

## Volunteer Agreement

Thank you for becoming a Westonbirt volunteer, you are joining a dedicated and enthusiastic team of people supporting the National Arboretum. Please complete and sign the information below for our records\*. Thank you.

I confirm I have:

- attended volunteer induction
- received the Volunteer Handbook
- received and will adhere to the Westonbirt Volunteer Policy, namely:

I agree to:

- Be a good representative for Westonbirt, support its aims and objectives and maintain its high standards
- Adhere to Westonbirt policies, practices, and health and safety regulations
- Adhere to Forestry Commission values
- Sustain a friendly, flexible and supportive attitude with staff and fellow volunteers
- Attend relevant meetings and training
- Respect confidentiality
- Create a welcoming atmosphere for visitors
- Wear my uniform with pride
- Inform Westonbirt if I wish to withdraw from volunteering and return my uniform.

It may be necessary for staff and/or volunteers to contact you at home if there are changes to arrangements, rotas, or diary dates, *'I therefore give permission for my email address and telephone number to be listed and given, when appropriate, to other staff and volunteers'*.

I accept whilst volunteering that I am a representative of the Forestry Commission at Westonbirt, The National Arboretum and not an employee'.

Volunteer name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
(please print)		

Supervisor name	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
(please print)		

**\*Please let the Volunteer Manager have a copy of this agreement sheet.**

Cheryl Pearson  
Volunteer Manager  
Latest updates: 15.03.13; 11.07.13; 08.01.14; 05.01.15; 02.02.15; 22.04.15; 22.10.16; 21 October 2016

Office use only		
Volunteer details added to database	Date	ID no.



## Volunteer Policy

### Purpose of the Volunteer Policy

This policy sets out the framework of how volunteers are managed and forms part of the Volunteer Handbook and Volunteer Agreement.

### Commitment to volunteering

The Forestry Commission is the Government department responsible for overseeing the protection and management of Britain's woodlands and forests and through volunteering aims to increase the number of people actively engaged in the environment. By raising awareness and understanding of the wide ranging opportunities and benefits afforded by volunteering, they want to enable and empower people to become involved.

### Principles and values

Westonbirt appreciates that volunteers are vital in helping to fulfil its mission – 'to connect people with trees to improve the quality of life.' Volunteer activities support the arboretum's objectives and meet our volunteering goals, namely:

- Support Westonbirt through involvement with its long-term care and management and by helping to achieve policy objectives.
- Involve the local community in our work to share the benefits of volunteering with everyone including the less able and those involved in rehabilitation programmes.
- Satisfy volunteer aspirations through a safe, supportive and responsive environment.
- Encourage participation in, and learning about Westonbirt's conservation and heritage.
- Be inclusive to all.

As a core part of our team all volunteers are expected to support and abide by our values; these are:

- Teamwork – working together for the benefit of Westonbirt and the wider Forestry Commission.
- Professionalism – enjoying and taking pride in achieving high standards.
- Respect – treating colleagues with consideration and trust, and recognising each person's contribution.
- Learning – optimising opportunities to gain skills and knowledge.
- Creativity – not being afraid to try new ways of doing things.

### Relationship between Westonbirt and volunteers

We recognise that the roles of volunteers must complement and bring added value to the work of paid staff through the output delivered, whilst at the same time achieving pleasurable and satisfying involvement that in itself is valuable to volunteers.

Volunteers are not bound by a contract or obligation, only by mutual agreement that may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. There is no intent for an employment relationship to be created either now or in the future.

### Volunteer management

We are committed to our volunteer programme. Volunteering is an integral element of the arboretum's strategic plan that aspires to manage volunteers and the activities in which they are involved within its professional standards and guidelines.

### Duty of care

The safety and well being of everyone at Westonbirt is of paramount importance. We operate a robust system of instruction, training and supervision for their health and safety. Volunteers must ensure they are aware of the demands of the activity and their ability to fulfil the tasks involved, to keep themselves safe, and to ensure their actions do not jeopardise the safety of others. Volunteers must adhere to the arboretum's health and safety policies and regulations, and to the risk assessment for their particular role. Volunteers must report all accidents, near misses, hazards and potential hazards to staff.

In the unlikely event of an emergency it is important that staff know whom to contact. Volunteers are asked to provide these details and any medical considerations that may effect their volunteering; all information is stored confidentially and accessed by staff only if an emergency occurs.

