



THE VOLUNTEERS' HANDBOOK

A guide and
information for
Volunteers



Welcome!

Firstly, let us welcome you to Newport's valuable volunteer network. Thank you for choosing to dedicate some of your free time to volunteering with us, and allow us to thank you in advance, for all of the hard work and dedication that you will no doubt bring to all of the exciting projects that are taking place across Newport.

The volunteers that make up Newport's volunteer groups are invaluable, and we want to make sure that your work with us goes as smoothly as possible.

The purpose of this handbook is to offer you, as volunteers, a one-stop reference point for any questions you may have either as a new volunteer or as an experienced volunteer. Of course, we don't expect you to simply rely solely on this handbook; our Volunteers Co-ordinator is always at the end of the telephone or at the end of an email to help you with any questions or queries you may have.

Let us thank you once again for volunteering. We hope that you will find it a rewarding and enjoyable experience. Newport is an exciting place to be at the moment - and as a volunteer, you are part of the regeneration and developments that are taking place.

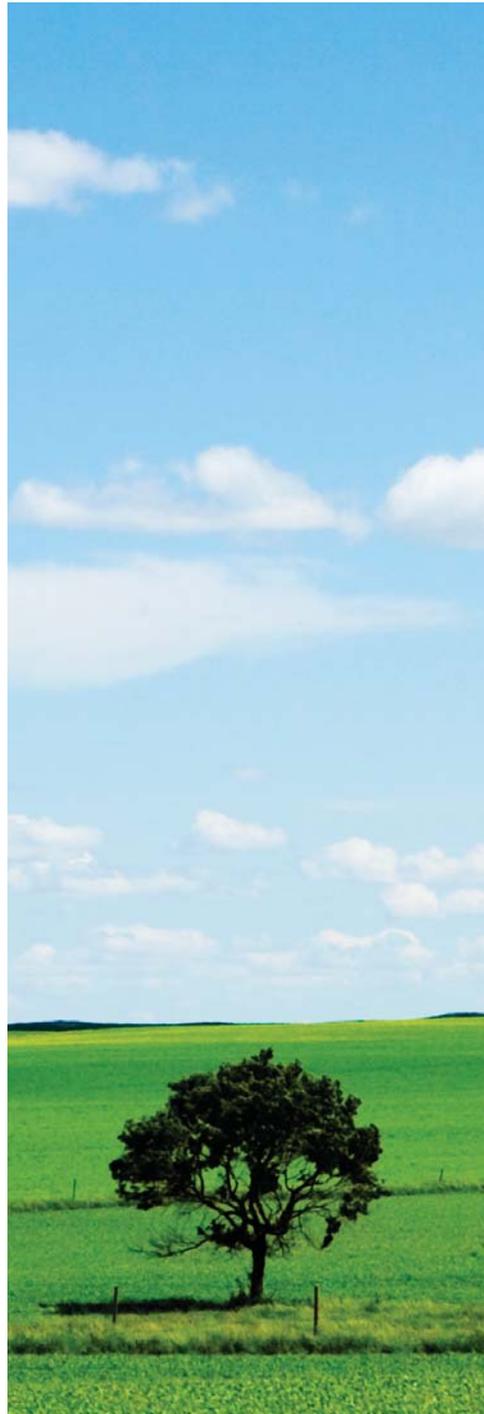
For further information please contact Emma Stowell-Corten, The Countryside Service Volunteer Co-ordinator. Her telephone number is **07947256579** or you can contact her via email at countryside.vols@newport.gov.uk

Emma will be able to liaise directly with the Countryside Service to help answer any queries or questions you may have, as well as offering support and co-ordination for your task days and projects. For copies of this booklet, in Welsh or other formats, please contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator also.



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Let Us Introduce You To The Countryside Service

You may already know about the Countryside Service and its function within Newport City Council, however, allow us to give you a more in-depth insight into the Service and how the Volunteer's Network fits in.

Newport is a rural country, made up of 70% countryside.

The Countryside Service is part of the Newport City Council, for The Environment and Economy directorate. Its principal purpose is to sustain and enhance the quality and diversity of Newport's countryside and open spaces, and to promote it as being accessible to all. It contributes to the City Council's objectives, by protecting and enhancing its unique environment and ensuring that Newport continues to develop as a greener, more attractive and inclusive authority.

It aims to develop understanding of countryside areas, whilst also aiming to promote respect and care for the local environment. By encouraging residents to become volunteers, we hope to build strong communities with a heightened level of responsibility and respect for all open spaces and the work carried out.

