation

- Conservation Volunteer
- Volunteer Group Leader
- Wildlife Monitoring
- Nature Reserves Warden

## Why Volunteer With us?

Why do we involve volunteers at Herefordshire Wildlife Trust	What are the benefits of volunteering at Herefordshire Wildlife Trust
To help us do more for nature	Help protect and conserve wild places
To offer opportunities for people to connect with nature	Gain new skills through training and learning on the job
To help protect and conserve more wild places	Meet likeminded people and open social circles
To educate and upskill people to work in the conservation sector	Gain the positive benefits of being outdoors
To utilise skills of volunteers to aid conservation	The chance to give something back to your local area
To gain more active ambassadors for Herefordshire's Wildlife	To keep active and healthy
	Advance your career within the sector
	Provide you with a positive purpose

### HWT Volunteer Quotes:

***"Making a contribution in a small way to a better world"***

***"It gets me involved and I learn from others with more experience".***

***"To learn new skills and develop existing ones"***

***"Meeting new people and supporting an amazing charity. Making new friends"***

***"To gain some satisfaction from helping others, keep my skills up to date and my mind active"***

***"I am early retired but still fit enough to give something back from my years as a land and wildlife manager. Gives me something to do."***

***"To help wildlife!"***

## Volunteering Information

### What's the process?

- Take a look at our volunteering opportunities on our website [www.herefordshirewt.org/volunteering-opportunities](http://www.herefordshirewt.org/volunteering-opportunities). To register your interest & find out more, email [a.hill@herefordshirewt.co.uk](mailto:a.hill@herefordshirewt.co.uk)
- You will then be invited to have an (optional) informal 'interview' to ensure we understand what it is you are looking for and help us mutually decide which opportunities will be the most beneficial to both parties. If you know which area you would like to volunteer in, just let us know and we will put you directly in touch with the right person.
- A volunteer handbook & registration form will be given to you to fill in
- When you start volunteering, your volunteer manager will provide an induction. An induction checklist will be completed within the first 2 weeks of volunteering.

### Code of behaviour:

- Responsible behaviour should always be demonstrated to ensure your own safety and those working with you.
- Everybody is expected to treat others with the same respect they would wish to be shown.
- No alcohol or illegal drugs are to be used when volunteering.
- Smoking is banned in all Trust vehicles and buildings. Out of consideration to other workers when smoking please keep a respectful distance.
- Please do not throw lit cigarettes or matches on site and take your litter home with you.

### Holidays and sickness

We are grateful of any time that our volunteers can give us. We understand that there will be times you cannot fulfil a role due to a variety of reasons. Please try and give us as much notice as possible by letting your main contact know or by calling the office on 01432 356 872.

### Problem solving:

We aim to ensure that your volunteering is enjoyable and worthwhile but occasionally problems do occur. If you are not happy with something, discuss it with your supervisor. If the problem is not resolved to your satisfaction, the next stage is to discuss it with the Volunteer Coordinator. If it is still unresolved, a Senior Manager will become involved. Similar steps will be taken if we are unhappy with any aspect of your volunteering. In the case of any misconduct we reserve the right to end a volunteering arrangement.



## Expenses

We greatly value the work carried out by volunteers and in some cases can reimburse your out of pocket expenses; these must be agreed in advance with your supervisor. You are not automatically entitled to claim expenses.

If agreed with your line manager, you may claim by completing a Volunteer Expenses Form, available from your volunteer manager. Travel expenses will be reimbursed at the prevailing volunteer mileage rate up to an agreed limit.

## Clothing and things to bring

Each volunteer opportunity will require different things to bring, you should wear clothing appropriate to the tasks you are doing. HWT can provide PPE, gloves and other equipment such as helmets or hi-vis jackets where necessary. If provided this must be worn.

## Data protection & confidentiality

All personal data you disclose is kept in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We ask you to respect other people's privacy and keep sensitive information confidential. You can find our full privacy and data retention policy here: <https://www.herefordshirewt.org/privacypolicy>

## Volunteering during Coronavirus

Many of our volunteering roles have been adapted to be Covid safe and are able to carry on. You should not be undertaking a volunteering role if you need to self-isolate or if you are classified as extremely clinically vulnerable.