Appropriate public and personal liability insurance covers volunteers undertaking tasks on site or involved in outreach events at the request of, and under the management of Westonbirt.

## **Welfare of children and vulnerable people**

Westonbirt is committed to protecting children and vulnerable people during their visit to the arboretum and every precaution is taken to keep them safe. All staff and volunteers are expected to comply with the Forestry Commission Child Protection Policy that should be viewed as mutually beneficial for the protection of children, staff and volunteers alike. Some volunteer roles necessitate a disclosure check (DBS); the process is managed by staff and paid for by the Forestry Commission.

## **Recruitment**

We develop volunteering opportunities that fit an agreed business or community need and complement and add value to the arboretum and the work of staff. Volunteers will support and not replace staff. The personal benefits that volunteering brings to individuals and communities is recognised and Westonbirt is committed to encouraging and enabling people to participate.

## **Equality statement**

Our approach is all inclusive to reach people from all backgrounds and socio-economic groups and ensures no discrimination on the grounds of race, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender, marital status, disability or age. We actively work with external organisations to increase social inclusion including underrepresented and disadvantaged groups who will gain benefit from involvement with Westonbirt and its resources.

Westonbirt develops viable and sustainable new activities to support its work. Opportunities are advertised internally and externally to reach and involve a wide and diverse community. Volunteers may be invited to attend a meeting with staff where a selection process is required.

## **Training**

Westonbirt encourages a learning environment and recognises the need for volunteers to receive necessary training. Appropriate activity training is provided, supplemented by information about Westonbirt's ethos, historic importance and the Forestry Commission's management approach. Staff are given guidance in working with volunteers.

To maintain proficiency, ongoing training and updates are provided throughout the year which volunteers need to attend. Some activities may have a limited trial period; all activities are evaluated.

## **Supervision and support**

Westonbirt acknowledges that a supportive environment is mutually beneficial. Staff provide a strong framework to support volunteer involvement and development, take responsibility for supervision, management and welfare and treat volunteers with the same respect and courtesy as staff. Volunteers are encouraged to provide mutual support for each other.

## **Communication**

Westonbirt operates a strong and clear communication structure amongst its staff and volunteers. We will let volunteers know their staff contact who is responsible for briefing and updating volunteers within their team, and volunteers are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the various information outlets accessible both on and off site.

The volunteer newsletter is sent directly to volunteers on a regular basis.

We encourage feedback from volunteers and arrange feedback sessions throughout the year. Where appropriate, volunteers are invited to a consultation process to ensure their opinions and comments are taken into account.

## **Recognition**

Westonbirt is proud to involve volunteers in its work and recognises their contribution. The arboretum promotes volunteer news and achievements to its visitors and staff, and to the wider public\*. Staff reinforce this message daily to volunteers whilst engaged in their activities and more formally by arranging occasional social and 'thank you' events.

Volunteers receive a volunteer card giving entry to the arboretum and some of its events.

\*Photographs of volunteers undertaking their activities may be used by Westonbirt in articles or for promotional and fundraising purposes, if an individual does not want their photograph taken for this purpose, they should advise the photographer on the day and the member of staff overseeing the event.

### **Welfare**

The arboretum makes every effort to ensure volunteer welfare. Regular breaks are factored in to activity hours and a common room provided for staff and volunteers to access refreshments whilst on duty.

Westonbirt pays a contribution towards mileage expenses and volunteers are advised how they can claim if they wish to do so; the policy is reviewed annually.

Dependent on the role, regular volunteers are issued with appropriate uniform after a regular 6-month commitment and/or on completion of their training programme. Whilst volunteers are personally responsible for the upkeep of their uniform, it remains the property of the Forestry Commission and volunteers are asked to return it along with their name badge on withdrawal from Westonbirt.

### **Confidentiality**

Westonbirt respects the confidentiality of personal information and ensures compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998 principles.

Whilst involved in certain activities at Westonbirt, some volunteers may have access to, or be involved with confidential matters. Volunteers are expected to act in a professional manner and safeguard the confidentiality and sensitivity of information that may be acquired.