Overall the Countryside Service aims to:

- Provide countryside facilities that are well-managed and maintained for all to enjoy.
- Manage all public rights of way and countryside access.
- Protect trees, hedgerows whilst encouraging and enhancing biodiversity.
- Conserve and protect the diverse landscape and ecology of Newport.
- Provide sufficient activities and events as well as educational programmes for residents of all ages.
- Support the area's natural beauty by protecting and



The Countryside Service team is based at Newport Civic Centre and can be contacted by calling 01633 656656, or at Newport City Council, Civic Centre, Newport, NP20 4UR. Alternatively, you can email countryside.vols@newport.gov.uk

The Volunteer Co-ordinator is also a useful point of contact and is in place to act as a liaison between Newport City Council and the volunteer groups. The co-ordinator can be contacted on **07947256579**.

About Newport Countryside Service and The Newport Volunteers

Newport boasts a wealth of countryside and open spaces, all of which is made up from varied landscapes which residents and visitors are encouraged to enjoy and participate in.

From sprawling countryside to ancient woodlands, a nationally recognised Wetland area, a developing coastal access path and a host of nature reserves and footpaths, Newport is rich in beautiful open space areas.

These areas all need to be protected, in order to ensure that they can be enjoyed to their maximum potential by those who wish to use them, and indeed, further generations.

One of the largest issues faced by the Countryside Service is a lack of understanding and appreciation from residents local to Countryside. By engaging local citizens in volunteer groups, we hope to develop relationships with communities in order to grow and develop respect and enjoyment of the open space areas in the county.

The countryside and wildlife related volunteer groups, within the city and county, work with the Countryside Service to develop and manage selected areas and provide us with an invaluable 'on the ground' team who are likely to have more access to the selected areas than the Service staff themselves have. The groups and organisations currently working within this network are: The Footpath Volunteer Group, The Coastal Access Volunteers, Nash College Student Group, Ringland Wood Group, Allt Yr Yn Wardens and Graig Wood Wardens. We also work with the RSPB and the Countryside Council for Wales.

We have a varied programme of volunteer task days set out each year, with volunteers invited to participate, be

the tasks within their own groups or within other groups. We can provide vocational training allowing volunteers to build up skills that may be difficult to gain anywhere else. This training, and the skills learned from it, are invaluable within your assigned volunteer group and are also useful within everyday life.

We are always looking for reliable and hardworking volunteers to participate within one of our well-established groups, and we welcome people of all ages, abilities and from all backgrounds.



Newport Countryside Service Volunteer Charter

Our volunteer network is a valuable and significant asset to the Countryside Service. We recognise this and we understand that volunteers play a large part in enabling Newport City Council to enable it to fulfil its Countryside Service aims.

The Countryside Service has an ambitious programme of set tasks to achieve, and volunteers are recognised as an essential element within our efforts to achieve these goals. Whatever commitment you are able to offer us, regardless of time, it will be valued and we guarantee that you will get just as much benefit from it as the Countryside Service does.

Volunteering within Newport's Countryside Service will be a rewarding yet challenging experience. Your work will be productive, regardless of whether you commit to a group on a long-term basis or are simply joining a set day task. However, just as you expect certain commitments from us, there are a number of agreements that we need to be assured of by any individual volunteering. These are laid out in our Volunteer Charter, which is...

We Will:

- Provide you with a type of volunteering that suits your abilities and interests to the best.
- Provide you with all of the training that your role requires, in order to ensure that you can carry out any tasks of which you are a part of successfully and safely.
- Ensure that you are aware, at all times, of the supervisor in charge of set tasks and the warden who is responsible for your group.
- Give you all of the tools required for the job that you are carrying out, and also advise you of the necessary equipment that you are required to supply yourself, such as wellies and wet weather gear.

- Treat you with the respect that all of our hardworking volunteers deserve, and ensure that you feel valued and appreciated at all times.
- Pay any expenses incurred; i.e: travel costs.
- Keep you updated with any developments or changes within the service.
- Ensure, at all times, that you have safe working conditions and that you are aware of all of the health and safety aspects that your role requires you and us to fulfil.
- Listen to your needs and visions for your projects.
- Keep all of your information confidential.



As A Volunteer You Agree To:

- Abide by all of the health and safety procedures outlined to you at all times.
- Work within and promote the aims of Newport's Countryside Service and work within the procedures outlined for all tasks.
- Provide us with a reasonable level of commitment and keep us up-to-date whenever you cannot meet with your agreed time commitments, or should you wish to, no longer volunteer.
- Represent the Countryside Service positively and carry out your role as safely and reliably as your abilities allow.
- Inform us of any changes to your health or general fitness, so that we do not task you with inappropriate work.
- Attend any training and support sessions in connection with your volunteer role.
- Abide by confidentiality policies regarding any information about volunteers, staff and the Service itself.



