

Volunteer Role Description

Role: Volunteer guide

Westonbirt guides introduce visitors to the special qualities of the arboretum by sharing their passion for this world famous collection of trees, and provide an important role in promoting the value of the arboretum as an internationally important scientific resource, learning destination, and a place to enjoy. This role is an opportunity to learn about the arboretum's heritage and historical context, its scientific significance and how this Grade 1 listed landscape is managed and cared for today.

Application closing date: Saturday 31 December 2016

Training dates: starting January 2017 – please see below

Tasks involved

- Leading parties of visitors safely around the arboretum.
- Providing visitors with a thought provoking walk focussing on our key messages.
- Tailoring the walk to suit the specific preferences and needs of different people.
- Answering visitor questions or advising where they may obtain the information.
- Promoting Westonbirt and its events; promoting the Friends' Charity and membership.

Essential skills & qualities

Reliability, enthusiasm and confidence in speaking to groups of people, with the ability to engage and communicate effectively. Willingness to undertake training and positively promote our key messages. Happy to be out in all weather and remain enthusiastic!

Desirable skills & qualities

Knowledge of Westonbirt and its trees is advantageous although if you are enthusiastic and willing to learn then we can do the rest!

Welfare

Sturdy boots/shoes are needed as terrain may be uneven, rough or muddy and you will be walking on and off mainly level paths in the arboretum in ALL weather conditions; we recommend bringing suitable clothing dependent on weather conditions; an on-site radio is carried for communication.

A contribution to mileage expenses may be claimed.

Commitment & frequency of activity

There are different types of walks running throughout the year March to end of October; walks last about 1½ hours. We ask for 1-2 walks per month, this may rise during our busy autumn period.

Training required

Following the open morning, interested volunteer guides may join a guided walk of the Old Arboretum with further opportunities to ask questions about the role. The full training programme is undertaken over the following 5 days starting at 10am and finishing by 3pm:

- Saturday 14 & 28 January 2017
- Saturday 11 & 28 February
- Saturday 11 March

Each day has a different theme and is a combination of 'class room' and practical, followed by a period of 'shadowing' experienced guides, before being 'signed off'; we would hope your training to be completed by May/June 2017.

Team meetings are held 4 times a year and include additional training, the opportunity to give feedback and the chance to socialise with other volunteer guides. Guides may seek and share specialist knowledge if they wish, and may undertake additional research using Westonbirt's library and archive resources.

www.forestry.gov.uk/westonbirt-volunteering