Whilst undertaking a volunteering role you should follow the government guidance which is:

- **HANDS** - Wash your hands regularly and for 20 seconds.
- **FACE** - Wear a face covering in indoor settings where social distancing may be difficult, and where you will come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
- **SPACE** - Stay 2 meters apart from people you do not live with where possible, or 1 meter with extra precautions in place (such as wearing face coverings or increasing ventilation indoors).

We have undertaken risk assessments for individual teams which your volunteer managers will share with you prior to you taking up your role. As well as following the Government

guidelines above we have introduced numerous extra measures such as not sharing any tools, introducing screens in our retail environments and no longer sharing vehicles.

## Volunteer Agreement

### What our volunteers can expect from us:

- We aim to ensure volunteers have a good understanding of the aims of HWT and all will undergo an induction to HWT and their role
- All volunteers will have a main contact who will be in touch regularly with the volunteer to gain feedback.
- All volunteers will receive an induction to health and safety procedures and risk assessments.
- Volunteers are covered by Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance when acting under HWT instruction but are advised to take out their own Personal Accident Insurance.
- The value of volunteers to the work of HWT will be recognised regular update events, volunteer newsletters, volunteer celebration events & socials.
- HWT will endeavour to provide training appropriate to and relevant to the tasks and duties that the volunteers will be undertaking.
- HWT will give references to volunteers who have attended regularly and over a prolonged period, if the main contact is able to do so.

### What we expect from our volunteers:

- Fulfil the requirements of your volunteer role to the best of your ability
- Inform us if they do not feel they have received the guidelines and information necessary to carry out their role.
- Make sure they abide by the health and safety procedures, risk assessments and safeguarding policies outlined to them.
- Respect confidentiality of information which they may become aware of whilst volunteering for HWT.
- Be mindful that they are ambassadors of HWT in their communities.
- Treat all staff, volunteers and visitors with dignity and respect



- Advise their supervisor as soon as possible if they are no longer able to volunteer at a previously agreed time/day.

## Health and Safety

The Herefordshire Wildlife Trust is fully committed to the health, safety and general comfort of all people who work for the charity, including: casual workers; part-timers; trainees; volunteers; sub-contractors and others who use workplaces we provide or are allowed to visit our premises or other holdings; as well as those that may be affected by our work, use products we make, supply or import, or use our professional services. You can view our full policies on request.

### Risk Assessments

All volunteer tasks will be risk assessed and we also have risk assessments for each reserve which will always be carried by the Reserves Officers. You will be asked to read all the relevant risk assessments before you begin your volunteering.

### First Aid

Volunteer Managers will identify any First Aiders and the location of First Aid kits. All accidents need to be both entered into the accident book and reported to a staff member as soon as possible. Staff will ensure that any accidents are reported to RIDDOR. Volunteer Managers will identify the nearest hospital and access points for ambulances. We are committed to ensuring as many volunteers as possible are first aid trained.

### Fire Safety

The Queenswood Visitor Centre and our Ledbury charity shop each have their own fire procedures that you will be familiarised with if you are working at

these sites. If working on a reserve then the Reserves Officer leading the group will share the procedures for that site.

### Lone working

The Trust tries to avoid lone working where possible but if its unavoidable then the Trusts Lone Working Policy must be read before starting. When you are lone working you must let an agreed contact know that this is happening and when you finish.

### Emergency procedures

Your Volunteer Manager will familiarise you with emergency procedures and meeting points for each site. This is particularly important at Queenswood where there is a higher density of visitors and buildings.

### Manual handling

Your Volunteer Manager will familiarise you with the process and guidance on manual handling.

## Health and Safety on reserves

Nature Reserves are natural environments, and there are hidden hazards on them. It is everyone's responsibility to look out for themselves and other people, and to warn others if appropriate.

### General Health

A couple of common-sense pointers will help to prevent any problems:

- Always inform the project leader if you have allergies or conditions such as asthma
- Activity Level: only do as much or as little as you feel able to do. Take regular breaks

### Occupational Conditions

Don't panic! Outdoor practical work can be dirty and hazardous. The following information is for your protection. Simple precautions will ensure that you are not at risk.

- Tetanus can be contracted through a dirty cut or wound. Ensure that your tetanus immunisation is up to date.
- Weils Disease can be contracted through water in rivers, ponds and ditches. Ensure that you wash your hands before eating and keep any cuts covered.
- Lyme Disease can be transferred to humans by ticks which live on sheep or on deer. Try to keep skin covered when working in areas where these animals are found.
- Weather Affects it goes without saying that when the sun is strongest in the Summer months you should take care to cover up unprotected skin, wear a sun hat and drink plenty of water to avoid sun-burn, sun-stroke or de-hydration.

