

Purpose of our volunteer policy

Our volunteer policy has been created to show our volunteers and potential volunteers that we have spent time and care in planning how volunteers will be welcomed at Shropshire Wildlife Trust. It also outlines that all volunteers will be treated in a fair and consistent way. It should also help our volunteers understand what support is available to them and what they can expect from us.

Our vision and mission for volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to share your enthusiasm, skills and ideas whilst having fun and meeting like-minded people. By volunteering for Shropshire Wildlife Trust, you will be making a positive contribution to our work in Shropshire. Shropshire Wildlife Trust is the largest county-based charity in Shropshire and volunteers underpin all aspects of our work. Volunteers help us to deliver additional work in all areas without which our reach and influence would be much weaker. Volunteers contribute on average an additional 20,000 hours work per year.

Definition of Volunteer and Volunteering

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations defines volunteering as any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.

This can include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation and social action. Everyone has the right to volunteer, and volunteering can have significant benefits for individuals.

A Volunteer is therefore an individual who, through their own free will, contributes their time to a cause or organisation without financial recompense.

This Policy relates to all our volunteers both under 18's and over 18's.

Text in *italics* denotes a separate policy document.

Statement of intent

Shropshire Wildlife Trust will ensure that the following systems and procedures are in place to make sure everyone has a safe and positive volunteering experience with us:

- Clear role descriptions
- A safe environment in which to volunteer
- Support and training
- Personal development opportunities
- Responsible retention of records under GDPR

1. Recruitment, application and registration

Under our *Equal Opportunities Policy*, anyone is entitled to apply to volunteer with SWT. There is a system for applying to volunteer which includes completion of an application form, attendance at an Information event (Find out about Volunteering session) and Induction. References and DBS check are carried out for certain volunteer positions. Informal meetings rather than formal interviews are normally carried out and if there is not currently a suitable role available we will signpost the applicant to another

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organisation or ask them to contact us again in 6 months' time. Once a volunteer has started, we store their details on our Database.

2. Health and Safety including Emergency Contact cards

We have a duty of care towards all our volunteers and comply with HSE law (Health and Safety Executive) We have systems and procedures in place for dealing with accidents and emergencies and have Risk Assessments for all Reserves, sites and tasks. Quarterly Health and Safety meetings take place at which the Volunteer Co Ordinator reports on anything relating to volunteers including local groups and Branches. Certain staff are First Aid trained to an appropriate level and all volunteers will be given a Health and Safety briefing appropriate to their role. Volunteers are expected to comply with H&S briefings and any breach will be dealt with by staff.

We request contact details in case of emergency for all volunteers and these are kept on file and on our database. In addition, anyone volunteering away from our main base is asked to complete an Emergency Contact Card (ECC) which is stored securely by the leading staff member for use in an emergency. See also section 7 below. We ask volunteers to keep us notified of any change in their contact details or health so that we can keep our records up to date and the ECC are reviewed annually in January.

3. Policies applying to volunteers

Shropshire Wildlife Trust has a number of Policies in place that apply to both staff and volunteers. These are:

- *Health and Safety Policy*
- *Safeguarding, both Children and Adults with care and support needs*
- *Lone Working Policy*
- *Volunteer Code of Conduct*
- *IT and social media Policy*
- *Declaration of confidentiality*
- *Privacy Policy*

4. Insurance

All Shropshire Wildlife Trust volunteers are covered by our insurance whilst volunteering. The Insurance Policy covers the following: Personal accident and Public Liability Insurance with regard to injury to themselves or others whilst volunteering with us. Volunteers are expected to follow instruction from a staff member and not to put either themselves or others at risk from accident. Personal belongings are not insured whilst volunteering with SWT.

5. Training, support and supervision

All volunteers will be allocated a staff mentor and appropriate training will be given depending on the role. If a volunteer wishes to undertake further training or to develop their skills, this can be discussed with their staff mentor. We will support volunteer in personal development and there is a range of free training courses available for volunteers.

6. Retention of records and General Data Protection Regulations

We will keep Volunteer forms in a locked and secure cabinet. Electronic details are kept on our ThankQ database. Records will be kept for 3 years and if inactive then electronic records will be archived, and paper forms shredded.

7. DBS checks

DBS checks are carried out for certain roles and volunteers will be notified if one is required.

8. Safeguarding

We have Safeguarding Policies for Children and also Adults with Care & Support Needs. Volunteers are expected to comply with both policies. Volunteers in certain roles will be required to do Safeguarding training.

9. Branded clothing

Certain roles require volunteers to wear SWT branded clothing and this will be provided following probationary period. This must only be worn whilst performing the volunteer role and not worn in public when 'off duty'.

10. Grievance procedure

A grievance is a perceived or real issue which causes resentment, suffering or distress and which may be regarded as grounds for complaint. Shropshire Wildlife Trust is committed to encouraging an open environment in which all volunteers can express themselves freely and responsibly, where issues raised are responded to in an appropriate and timely manner and where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. Above all, we are committed to providing fair and honest settlement of any grievance. Grievance will be dealt with in this order until resolved: staff contact / Supporter Relationship Officer (Volunteers & Community Groups) / Senior Management

11. Code of Conduct

We have a volunteer Code of Conduct which all volunteers are required to read and sign before starting volunteering with us.

12. Volunteer Expenses

Volunteers are entitled to claim reasonable travel expenses if a Trust vehicle is unavailable, or it is impractical for them to use a Trust vehicle.

Date approved	December 2018
Date for review	2021/22