### **Problems and complaints**

Westonbirt will resolve problems and complaints fairly, sensitively and promptly. Clear procedures are adopted to inform volunteers of the process and the person responsible for overseeing it:

- When a problem or complaint is known, the Volunteer Supervisor and Volunteer Manager involve all parties in achieving a satisfactory resolution.
- If this is not possible, the Learning and Participation Manager is informed.
- If it remains unresolved, the arboretum Director is informed.
- The problem or complaint, actions and outcomes are recorded.

All matters are treated in total confidence.

### **Behaviour**

If the behaviour of a volunteer does not complement or support Westonbirt or its staff, the individual may be asked by their Supervisor or Volunteer Manager to adjust their behaviour. If behaviour does not improve, the Learning and Participation Manager will be informed. Persistent behavioural issues that remain unresolved will be dealt with by the arboretum Director and may lead to the volunteer being informed their services are no longer required. All stages of the process are recorded.

All matters are treated in total confidence.

### **Policy review**

The Volunteer Policy is reviewed on a regular basis.

## Volunteer Induction

Managing performance starts from the volunteer's first day. Induction is part of their training and learning programme and will have a lasting impact on performance and their role within the organisation. A successful induction will promote trust and co-operation and help to motivate the volunteer.

The purpose of induction is to help new volunteers understand Westonbirt, the wider Forestry Commission and their volunteer role.

### Who is responsible for an individual volunteer's induction?

Volunteer induction is the responsibility of the day-to-day manager/supervisor. Once all aspects have been covered, the volunteer signs the Volunteer Agreement which is counter signed by the manager/supervisor, and completes sections 8-11 on their application form. The application form and a copy of the signed Volunteer Agreement are returned to the Volunteer Manager to enable details to be entered on to the database.

### What happens with an effective induction programme?

- The new volunteer is made to feel welcome and part of the team.
- They have a better understanding of their team, the organisation and their role within it.
- They understand any health and safety issues relating to their role.
- Future training will be more effective and staff will be aware that volunteers have received the same introduction to their training programme.
- Best practice is followed and high standard's maintained.

Topic	Elements covered	Done ✓
<b>1. Introduction</b>	Welcome and brief overview of the session	
	Issue the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- badge</li> <li>- Volunteer Handbook (includes Volunteer Policy and Agreement)</li> <li>- volunteer's own application form to complete sections 8-11</li> </ul>	
<b>2. FC / Friends</b>	Westonbirt's aims, values and ethos including appropriate behaviour	
	Different departments and how they work together/site tour	
<b>3. Activity specifics</b>	Volunteer role and tasks involved, advise/issue specific information	
<b>4. Training, support &amp; supervision</b>	Outline training for the role and ongoing development Advise who to report to and where to find guidance/help	
<b>5. Health &amp; safety</b>	Issue risk assessment and discuss, ensure able to fulfil tasks, explain any PPE	
	Accident reporting procedure, location of First Aid boxes/First Aiders	
	Roles of Duty Manager, Visitor Services and how they provide support	
	Location of fire exits and emergency procedures; no smoking policy	
	'Safety in pairs' policy	
	Child Protection Policy and missing persons procedure; DBS if appropriate*	
	Reasons for carrying a radio and its operation (if appropriate)	
	Lyme disease guidance, bio-security (if appropriate)	
	Manual handling (mandatory), advise quarterly dates and <b>sign-up process**</b>	
<b>6. Welfare</b>	Common room facilities (advise back door code), need to take regular breaks	
	Attendance books and signing-in procedure	
	Mileage expenses forms and claims procedure	
	Uniform and volunteer card	
	Grievance procedure	
<b>7. Communication &amp; information</b>	Absence procedure and details of who to contact Volunteer newsletter emailed regularly Advise relevant diary/meeting dates, and where to find further information	
<b>8. Summary</b>	Any questions?	
<b>9. Signed paperwork</b>	Return completed and signed application form and photocopy of Volunteer Agreement (reverse of Volunteer Policy) to the Volunteer Manager	

**\*The list of ID documents needed for completion of DBS forms must be given to volunteers prior to the induction session.**

**\*\*Manual handling dates: Tues 7 Feb 10-11:30am; Sun 12 Feb 1.30-3pm; Wed 3 May 10-11:30am; Thu 3 Aug 2-3.30pm; all sessions are in Treetops, please book-in with Chris Meakin 0300 067 4856.**