

Memorandum of Understanding between Volunteering England and Forestry Commission England

This document outlines a formal Memorandum of Understanding between Volunteering England and Forestry Commission England to demonstrate our joint commitment to working together. Together we aspire to empower individuals and communities to be more engaged in volunteering activities, both in the creation and management of forests and woodlands across England.

Volunteering England

Volunteering England is an independent charity and membership organisation, committed to supporting, enabling and celebrating volunteering. Volunteering England is the national volunteering development agency for England and a strategic partner with the Office of Civil Society.

Volunteering England's vision is "of a time when everybody is inspired to volunteer and when the power of volunteering to enrich lives and communities is fully realised."

Through working across the public, private and voluntary sectors, its mission is seek to achieve this vision by:

"Transforming attitudes and behaviours of individuals and institutions so volunteering becomes a natural and easy choice to make;

"Championing the diversity of volunteering and removing the barriers that limit engagement;

"Establishing the conditions in which volunteering can flourish by ensuring legislation and regulations support rather than discourage volunteering;

"Creating a better volunteering experience by promoting excellent leadership and a robust infrastructure;

"Connecting to the millions of volunteers through our membership and articulating their concerns, interests and achievements."

The Forestry Commission

The Forestry Commission is the Government department responsible for overseeing the protection and expansion of Britain's woods and forests. Forestry Commission England sustainably manages the Public Forest Estate for a range of objectives, including many diverse opportunities for volunteering. Together we seek:

- An increase in the number of people actively engaged in the environment through volunteering
- Improved awareness and understanding of the wide ranging opportunities and benefits afforded by volunteering in the natural environment
- The attainment of leadership and management skills to encourage more sustainable participation
- An organisational approach to supporting volunteering within the Forestry Commission, as part of its remit to enable and empower individuals, business and civil society to benefit from the creation and management of woodlands and forests. Also to consider working towards the Investing in Volunteers Standard, the UK award which recognises good practice in volunteer management, managed in England by Volunteering England.
- To continue to support a wide range of volunteering opportunities across the public forest estate and encourage the organisations we work with to consider the benefits afforded through membership of Volunteering England.
- To encourage other woodland owners to consider their own approach to supporting volunteering.
- To build capacity and skills of our own staff, organisations we work with and those using the public forest estate to deliver well managed volunteering opportunities.
- Opportunities to promote volunteering in the woodland environment.

The Forestry Commission and Volunteering England wish to explore the possibilities to enable and empower greater participation in volunteering. This partnership will last initially for a two-year period and will be reviewed again in 2014. To support this partnership, Forestry Commission England and Volunteering England will work together and review on a regular basis, opportunities to support volunteering.

Common objectives

Both organisations seek:

1. To build and maintain a mutual understanding of each other's work
2. To keep each other well informed of issues related to volunteering
3. To define our working practices in the spirit of collaboration and partnership
4. To strengthen volunteering in England by working in collaboration to support key aspects of the infrastructure for volunteering in England.
5. The provision of good practice in volunteer management
6. The empowerment of people to have the confidence and skills to try new activities

In order to achieve these aims both organisations will:

- Hold an annual meeting of Chief Executives to review:
 - ways to develop the relationship in the coming year
 - potential for development of new joint activity arising from the Memorandum of Understanding.
- Aspire to work together to secure a sustainable infrastructure for volunteering at all levels.
- Encourage key members of staff in both organisations to work together on relevant policy developments, sharing intelligence and documents, and drawing up joint responses and submissions when appropriate.
- Ensure that all areas of joint work are negotiated; expectations made explicit; budgetary issues considered and working arrangements.

Signed by:



Justin Davis Smith

Chief Executive
Volunteering England



Simon Hodgson

Chief Executive
Forestry Commission England