Expenses for Volunteers on Council Projects

We appreciate fully that you are committing your free time to the Service as a volunteer; therefore, Newport City Council will reimburse you for any out of pocket expenses.

Mileage Rates

- Car mileage 33 pence per mile
- Motor Cycle 22 pence per mile
- Pedal Cycle 7 pence per mile
- Passengers: 5 pence per mile may be claimed for each additional named passenger within a vehicle*

(*passengers must be other volunteers in order to claim this allowance)

Passenger miles are not payable in respect of private motorbikes.

Fares

The Authority is committed to a preference for the use of public transport whenever reasonable and practical. There are a number of reasons for this preference, such as the promotion of public transport is in line with the Council's aim to support long-term government goals on sustainability.

Where a volunteer travels by bus, an original receipt or proof of payment made for the journey must be obtained and submitted with the claim for reimbursement.

Meals

A meals allowance is not payable where a volunteer is undertaking duties within the administrative boundary of the City of Newport. The only exception to this will be where a volunteer is undertaking unplanned duties and is therefore unable to make provision or take a meal in accordance with their usual arrangements.

Please Note:

- In all cases, VAT receipts will be required as evidence of expenditure and all expenses will need to be listed in full. An expenses form is included within the Volunteers Pack and additional copies can be obtained from the Volunteer's Co-ordinator.
- Any expenses must be agreed with your group co-ordinator prior to making purchases.
- If you travel by train or bus, you are entitled to a full reimbursement of your fare. Retain all tickets in order to claim back these expenses. These should be attached to your Expenses Claim Form.
- Journeys and purchases should be recorded clearly on your claim form, which should be returned to the Volunteer Co-ordinator or returned to Jo Gossage, Countryside Service, Newport City Council, Civic Centre, Newport. NP20 4UR, by the agreed deadline in order to be processed for payment.

Be Environmentally Aware!

Do you need to drive? Can you car share? Think of your carbon footprint! To encourage this, we will pay an additional 5p per mile for each additional car passenger.



Volunteer Guidelines:

This brochure highlights all of the expectations required from volunteers within the service, as well as the assurances provided by Newport City Council's Countryside Service to its volunteers.

What Is A Volunteer?

By definition, a Countryside Volunteer is an individual who offers their time, experience, knowledge and skills without financial gain. Volunteers help us to achieve our service objectives whilst also gaining experience within the Countryside Service. The service and work carried out by volunteers provides a benefit to the local community.

Volunteers do not have a contract of employment and are not reimbursed for their time; however, allowances will be made for out of pocket expenses.

The role of volunteers is laid out in this brochure. By agreeing to be a volunteer, you have a number of rights. These include:

- Knowing exactly what is expected of you whilst acting as a volunteer.
- Receiving any necessary training needed to carry out tasks.
- To know points of contact.
- To be able to say 'no' where appropriate.
- To have safe working conditions.
- To be free of discrimination on all grounds.
- To be treated with due respect and consideration.
- To be provided with the right tools and equipment for your work.



Who Can Volunteer?

Volunteering opportunities are open to anyone who may have a special interest in the countryside. We actively seek to recruit volunteers from all parts of the county and from all backgrounds, cultures, abilities and age groups.

To apply to become a volunteer we require you to fill out and return the necessary paperwork, as outlined on the checklist. Once onboard you will be regularly encouraged to meet your supervisor and group on a regular basis, to ensure that you get the most from your volunteer experience. Prior to being accepted, you will meet with a member of the team to discuss your aims and ambitions within the Service.

Newport City Council reserves the right to decline a prospective volunteer at anytime and references will be taken up on all applicants.

In certain circumstances we may need to carry out a CRB (Criminal Record Bureau) check. These circumstances involve individuals who will be working with children and vulnerable adults.

Once approved, we will write to you to welcome you to the Service. You will be sent a full description of your role and an outline of your first meeting and training session, along with relevant contact details for your group.

Records

We will keep a record of all volunteers who are working with us. These details will remain confidential and will only be accessed by relevant individuals within the Service. However, you will be written to on a regular basis with information regarding volunteer programmes, task days and updates.

You will receive full support from Wardens within the Service and the Volunteer Co-ordinator, all of whom will be able to assist with any issues or problems you may have.



Health and Safety

We have responsibilities to all volunteers to ensure their well being when working with us. We will carry out risk assessments and provide details of these where appropriate, particularly when it comes to the use of tools and working alone and within practical tasks.

