



Dear Countryside volunteer

## ELCV – Wanted new trustees!

I am the chairperson of the East Lothian Countryside Volunteers (ELCV), the umbrella charity for all countryside volunteers in East Lothian.

We urgently need more people to join as trustees to help run our charity. Without another three or four new trustees, very likely the charity will be unable to continue. **For this reason, I am writing to all countryside volunteers to invite you to consider stepping forward to join us as a trustee.**

Please read on to find out:

- what ELCV does
- why we need new trustees
- what trustees do - and how to find out more if you are interested in getting involved.

**If you wish to volunteer as a trustee, please get in touch with me by Friday 12 May 2023.**

Thereafter, our next ELCV trustees meeting is in Haddington at 2.15pm on Friday 26 May 2023. We would of course welcome anyone who decides to join us as a trustee at that meeting.

### What ELCV does

There are around 380 countryside volunteers in East Lothian, organised into more than a dozen groups under the supervision of the Council's countryside services team (see Box).

East Lothian countryside volunteer groups		
• Barns Ness – sheep checking	• Friends of Yellowcraig	• North Berwick Eider Monitoring
• Dunbar Conservation Volunteers	• Junior Rangers	• North Berwick & Traprain Laws Pony Groups
• East Lothian Volunteer Path Wardens	• Mountain Hare Monitoring Group	• Plant, Bee & Butterfly Surveyors
• Friends of Aberlady Local Nature Reserve	• Friends of Levenhall Links	• River Tyne – Control of Invasive plants
	• North Berwick Conservation Volunteers	

ELCV's main purpose, as a charity, is to win extra funding to support what the volunteers do. We have raised **almost £22,000** in the last five years and projects we have assisted include:

- Aberlady Volunteer Hub, a new base for volunteers on Aberlady reserve. It cost ~£5,900 with funding secured from the Scottish Ornithologists Club, Wemyss & March Estate, Gullane Area Community Council, Cala Homes and private donations.
- Blindwells Graylings Butterflies. With £1,000 grant assistance from Butterfly Conservation Scotland (East), the project relocated a colony of endangered butterfly of high conservation concern away from a new housing development.
- Tyne - Giant Hogweed eradication. We got £1,000 from Scottish Natural Heritage in 2019 to help start the project. We continue to work with landowners to rid the Tyne and its tributaries of Giant Hogweed and other invasive species.



- Some £4,500 raised to buy protective clothing, machinery and training for all volunteer groups with grants and donations secured from Sustrans, local businesses including the North Berwick Golf Club and private donors.

### Why we need new trustees

As a charity, ELCV operates under a constitution approved by OSCR, the Scottish charity regulator. A board of trustees manages the work, with trustees approved by ELCV members every year at the AGM, as required by the constitution.

While most volunteers are also ELCV members - and thereby eligible to vote for the trustees - in practice only a minority attend the AGM each year. Consequently, since inception in 2017, the board has gradually reduced in numbers from 12 initially to the current total of seven.

Four of the seven trustees are now approaching the 6-years limit, after which they can no longer serve as trustees under the constitution. We fear that that it will not be practicable to continue as a charity unless we can maintain and ideally increase the number of trustees. Realistically, by the time of our next AGM scheduled for September 2023, we need to recruit at least three or four new trustees.

We do not have to wait until the next AGM, however, to accept new trustees. People can step forward at any time and be co-opted to the board, until members approve them at the AGM.

### What the trustees do and how to get involved

The ELCV trustees meet as a board every two months, usually in Haddington. The Council's countryside department guide and support our work and Dave Wild or another ranger always joins these meetings.

At each meeting, we review progress with projects we are supporting and consider other similar opportunities as they arise. We also hear from the countryside team about volunteer and conservation work and discuss issues arising. Trustees sponsor individual projects, so they also work a little outside the formal board meetings. Generally, though, the total time commitment for each trustee is modest, usually no more than a few hours a month.

You can browse our website homepage <http://www.elcv.org.uk> for more information about ELCV. It includes a business plan summarising current projects which can be viewed at <https://www.elcv.org.uk/charity/projects/>

If you interested in or have any questions about becoming an ELCV trustee or have decided to volunteer as a trustee I would love to hear from you as soon as possible:

- Please speak to any of the trustees you may already know. The current trustees are named and pictured on our website [www.elcv.org.uk/charity/trustees-4/](http://www.elcv.org.uk/charity/trustees-4/).
- If you would like to volunteer as a trustee or discuss this without any commitment or have any questions, please email [chair@elcv.org.uk](mailto:chair@elcv.org.uk) with your phone number and I will get in touch.

Thank you for your interest and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Dick Gill  
ELCV chairperson  
8 April 2023