



VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT & HANDBOOK

This volunteer agreement describes the arrangement between us, Hawk and Owl Trust and you.

This agreement is binding in honour only, and we do not intend it or you to create any employment relationship or be a legally binding contract between us. It may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of you or us.

Volunteers play an essential part in our charity, and we appreciate your volunteering with us. We hope you enjoy your volunteering experience with us and look forward to your joining us. We will do our best to make you feel part of our team and hope your volunteering experience with us will be enjoyable and rewarding.

The following sets out what you can expect from us and what we hope from you, but we try to be flexible, so please tell us if you would like to change anything, and we will try to meet your requests.

Part 1: the organisation

This handbook and notes are relevant to all the many different volunteer roles and are, therefore, generic. It is designed to provide information on what you can expect whilst volunteering with the Hawk and Owl Trust (the Trust).

The following guidelines explain the relationship between a volunteer and the Trust and will help you understand your role as a volunteer. It covers topics relevant to many of the people who give their time to the Trust, including:

- All of our volunteers are based on our reserves or offices.
- Project Groups

You can expect the following from us:

1. Induction and training

To introduce you to the charity and how it works.

To provide you with a thorough induction on our work, activities, our staff, the description, and full responsibilities of your volunteering role in the charity, and to meet the responsibilities of your role.

2. Supervision, support and flexibility

The Trust will designate a member of staff to oversee your volunteering. In turn, the staff member may designate another volunteer as your key contact if you are part of a group. To explain the standards we expect to meet in the running, providing the charity's activities and/or services, and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them.

3. Expenses

The Trust's policy, pertaining to staff and volunteers, is not to reimburse any travel expenses unless it has been agreed in advance with the designated staff member.

4. Health and Safety

To provide you with a healthy and safe work environment and adequate training and feedback in support of our health and safety policy, a copy of which is available from your designated key contact.

5. Data Protection

A copy is available upon request to deal with all the personal information we collect or hold about you, following the applicable relevant data protection legislation and our privacy policy. All volunteers must register online using our volunteer database and may amend their details at any time using the online portal. Volunteers can also opt into areas of interest should they wish to receive information.

6. Insurance

To provide insurance cover for you for an injury you suffer or cause through negligence while carrying out your approved and authorised volunteering activities. At the end of each year (31st March), volunteers who have not contributed in the preceding twelve months will be deleted from the system, insurance cover suspended, and this agreement will end.

Volunteers driving on Trust business using their car: It is up to the individual volunteer to ensure they have the correct level of insurance in place. The Trust's insurance policy does not cover volunteers using their cars.

Volunteers driving any Trust vehicle: This must be agreed upon in advance with the Head Office, and a copy of the volunteer driving licence will be held on file. Once agreed, drivers are then covered by the Trust's insurance policy. The Trust's policy does not cover drivers under the age of 25, and restrictions may apply to those over 65.

7. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

To ensure that you are dealt with following our equal opportunities and diversity policy, a copy of which is available on request.

8. Problems

The Trust aims to treat all our volunteers and employees fairly and objectively. We recognise that situations may arise from time to time that volunteers, or employees working with volunteers, need assistance to resolve. If you have a problem concerning any aspect of your voluntary work, we ask that you take this up directly with the employee or volunteer responsible for your work.

Your views will always be heard and given full consideration. If this does not result in a mutually acceptable resolution of the difficulty, further advice should be sought from your key contact.

The relationship between the Trust and a Volunteer

Whichever volunteer role you are in, you are an important ambassador and should always represent the Trust's best interests. For many members of the public, you are the 'face' of the Trust, so please always extend a warm welcome, and treat members of the people with respect and courtesy.

The Trust recognises that you have offered your time freely as a volunteer. There is, however, an element of responsibility on both sides. You must understand the benefits you will gain from volunteering with the Trust and the Trust's expectations of you as a volunteer.

As a volunteer, the Trust expects that you will:

- Maintain good relations with other volunteers, all employees, trustees, and Trust members.

- Promote the Trust to visitors.
- Adhere to the Trust's decisions, policies, and procedures.
- Respect and protect our natural landscapes.
- Be reliable and responsible, always.
- Carry out your role safely, both for your own sake and that of others
- Demonstrate high standards of work.
- Attend training and support sessions as required
- Maintain confidentiality and respect our data protection policies.

Equality and Diversity: the Trust has an Equality Policy, and volunteering is open to all over 16's (except past Staff, Trustees and Self Employed Contractors who have worked for the Trust), which all volunteers and employees must follow. While the Trust welcomes Diversity, it also has a legal obligation to ensure that neither the Trust nor anyone representing it (directly or indirectly) discriminates against an individual based on age, gender, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

The Trust has no upper age limit and recognises the valuable contribution of older volunteers in terms of knowledge and experience. For specific conservation tasks, there is a minimum age of 18. Certain activities for those over 65 may be restricted due to Health and Safety, child protection legislation or insurance requirements.

Dress Code: Although the Trust does not have a specific dress code, there may be recommendations for appropriate clothing based on your role and location. Some activities may also require using particular Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Please see the Trust Health and Safety policy for more information on the requirement to wear PPE when requested.

As part of your volunteering, it may be appropriate to wear Trust-branded clothing. Wearing Trust clothing is optional, and there is no requirement to wear branded clothing while volunteering. If you choose to wear our branded clothing while carrying out your volunteer role, please be aware that you identify yourself as a Trust representative, and your actions may reflect on the Trust.