It is important to note that incidences of these occurring are very uncommon.

### First Aid

There will always be at least one trained first aider on site. There is always a First Aid Kit at each practical project. The project leader is usually first aid trained, although there may be others on site. It is good to find out who is first aid trained, who keeps the vehicle keys and if there is a mobile phone available.

### Brushcutters

Formal training is required before a volunteer can use a brushcutter. Strict regulations cover the safe use of machinery, and so for those who are not operating a brushcutter, please be aware of the following:

- Keep your distance – *twigs and vegetation can fly many metres*
- Move out of the way - *the Operator might not see or hear you*
- Attracting attention – *if you must, do so from the front, 15m away*
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – *if working near to brushcutters it is recommended that you wear ear defenders to reduce the potential of progressive hearing damage*

## Chainsaws

Certification is required for chainsaw use. Only certified operators with the authorisation of the project leader may use chainsaws on the Reserve. Chainsaws are very dangerous machines and if used incorrectly have the potential to kill the Operator, or other people if trees fall out of control.

- Keep your distance – *at least two trees lengths away from any felling activities*
- Awareness – *be aware which direction a Chainsaw operator is working, and agree any hand signals before they start work*
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) – *HSE approved PPE is provided by the Trust and must be worn*

Training is available in all of these areas if it is appropriate: please ask for further information.

## Working alone

Reserve Wardens often operate alone on a Reserve. It is important to tell a friend or relative if this is the case, including where you are going and for how long. If this is not possible then a member of Reserves staff would be able to 'buddy' with you out of hours. Never operate a brushcutter or chainsaw if you are on your own.

## Trust Policies and Insurance

### Volunteers under 18 years of age.

Volunteers under 18 years of age will be required to provide a signed parent/guardian consent form before being able to volunteer.

### Medical information

Please inform all Volunteer Leaders of any medical conditions they may need to be aware of, it is your responsibility to do this. Please let us know if you have any medication onsite e.g. epi pen.

### Insurance

Volunteers are covered by Public Liability Insurance when acting under HWT instruction but are advised to take out their own Personal Accident Insurance if they wish to.

If you are using your own car to carry out work on behalf of the Trust as part of your volunteer role your insurer may in some circumstances, consider this 'business use'. It is your responsibility to check with your insurer that you have adequate cover for any use of your car related to your volunteering.

## Safeguarding

Herefordshire Wildlife Trust is committed to protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults throughout all of its activities onsite and offsite. Any volunteers undertaking roles in our Engagement department who will be working with the public will undertake a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check and they will be appropriately trained in Safeguarding. Lead volunteers working in our Queenswood or Ledbury shops with young/vulnerable people with no member of staff present must also be DBS checked. A copy of our full safeguarding policy is available on request.

What to do if someone confides in you:

Do:

Listen carefully and without judgement

Record what you hear

Refer your concerns to an appropriate member of staff

Don't:

Rush the person

Promise to keep their information confidential

Ask leading questions

**Remember: As a volunteer you are not expected to handle safeguarding issues alone or investigate them. However it is your responsibility to tell someone.**

**Volunteer Induction Checklist**

***“Volunteers don’t get paid - not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless.”***

**Name of Volunteer:**

**Date of induction:**

**Volunteer Role/Department:**

**Volunteer Manager:**

<b>Induction Action</b>	<b>Completed? <i>Any comments</i></b>
<b>Volunteer Coordinator</b>	
Check ID	
Volunteer ‘welcome pack’ provided and discussed (includes volunteer policy & handbook)	
Introduction to Trust including staff structure, projects and key information about work/aims.	
Expenses: procedure for claims where appropriate	
Volunteer Contact Details form completed, & a copy handed back to Volunteer Coordinator?	
<b>Volunteer Manager</b>	
Role description explained - Activities, role, responsibilities. Key information re: clothing, lunch, timings.	
Tour of premises/site where working What to do in an Emergency - Including evacuation procedure (both office and out on site).	
Who to report to and their contact details given to the volunteer?	
First-aid - Location of first-aid kits / first-aiders. Discuss any key health & safety rules	



***Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust!***



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[www.herefordshirewt.org](http://www.herefordshirewt.org)

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