

Volunteer Policy

Countryside & Rights of Way

This policy outlines the commitment of Countryside & Rights of Way (CRoW) to working with volunteers and is applicable to all roles.

The main aims of this policy are:

- To describe how CRoW engages with volunteers
- To outline expectations for both staff and volunteers
- To ensure volunteers are, and feel valued and supported

This policy is signposted to all new volunteers and is available on the [CRoW website](#). It is reviewed every two years.

You can also read [HCC's Volunteer Handbook](#) about volunteering for the County Council.

About CRoW

We work with communities in Hertfordshire to help them care for and enjoy the environment by:

- Encouraging people to get involved with their local countryside or park by offering a range of voluntary opportunities, from practical conservation to leading Health Walks.
- Providing advice to landowners and managers to help them look after their land with wildlife in mind. Helping a range of people secure funding for landscape improvement and conservation work.
- Promoting outdoor recreation through organising events and working with groups to develop walk and cycle routes to link towns and villages to their surrounding countryside.

CRoW is hosted and funded in part by Hertfordshire County Council, and further funded by the majority of Hertfordshire's District and Borough Councils.

Why volunteers are important to us

Volunteers are an integral part of our activity, with many projects undertaken by volunteers. The time, experience, knowledge and skills that volunteers offer is highly valued by us, as well as Hertfordshire County Council, District & Borough Councils and the local communities.

Our aim is that volunteers have a positive experience from their time working with us and that the relationship is one of mutual benefit.

Volunteers contribute over 40,000 hours every year to our projects. That's equivalent to 16 years!

What volunteers can expect from CRoW

We are committed to encouraging and supporting all volunteers and will do this by:

- Welcoming volunteers as part of the team and providing an induction
- Providing volunteers with a nominated member of staff to serve as their main point of contact and support
- Providing appropriate training, guidance and support
- Always considering the health, safety and wellbeing of volunteers
- Giving feedback so volunteers can develop in their role
- Ensuring volunteers feel valued for their contribution
- Providing expenses for travel to pre-agreed training courses

What CRoW expects from volunteers

- To be good ambassadors for CRoW and positive role models to other volunteers
- To behave in a responsible and professional manner and adhere to CRoW policies and procedures
- To respect confidentiality, see section on GDPR below
- To give feedback, ask for help when needed and contribute ideas for improvement
- To never undertake a task they are uncomfortable doing, are not trained to do or capable of doing
- To be accountable and accept constructive comment
- To undertake work safely, as advised and report any concerns immediately
- To attend pre-arranged meetings, and inform their supervisor if they are unable to do so

Voluntary Roles

There are a range of voluntary opportunities available in many areas of Hertfordshire. Details of these can be found on the [CRoW website](#). Specific Role Descriptions detailing the activities undertaken plus support and benefits of each role are sent to potential volunteers or upon request.

Volunteers are welcome to take on one or a combination of roles within Conservation, Rights of Way or Hertfordshire Health Walks.

Individuals who are claiming welfare benefits should discuss their voluntary activities with their local Benefits Office.

Volunteer Induction

An induction will be given to all volunteers providing them with all the introductory information they will need to begin their role. For example, who their main contact will be, health & safety information, tools required and any training they can expect. More details can be found in the Role Description.

If we are unable to offer a volunteering opportunity, other organisations will be signposted.

Volunteers may be asked to supply any relevant personal information such as any medical conditions which may impact upon the type of role offered.

Equality & Diversity

At CRoW we believe that no one should be treated less favourably than anyone else because of their gender, marital status, age, race, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, disability or sexual orientation. We respect and value diversity and will do everything we reasonably can to make sure volunteering opportunities are available to all.

People under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a responsible adult on voluntary activities. Those between 16 and 18 may attend activities unaccompanied with the written consent of their parent or guardian.

The needs of vulnerable adults will be treated on a case-by-case basis. It is likely that we will require vulnerable adults to be accompanied by a carer until the carer, on agreement with CRoW staff, deems it no longer necessary. This agreement will be confirmed in writing.

Insurance

Whilst engaged on agreed activities, volunteers are treated the same as a paid employee for the purposes of both Employers and Public Liability Insurance. As such, the standard Employers and Public Liability policies give the same protection to volunteers as they would to an employee.

The Employers Liability policy covers the HCC's legal liability in respect of accidental injury, illness, disease or death to employees, and therefore to volunteers. The policy also provides an indemnity to individual volunteers regarding injuries caused by them to other employees/volunteers, where they are legally liable as individuals.

Health & Safety

CRoW take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of all our volunteers. We are committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment.

Volunteers can expect appropriate induction, training and supervision to maintain everyone's health and safety.

As part of the induction, volunteers will receive information and training specific to the role. Volunteers should be aware of, and adhere to, the health & safety measures that are in place.

Medical Conditions

If you have or have had any medical conditions, illness or injury that may affect you or others while working with us, or if there are any changes to your health that we should know about, please let us know. Where necessary we may refer you to our Occupational Health Practitioner for assessment. The information you provide is strictly confidential and will only be seen by your CRoW contact and the Occupational Health Unit.

Problems or concerns

Volunteers should raise any concerns they may have in the first instance with their volunteering supervisor, who should make every effort to settle the issue fairly. If a volunteer does not feel the matter has been resolved to their satisfaction, they should contact the department manager with their concerns.

Volunteering supervisors will discuss with the volunteer any concerns they have with their behaviour or contribution and will take the necessary steps to address them. If concerns cannot be resolved, volunteering relationships may be ended by either party.

Confidentiality & GDPR

As part of their role volunteers may encounter information that is confidential. This should not be disclosed to, or discussed with, anyone not directly connected to our work.

We will ensure that any personal information supplied to us is treated in confidence and is handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018.

Moving On

We understand that personal circumstances change. If a volunteer no longer wishes to continue in their role at any point, they are not obliged to do so. On leaving CRoW, volunteers are welcome to ask for a reference or statement of their achievements. To help us continue to improve our services we would welcome volunteers for feedback on their experience.

Contact Us

If you have any questions about our volunteer opportunities, volunteer policy or you are ready to get started as a volunteer, please get in touch:



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www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/cms



facebook.com/hertscms

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