



GWT's Return to Volunteering

Dear Volunteers

Thank you for your understanding and patience over the past 3 months, with the Trust putting its volunteer programme on hold due to COVID-19 to ensure the safety of all our volunteers and staff. I am sure many of you are keen to get started and have been missing volunteering and socialising with other volunteers in your group. Whilst we can't wait to see you all back, we need to ensure we return back to volunteering safely. It will take some time for the country to fully come out of lockdown and this will be the same for our volunteer programme. This will mean we will be restarting our volunteer programme in a staged approach.

The plan for restarting has already begun, whilst I was off on furlough between April -July; Lorna Fox, Will Masefield and Ian Stevenson have been working on a plan to restart volunteering safely. As other staff return from furlough, I will be working with them to prepare their volunteer groups and roles in accordance with the Trust's return to volunteering plan. This will mean we will need to ensure additional safety measures are put in place before any groups or roles can restart. Each role and group will be assessed individually, and this may mean some activities cannot start at the same time as others or need to run at reduced numbers.

We are looking forward to seeing you all again. However, there is no pressure to return to volunteering if you currently do not feel comfortable doing so. Please put your own safety first. Below are our guidelines to support those who are able and wish to participate in sessions.

Return to volunteering form

We require all volunteers, who would like to volunteer during social distancing, to complete the following short online form. Paper copies can be sent on request or the form can be completed over the phone.

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/JT8Q79W>

This form will ensure we know who is returning to volunteering and that they are happy with and understand the additional risks to volunteering during the Covid-19 pandemic. The form also asks for contact details to ensure we have updated information in case the worst happens, and we need to contact volunteers about an individual within their group testing positive for the virus. The form should take less than 5 minutes to complete and will be stored securely and confidentially.

Size of volunteer groups

The government advises people to meet up in groups of a maximum of 6; all 6 can be from different households. Further information about meeting outdoors in groups from the government can be read [here](#).

Please read below the Trust's policy for volunteering outdoors during the Covid-19 pandemic:

- A maximum of 5 volunteers per group plus one staff member/volunteer leader, either alone or in socially distanced pairs. If some volunteer tasks require working in close proximity to each other the maximum number may need to be reduced.
- Pairs can be two people from the same household but the maximum number of volunteers and staff/volunteer leader onsite still needs to be no more than 6.
- Socially distanced pairs will need to be at least 2 meters apart from each other at all times, unless they are from the same household.
- Each pair must work separately from the other volunteer pairs and not swap between pairs during the day.
- Whilst social distancing measures are in place, volunteers under 18 will need to attend with an adult.
- You must let the group leader know in advance if you would like to attend, to ensure the group's numbers do not go over 6 individuals. If you do not book in advance and turn up and there are more than 6 individuals, you will be asked to volunteer on a different day.

During a volunteer session

- Staff will run through the risk assessment at the start of each session. Volunteers will be required to verbally confirm they understand and accept the potential risks.
- Volunteers may request a written copy of the risk assessment to be sent to them in advance by email or post.
- Social distancing (2m) to be maintained at all times.
- The Trust will provide any equipment for the volunteer session at the start of the day.
- This equipment must not be shared between volunteers.
- GWT will ensure equipment is disinfected before they are next used, this may require volunteers to disinfect the equipment they have been using at the end of the day.
- For volunteers who require gardening gloves for their role, they will be issued with a pair at the start of their first session back. It will be their responsibility to take the gloves home and wash them after each session.
- For safety reasons GWT will not be able to supply refreshments for volunteers while social distancing is in place. We also ask volunteers to not share food between different households.
- The Trust will provide hand sanitizer, but we recommend you bring and use your own where possible.
- Volunteers must not lift-share between separate households for volunteering.

Showing signs of Covid-19


Any volunteers who think they may have Covid-19 or believe they may have come into contact with an individual who has the virus, must not attend the group. You should get tested as soon as possible and inform the Trust.


If you test positive, please let us know, especially if you have recently volunteered with others, as we will need to follow the [NHS Test and Trace process](#) and let those who may have come into contact know. In this scenario, we will not inform the other volunteers who out of the group has tested positive, just that someone has tested positive.

If a volunteer starts showing symptoms of Covid-19 whilst volunteering, staff will politely ask the individual to leave and to get tested. They can return to volunteering if they test negative; if positive they must follow government guidelines of self-isolating for two weeks.


Below is a handy guide to our Coronavirus Volunteer Code of Conduct:

Gloucestershire
Wildlife Trust


The Wildlife
Trusts




Coronavirus Volunteer Code of Conduct
All volunteers should read and follow the precautions below




Maintain minimum 2m social distancing at all times




Sanitise hands before entering and leaving site




Maintain hygiene standards as defined by activity coordinator




Strictly adhere to the risk assessments provided



Support staff by notifying them of any issues that arise



No sharing of vehicles, tools, equipment or refreshments



Do not attend if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19



Again, we want to thank you for your patience and understanding during this difficult time. Whilst we are keen to return to volunteering as soon as possible, we need to ensure we do so safely. As I am sure you are fully aware, government guidelines about the pandemic and social distancing are regularly changing. We will continue to update you of any changes that may affect volunteering and the Trust.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about the above or concerns, please do contact me at volunteering@gloucestershirowildlifetrust.co.uk or call 07785 350827.

Kind regards

Donna Cavill
Volunteer Coordinator