Personal Viewpoints: when people know that you are volunteering with the Trust, they will naturally come to you for your thoughts or opinion on anything in the news which may affect the organisation.

While volunteering: if someone asks you a question while volunteering, politely let them know that the Trust is politically neutral – this means that you cannot comment either on behalf of the Trust or share your views on the Trust's position.

Outside your volunteer role: our volunteers' personal opinions are very important to us. To maintain the Trust's political neutrality, we must ensure that we do not appear to support any political party. (For example, it would put the Trust in a difficult position if someone was photographed wearing their favourite Trust-branded clothing at a political rally). Similarly, it is unacceptable for volunteers to discuss Trust matters with the press or comment on Trust policies and decisions.

Social Media & What's App: If you are a Trust volunteer, your comments can reflect on the organisation or other volunteers - even when made in a personal setting, for example, on your social media account. Social media is in the public domain, where a single comment can be 'shared' or 'retweeted' by many people in a very short period.

We are happy for volunteers to promote their connection with the Trust, but please be aware that you are identifying yourself as a Trust representative, and your actions may reflect on the Trust. (We recommend including the statement 'all opinions are my own in your social media profile to ensure that any comments do not reflect on any organisations to which you are connected.)

Volunteers should be aware that the Trust has a zero-tolerance social media Policy, which goes into more detail on the topic of social media use for personal purposes. The principles in that section (including, but not limited to, not breaking the law, refraining from prejudicial language and ensuring the organisation's political neutrality) apply to all our staff and volunteers, including those without access to social media. Volunteers found to be acting or commenting critically on the Trust or its policies will be stood down without notice or appeal.

Further breaches: The following points (which are not exhaustive) will also be considered a breach of our Code of Conduct, namely:

- Bullying, harassment or acts of physical or verbal violence.
- Entering into contracts on behalf of the Trust.
- Failure to account for funds held in the Trust's name.
- Breaches of rules and regulations which are considered to give rise to a serious risk of reputation or financial loss.
- Inability to carry out tasks due to alcohol or drugs.
- Using abusive and offensive language or behaviour.
- Wilful or negligent disruption of the work of staff or other volunteers.
- Uncooperative attitude or rudeness to fellow volunteers, staff, trustees or clients and failure to carry reasonable instructions.
- Disclosing information or emails concerning the Trust, any of its clients, volunteers, members, or staff.
- Using Trust data for communications unauthorised by the Trust in advance.
- Consistent poor performance in carrying out our volunteer activities, poor time keeping and unreliability.
- Acting inappropriately in an unprofessional manner, undermining the management and Trustees or bringing the name of the Trust into disrepute.

Attendance: To attend induction and training sessions if requested. To make sure that our projects operate smoothly, we must know in advance which volunteers plan to attend. Where you have signed up to attend on a specific occasion, we appreciate that you will make every effort to attend and arrive on time. Still, we understand that unexpected events may occasionally prevent this from happening. If you cannot attend on a particular day, please inform your project organiser or volunteer coordinator as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Governance: to follow the charity's procedures, standards, rules, policies (including health and safety, privacy, data protection, anti-bribery, social media and equal opportunities, Diversity, and child protection) and any other reasonable instructions we give you in relation to our staff, volunteers, and members of the public. A copy of these procedures, standards, rules and policies is available from your key contact.

Confidentiality: during your volunteer work with the Trust, you may be a party to personal information or confidential information about Trust activities that are not in the public domain. You must keep such information confidential and not communicate it outside of the Trust nor use it to send inappropriate messages.

Some specific roles also require handling of personal data on a more regular basis, and, in such cases, those volunteers will be required to complete an online data protection training module and any subsequent refreshers.

Safeguarding: to provide us with referees if requested and agree to a Disclosure & Barring Service check where necessary.

A volunteer is someone of 16 years and over who supports the TRUST's work but is not employed by the TRUST.

1. The minimum age for volunteering is 18; however, individual reserves/projects may take lower the minimum age to 16 is required and this can be accommodated.
2. Volunteers under the age of 18 years are defined as children under this policy. No volunteer under the age of 18 years will be placed in a position of Trust working with other children.
3. Adult volunteers are aged 18 and over.

Volunteers under the age of 18 require a consent form to be signed by a parent or guardian, which includes a declaration that the volunteer does not have a criminal record.

Volunteers aged 16-18 should not be alone working or working 1:1 with an adult volunteer.

Volunteer hours: If volunteering on our reserves, all volunteers are required to sign in and out of the site. If volunteering in an alternative place, a record of the hours must be maintained and submitted when requested by your designated staff member.

End of Volunteering: At the end of the Trust's financial year (31st March), this agreement will automatically end if no volunteer hours have been contributed in the preceding twelve months.

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Use of Photography and Film: Visual imagery – be that photography or film – is crucial to the success of our project, alongside colour, branding, style and concept. When using photography and film, it is essential to be data protection legislation compliant: it is illegal to use anyone's image without contractual right or consent, and this must be able to be demonstrated. Please make sure any use of photography or film follows these guidelines.

Guidance for the use of images

- You can only use material if you are able to demonstrate the right to do so, either by contract or written consent. This includes staff, volunteers, and members of the public.
- If you cannot demonstrate our right to use an image, the material must not be used in any public format.
- Images or videos may be taken for personal use and not commercial usage unless the Operations Director has given written consent.
- We value all images sent to us which allow us to share our activities. Any image worthy of publication should be sent to the Trust's Publications Officer.