It is essential that you be aware of your own safety and that of those around you at all times. Protective personal clothing should be worn when required and suitable weatherproof clothing should also be worn.

On each set task day a trained first aider will be on site, as will a first aid kit.

Any accidents should be reported immediately to either the Warden in charge of the task, or the Countryside Service at 01633 656656.

Health and Safety Policy Objectives

Over the next few years, Newport City Council aims to achieve, maintain or improve the following objectives:

1. All hazards that present a risk to Volunteers and/or other people's health and safety will be subject to a risk assessment.
2. The significant finding of risk assessments will be recorded and revised periodically and will be revised periodically should circumstances change.
3. Following risk assessments, measures will be taken to eliminate hazards or to reduce risks to the lowest level reasonably practical. Measures taken shall follow the proffered hierarchy of risk control as set down in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
4. The Task Warden will ensure that arrangements are made to implement the health and safety measures that are identified in risk assessments, and will monitor and review the effectiveness of the measures.



5. Risk Assessments, the Health and Safety Policy, Service Area policies and any other appropriate documents will be brought to the attention of all volunteers.
6. All volunteers will receive comprehensive information, instruction and training relevant to the work they undertake and their knowledge, experience and abilities.
7. Emergency procedures will be devised and volunteers instructed accordingly.
8. Adequate first aid arrangements will be made for all staff and volunteers.
9. All accidents will be investigated, recorded and reported with the aim of improving health and safety measures.
10. Measures will be taken to ensure that appropriate work equipment is selected, used and maintained in such a way that risks to health and safety are minimised.

Policy

This is a summarised version of Newport City Council's Health and Safety Policy. A full version can be obtained from the Volunteers Co-ordinator.

Our Duties to You:

- Ensuring workplaces are safe and without risks to health.
- Ensuring equipment and machinery is safe and safe systems of work are set and followed.
- Ensuring all articles and substances used are stored and moved safely.
- Providing adequate welfare facilities.
- Ensuring appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision is provided for reasons of health and safety.

Your Duties:

Every member of the workforce has responsibilities under the law and these are reflected in the health and safety policy. All members of the workforce must take reasonable care for their own and other people's health and safety. On a day-to-day basis this means making sure that you are aware of what should and should not be done for reasons of health and safety, and also following your training and instruction. You should also report any hazards that you come across and make sure that your assigned warden is aware of any injuries that either you or your colleagues have sustained whilst at work.



Smoke Free Policy

All volunteers are expected to abide by the current Welsh No-Smoking Laws and the Newport City Council Smoking Policy. A copy is available on request.

Insurance

Whilst carrying out agreed voluntary work, all Volunteers will be covered by Newport City Council's public liability insurance, unless otherwise stated in writing.

The insurance position is as follows:

1. Newport City Council holds a public liability insurance policy which indemnifies it against sums which it shall become legally liable to pay as compensation arising out of bodily injury, illness, loss or damage to property, etc. Jointly indemnified with the Council are employees and volunteers acting on its behalf, so that if such claims are pursued against them personally, the policy will operate accordingly.
2. The Council operates a Personal Accident Policy in respect of countryside volunteers whilst engaged on official duties on behalf of the authority.

The proposals for volunteers engaged in their agreed duties are therefore as follows:

1. Any necessary training will be offered
2. No power equipment will be used unless appropriate training has been given.
3. The City Council will supply all necessary tools and materials if required.

Equal Opportunities

Newport City Council is committed to adhering to its Equal Opportunities Policy. A full copy of this policy is available upon request.

Age

We welcome Volunteers of all ages, however, Volunteers under the age of 18 will need appropriate permissions and supervision at all time.



And Finally...

Always Be Prepared!

We all know how changeable the Welsh weather can be. Make sure that you check the forecast before heading out for any volunteer work. Ensure that you are dressed appropriately, wearing wet weather and warmer gear where appropriate. During hot weather ensure that you have applied sun lotion and wear a hat. Also ensure that you have a plentiful supply of water with you at all times.

Working Alone?

If you are working alone, please make sure that you inform somebody. Leave the information of your location and activities with a friend, neighbour or partner. Alternatively, inform the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

For more information contact:

Countryside Service:

T: 00000 000000

E: Joanne.gossage@newport.gov.uk

A: Civic Centre, Newport, NP20 4UR

Volunteer Co-ordinator:

T: 00000 00000

E: countrysidevol@newport.gov.uk

City Contact Centre:

T: 01633 656656

Alternatively, contact the Warden in charge of your group:

Warden Name.....

T: 00000 000000

E:

