Volunteer Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

Conservation Volunteers are highly regarded within East Lothian Council Countryside Services (ELCCS). It is recognised that Volunteers provide added value and benefit in managing sites across the area and their work is greatly appreciated. This guide has been produced for the Countryside Volunteer (CV) who gives up valuable time to help ELCCS. It also provides guidance to countryside staff who work with, or want to work with, Countryside Volunteers.

This document provides the rationale behind what being a volunteer entails, together with the principles and procedures that are there to ensure that volunteers can carry out their role safely and in accordance with East Lothian Council's (ELC) own policies and procedures.

Section A outlines the policies and procedures affecting CVs; Section B outlines the existing range of conservation volunteering opportunities that are available.

The appendices provides a registration form which includes the volunteer agreement, an overview of risk assessments and a list of criteria for volunteer group organisers to consider when preparing for an activity.

SECTION A POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This section will cover the policies and procedures that relate to Countryside Volunteer recruitment and employment. Specifically, it addresses five requirements;

- To set out the principles governing the involvement of Countryside Volunteers (CVs) with the Countryside Service
- To provide relevant information and support to CVs
- To ensure CVs are treated fairly
- To describe what a CV may expect from East Lothian Council and vice-versa
- To ensure the integrity of East Lothian Council is maintained

2. VOLUNTEER POLICY

2.1 Commitment to Volunteer Involvement

East Lothian Council Countryside Service (ELCCS) recognises the valuable contribution that Countryside Volunteers (CV) make and seeks to promote the importance and benefits of volunteering.

2.2 Volunteer Roles and Relationships

A CV is anyone who, without financial remuneration, beyond reimbursement for out of pocket expenses, gives their time to assist the work of ELCCS.

CVs roles will be developed and managed to complement those of paid staff and they will not be used to supplant nor displace paid staff.

CV positions will be well defined and match, as far as reasonably possible, volunteers' skills, abilities and aspirations.

2.3 Volunteer Entitlements and Conditions

CVs are entitled to conditions comparable to paid staff in relation to insurance, out of pocket expenses, induction, training, personal development and health and safety in compliance with relevant legislation.

2.4 Equal Opportunities ELC is committed to equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination based on age, gender, national or ethnic origin, disabilities, economic status, religion or sexual orientation. CVs will be expected to adhere to anti-discriminatory practices.

2.5 Expectations for / of Countryside Volunteers

2.5.1 ELC Countryside staff will ensure that all CVs will;

- Be valued and recognised and treated with fairness and consideration
- Be reimbursed (when requested) for appropriate expenses
- Be provided with insurance cover
- Have specific lines of support and supervision
- Have appropriate induction and training
- Have an opportunity for personal development
- Have access to an appeals process for complaints, grievances and disciplinary matters
- Have safe and healthy working conditions
- Be consulted in decisions relevant to their roles and responsibilities
- Be able to request a reference in relation to their voluntary work.

2.5.2 In reply, CVs are expected to;

- Work within agreed ELC policies, guidelines and legal requirements
- Be reliable, trustworthy and accountable
- Participate in induction and training
- Respect any confidentiality of private or personal information and not use the information for your own benefit or disclose the information, except where required or permitted to do so by law.
- Contribute in a constructive manner to the resolution of problems and conflicts
- Communicate ideas, opinions, questions and concerns to an appropriate person within ELC
- Support and promote the aims and standards of ELC
- Give appropriate notification if unable to continue volunteering.

3. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION OF COUNTRYSIDE VOLUNTEERS

3.1 Recruitment

3.1.1 It is important to provide adequate information to potential CVs to make an informed choice. ELCCS Recruitment information should contain;

- A description of the work likely to be undertaken by CVs
- Information describing where and when the work will take place
- Whether particular skills / experience are required
- Whether specific training will be offered
- Payment (upon request) of expenses
- What we can and cannot offer

3.2 Selection

3.2.1 ***Information to prospective CVs*****.** New recruits should be contacted as soon as practical. Additional information, if appropriate, to be sent to prospective CVs should include;

- A registration form – see Appendix A
- A description of the types of volunteer opportunities currently available – see Appendix B
- ELC mission statement, aims and core principles

3.2.2 ***Meeting / Initial Interview***. This should be kept informal and structured to be of benefit to both ELCCS and the potential volunteer. Consideration should be given to;

- Allocating sufficient time to conduct the meeting at a relaxed pace in a safe environment
- Ascertaining volunteer's skills, interests, motivations and likely time commitment
- Ascertaining whether any training is required and how to deliver this

- Encouraging the volunteer to raise any questions of their own

3.2.3 ***Accepting a Volunteer.*** Ideally the person conducting the initial interview should have the authority to appoint the volunteer being interviewed.

The appointment should be confirmed (email / letter) setting out what has been agreed verbally. At this time any specific task descriptions and guidance information should be sent out to the CV.

3.2.4 ***References.*** References may be required.

3.2.5 ***Scottish Criminal Records / Disclosure Checks***. Criminal record checks, if appropriate, should be processed in addition to and not as a substitute for the planned selection process.

3.2.6 ***Trial Periods.*** After selection CVs should be placed as soon as possible. Where CVs are involved in a long-term deployment, a trial period is usually agreed by both parties, enabling the volunteer and the ELCCS to review progress, and when necessary, re-negotiate agreed tasks.

3.2.7 ***Rejecting Volunteers*.** If a CV is found to be unsuitable, the reasons should be conveyed to the volunteer and an opportunity allowed for face-to-face discussions to take place. This will allow both parties to discuss

options. In all cases where a resolution cannot be found a letter of regret should be sent out thanking the volunteer for the interest they have shown.

3.2.8 ***Confidentiality.*** All information on application forms, references and any written material relating to volunteers should be treated as confidential and stored securely and in line with the Data Protection Act. Applicants will be informed of this.

3.2.9 ***Volunteer Agreement.*** In specific long-term situations it may be appropriate to draw up a specific written agreement between the CV and ELCCS. This will include the following agreed information

- The undertakings of both the CV and ELCCS
- Dated signatures of both parties

This agreement should be reviewed and updated at regular intervals.

However, a general agreement is included with the Registration / Volunteer Application form.

4. INDUCTION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

4.1 An appropriate member of ELCCS should set time aside to familiarise new CVs with key information and personnel. These include;

4.1.1 ***Personnel;***

- ELCCS staff and support team
- EL Countryside Ranger Staff
- ELC Amenity Service personnel (Countryside Squad)

4.1.2 ***Practicalities;***

- A tour of the site / building where the volunteer will be working
- Tour of the facility – e.g. fire drill, kitchen, WCs,
- Volunteering duties – hours of volunteering, tasks, responsibilities
- Contact information for key personnel
- Introduction to the task(s) for which the volunteer has been employed

4.1.3 ***Policies;***

- An introduction to the aims and objectives of East Lothian Council;
    - Mission Statement
    - Aims and Core Principles
    - Health and Safety Policy (see section 7.0)
    - Equal Opportunities Policy
- An explanation of any relevant house rules – e.g. Internet use

- Health & Safety – relevant policies / procedures
- Safe operating procedures – for specific tools/ safe handing techniques
- Risk assessments – copies to be made available of relevant risk assessments to CVs and discussed
- First Aid – identification of First Aiders and procedures
- Lone working – additional procedures for volunteers working on their own (see section 8)
- Meetings – information on times of staff and / or volunteers meetings
- Expenses – procedure for claiming expenses
- Supervision – introduction of the idea and requirement for supervision at the initial stages
- Training – identify any training requirements. The exact amount of training will be determined dependent upon the tasks involved and volunteer's experience and ability
- Customer care
- Care of ELC property and equipment

5. CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

5.1 Insurance

Standard insurance (similar to all ELC staff) cover should be provided for all volunteers in respect of public liability, personal accident and professional indemnity.

5.2 Expenses

Reimbursement of reasonable expenses should be made available to all volunteers and will normally cover agreed travelling costs. Other out of pocket expenses may be agreed on a case-by-case basis, e.g. special clothing, training.

The volunteer should be provided with information on;

- Expenses paid
- What is covered
- Rates of reimbursement
- Procedures for claiming and method of payment

5.3 Information and Confidentiality

5.3.1 ***Personal Records.*** All personal records must be accorded the same confidentiality as for paid employees. ELCCS will act in accordance with ELC procedures and the Data Protection Act 2018.

5.3.2 ***Confidentiality.*** CVs should be made aware of their responsibilities in maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information relating to members of staff, other volunteers and members of the public, or matters relating to the business of ELCCS.

5.4 Holidays and Absences. Difficulties should not be put in the way of CVs making holiday arrangements or taking a leave of absence for personal reasons. CVs should notify a relevant member of the ELCCS as soon as possible.

5.5 GRIEVANCE, COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

5.5.1**. *Grievance.*** Grievances, when they occur, should be dealt with as soon as possible, between the CV and the member of ELCCS person immediately responsible for them.

5.5.2 ***Complaints.*** These may relate to a breach of policy, practice standards, they can be made by the CV against other individuals within ELC or by ELC staff against a volunteer.

5.5.3. ***Disciplinary Procedures.*** These may be taken against CVs who consistently fail to adhere to policies, procedures and / or standards, who fail to perform their duties satisfactorily, or who are guilty of breach of trust, dishonesty, substance abuse, physical or verbal abuse. At all times the CV and ELCCS should have the opportunity to discuss reasons for the dismissal.

6. MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

6.1 Support

A member of the Countryside Team will be appointed to supervise and provide support to the CV. Normally this will be the site's Countryside Ranger / task leader with which the CV is engaging. The way in which the CV is supported will depend upon the nature of the task / duty, the competence of the volunteer and the volunteer's motivation. The CVs motivation could be a factor of;

- A commitment to help conserve the environment
- A desire to make new friends
- Personal development
- Work experience / career development
- Intellectual stimulation
- Health / well-being benefits
- A commitment to ELCCS and the work it delivers

6.1.2 ***Methods of Support.*** These can either have a social or training focus;

- Informal techniques – being receptive, helpful and available
- Formal – e.g. through specific meetings, group discussions

6.2 Recognition

It is important that the efforts of CVs be recognised. This can be via;

- Informal recognition – simple 'thank-you'
- Involving CVs in decision making
- Public acknowledgement through media / events

- Arrangement of volunteer thank-you days
- Certificates / awards

6.3 Problems

The responsible person and the CV should deal with any problems immediately in a confidential manner. Options include;

- A re-examination of the CVs role
- A reminder of what is expected of the CV
- Re-training
- Re-assignment
- Allowing the CV to have time out
- Counselling out of the role

6.3.1 ***Counselling.*** Where a problem cannot be resolved then counselling a CV to leave could be in the best interest of ELCCS and the CV.

6.3.2. ***Dismissal.*** In these situations it is necessary to;

- Be immediate, direct and firm
- Announce rather than argue
- Avoid counselling, as this will have already taken place

6.4 Resignation

CVs will resign for a number of reasons – positive, negative and / or personal. It is always desirable to try to establish why CVs are leaving and to thank them for their contribution. An acknowledgement of their contribution may be appropriate.

7.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY OF VOLUNTEERS

7.1 East Lothian Council's Heath and Safety Policy applies equally to paid staff and to CVs. Every effort will be untaken to ensure all CVs carry out tasks in a healthy and safe manner. This will be achieved by;

- **First Aid**. For group tasks a member of ELCCS with a suitable first aid qualification will be on-site and will carry an appropriate first aid kit
- **Risk Assessments**. Both the task at hand and the area in which the group of CVs is carrying out work will have been subject to a risk assessment by a suitably qualified member of the ELCCS. These risk assessments will be explained to the group in advance of commencing any work
- **Safe Operating Procedures**. Where the task at hand involves the use of specific tools and / or movement of heavy / awkward materials, these will be identified to the group and specific instruction given
- **Clothing**. ELCCS will provide PPE for specific tasks where a need is identified. CVs will be expected to bring appropriate clothing / footwear of their own along for the nature of the task and this will be checked by the group leader prior to undertaking any work. CVs will also be expected to bring their own food and drink to sustain themselves
- **Self-assessment**. In addition to the safety mechanisms already identified, all CVs, will be expected to self-assess the risk prior to the commencement of any task. This includes informing the group leader of any health problems you have that may affect your ability to carry out the task.

8 LONE WORKING PROCEDURES

8.1.1 The aim of these Lone Working Procedures is to ensure that there is always someone who knows where you are working, so that you can be located and/or contacted in the event of an emergency.

8.1.2 Lone Working Procedures should be applied to situations where a person is working alone. Lone working should take place only if you, and your supervisor, are confident that you are safe and able to work alone.

8.1.3 Lone workers need to be experienced and fully understand the risks and precautions involved with lone working. This can only be achieved through adequate training or assessment. Once suitably trained, it is up to the CV to use these procedures appropriately and responsibly.

8.2 What is a 'Lone Worker'?

8.2.1 There are some circumstances where volunteers may find themselves in situations where they are classed to be 'lone working'.

8.2.2 'Lone working' is defined as a situation where "Work undertaken by the individual lone worker may be more risky, either because of the work itself, or due to the lack of on-hand support should something go wrong" (Leeds University, 2006). Lone working can occur during normal working hours at an isolated location within the normal workplace or when working outside normal working hours.

8.2.2 Lone Workers include: Path wardens, CVs checking ponies/sheep, volunteers monitoring of nesting birds and/or undertaking coastal people counts.

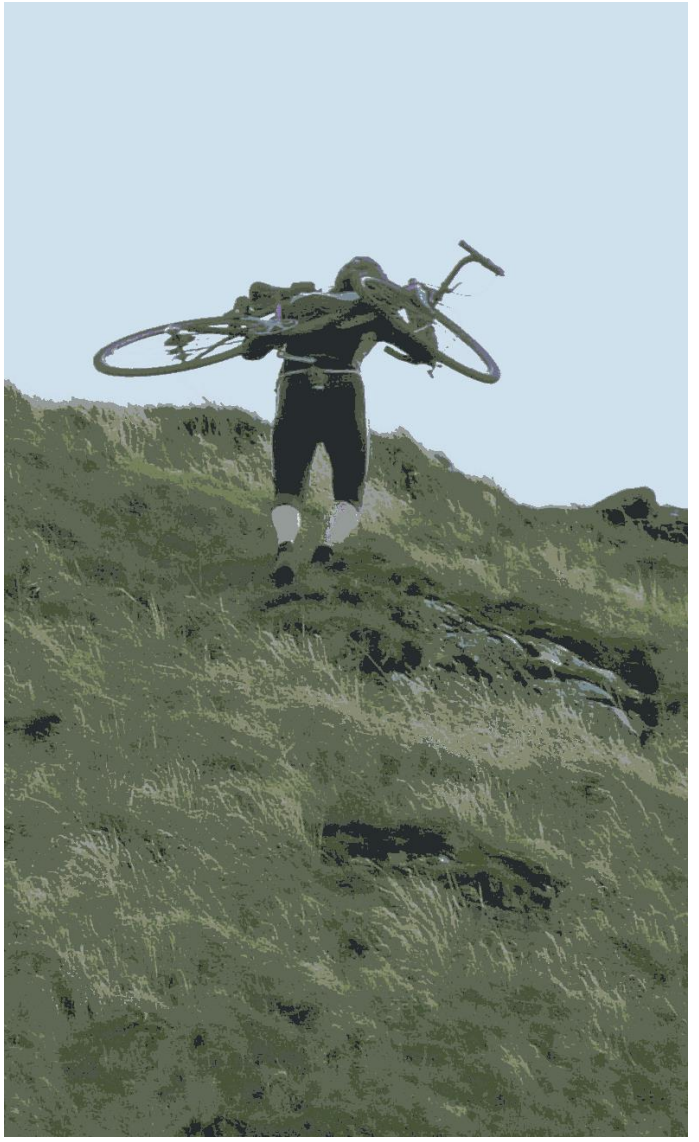
8.3 What Legislation Covers Lone Workers?

Employees taking part in lone working are covered by two pieces of legislation: the general duties of the Health and Safety at Work etc, Act 1974 and the specific duties of the Management of Health Safety at Work Regulations, 1999. These requirements are applicable to all work situations, particularly staff that are working alone or outside normal working hours (Ibid). The responsibilities detailed in the legislation are the employers alone and cannot be transferred to the lone worker (HSE, 1998). The situation with volunteers and their

status as ‘employees’ under the law remains uncertain, and as such any organisations using volunteers should consider them employees in regards to all health and safety matters, including lone working guidelines, in order to protect the safety of volunteers and to protect the organisation from prosecution. Employers must decide if the circumstances of the work and the risk could be adapted to avoid incidences of lone working. If this is not possible then thorough risk assessment of lone working must be carried out.

8.4 Assessing the Risk

8.4.1 ELCCS is responsible for identifying and assessing the risk to CV lone workers. Lone working itself may not be high risk, but the activity and / or location can be.



8.4.2 Risk assessments should be undertaken using standard ELC risk assessment guidance.

8.4.3 When assessing risk, a number of factors should be considered;

- Can lone working be avoided?
- Are there factors which may make an individual unsuited to the task to be performed?
    - Does the person have suitable training?
    - Does the person have suitable experience?
    - Can the period of lone working be reduced?
    - Do they have any known health problems?
    - Do they have a known disability, which may affect their ability to work alone safely?
    - Are they a new volunteer who may require specific training / supervision?
    - Is the person a new/expectant mother?
- If the location is remote,
    - Do they have suitable clothing?
    - Is shelter available?
    - Do they have access to first aid?
    - Do they have adequate means of communication?
    - What are the options for assistance?

8.5 Training and Supervision

8.5.1 Lone workers need to be experienced and fully understand the risks and precautions involved with lone working and ensure that they adhere to any prescribed systems of operating. This can only be achieved through adequate training. When the risks of a job have been ascertained, it is important to ensure that the employee has been thoroughly trained in how to mitigate these risks. Emergency procedures should be established and training given, with frequent refresher courses. Lone workers should have access to first aid kits and mobile lone workers should carry a kit with them. If the risk assessment indicates that the lone worker should be trained in first aid, then it is important that they receive this training. Sufficient training can help workers avoid panic in emergency situations.

8.5.2 When a CV is new to a job or to the situation in which they will be lone working, then the risk posed to them is considerably higher. In these circumstances, it is advisable to have a level of supervision before they are allowed to work entirely on their own.

8.5.3 A CV will only be asked to undertake lone working if ELCCS staff are confident it is within the volunteer's capability. The CV should indicate their willingness to operate as a lone worker.

8.5.4 Supervision is not just needed at the beginning of a volunteer's lone working, but should be periodic throughout the course of the work. Procedures should be put in place to ensure that the lone worker remains safe. These may include:

- Programmed visits to the lone worker
- Keeping regular (telephone) contact with the lone worker
- Installing automatic warning devices that operate if specific signals are not received periodically from the lone worker (e.g. SPOT GPS tracking recorders)
- Checks that the lone worker has returned to their desk or home after the completion of the task (HSE, 1998)
- Use of a 'Buddy System' (see 8.6)

8.6 The Buddy System

8.6.1 The buddy system is a simple 'checking in, checking out' mechanism, involving the CV and their chosen 'buddy' (usually a relation). The buddy system is not a fail-safe device to protect lone workers, but used properly, greatly reduces any potential risk to the lone worker.

8.6.2 The system works as follows.

1. Before commencing a task the CV contacts (preferably by directly speaking with) their chosen buddy
2. They indicate that they are starting out on their task, where they are likely to be going and when they expect to finish. Ensure you provide vehicle details as well (where relevant)
3. Upon completion of that task (and safe return), the CV contacts their buddy for a second time to indicate to them that all is well
4. If, for some reason, a CV part-way through their task moves to another location, or realises the timescales are going to be different to those agreed at the start of the day, they must re-contact their buddy to inform them of these changes. If your buddy cannot be informed of these changes, another suitable person may be used to convey these changes (buddies should check for messages before implementing emergency procedures).

8.6.3 ***Emergency Procedure***

In the event of the lone worker not 'reporting in' after half an hour beyond the agreed time, their buddy should carry out the following:

1. Telephone the lone worker on the number(s) given. If there is no response, leave a phone message with the time of the call, and state that the Lone Worker is overdue for reporting in.
2. Repeat this after 15 minutes, and a third time up to one hour after the due reporting-in time. If there is still no response then the Buddy should exhaust all other options (van tracker, home numbers, colleagues etc.) before calling the emergency services.

3. If still unable to contact or locate the lone worker, the buddy should call the local police on 101 (use 999 only if you are sure there is an emergency, though it is better to err on the side of caution). The police should be advised of the Lone Working Procedures, the areas being visited, description of the volunteer, travel details including vehicle description and registration number, any known risks, reporting in times and any contact details; and they should leave a contact number should further information be required.
4. If any other emergency services are involved, the buddy should also advise them of the details provided by the lone worker, notably the areas being visited, travel details, any known risks, reporting-in times and contact details.

8.6.4 ***Weaknesses in the Buddy System***

1. Lack of mobile phone reception/assumption CV has a mobile phone
2. Failure of CV to enact the system properly – 'reporting in' on time
3. Failure to establish contact with ones chosen buddy at point of call (your buddy is out/driving etc.)

In the case of mobile phone signal reception, all CVs will be asked to initially test out signal strength in their area of operation. It is the duty of all CVs to enact the buddy system. The Countryside Service will provide regular reminder training.

If, during operation of the lone working system, a CV's buddy cannot be raised, the volunteer should either text the information (if possible) to them, or contact a back-up contact (agreed prior).

8.7 Lone Workers and Insurance

As with any paid employee, lone workers are covered by the Council's liability insurance.

9. YOUNG VOLUNTEERS AND VOLUNTEERS WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

9.1 Anyone over the age of 16 years is able to apply to become a CV. Some volunteer options, such as the *Junior Rangers* programme, are specifically designed to attract younger volunteers. People under 16 years of age will require supervision by those who are Disclosed and have membership of the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme.

9.2 There are other categories of people with reduced ability to look after themselves. The nature of the supervision must be agreed between the responsible adult and the task organiser. The organiser cannot take on responsibility for such additional supervision.

9.3 The responsible adult must ensure the person they are looking after is made as aware as possible of any hazards and of any restrictions imposed upon them. In many cases it may be inappropriate for young etc. volunteers to be involved in certain tasks.

SECTION B VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Currently all potential CVs receive a document outlining what opportunities are available. It is repeated below;

So, you want to be a countryside volunteer… here in sunny East Lothian?

What can we, in the Countryside Section, offer you?

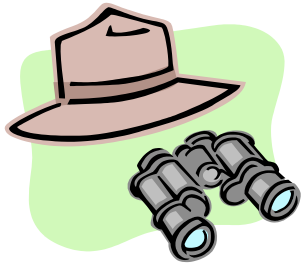
Between the countryside ranger team, the access officer, the biodiversity officer and myself – the countryside officer – we have a number of opportunities for volunteers to get involved with conservation-related work.

Group work or lone working? Potentially either; volunteers are like anyone else, some of us prefer the wild open spaces to ourselves; others prefer to mingle with like-minded folk. Both can be done.

Frequency of volunteering? Varies enormously on you and the group/s to which you are attached. On average volunteers come out 1-2 x per month across the board, though this is an average. Some come out much more, others only occasionally. It is ok either way.

What work are you likely to be doing? Either practical conservation work or some sort of survey and recording work.

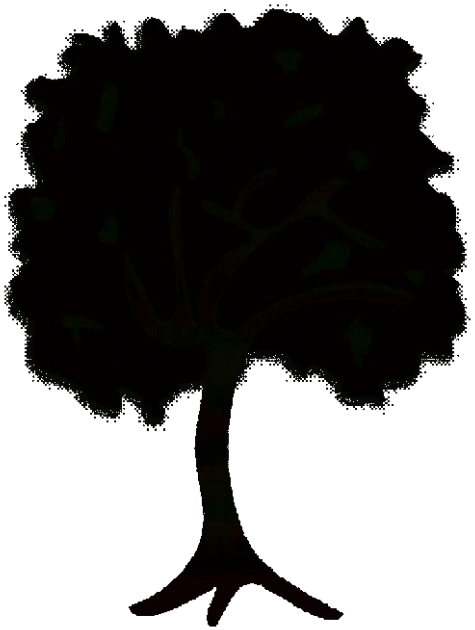
Where do we have volunteer groups, and when? We have several 'Friends of' groups tied to specific sites / areas – e.g. Yellowcraig. Such groups meet on a set date or dates each month. It breaks down like this (see table on following pages);



Group	Examples of types of work	Practical work?	Survey work?	When do they meet?	Key contact/s	Lone (L) or Group (G) working?
Friends of Aberlady Bay Local Nature Reserve	Sea buckthorn control; species monitoring; Checking grazing sheep and electric fence	Yes	Yes	1st **Wednesday** each month and **Sunday** in the middle of each month, 0930-1500 unless otherwise stated	John Harrison, Reserve Warden jharrison@eastlothian.gov.uk	G, L
Junior rangers (11-18 years)	Mix of practical and survey work, skills development	Yes	Yes	Every 2nd **Friday** during term-time 1400 - 1600 (aimed at 11-16 year olds)	Richard English, Countryside Ranger renglish@eastlothian.gov.uk	G
Friends of Levenhall Links	Various practical conservation work, some survey work	Yes	Yes	Last **Tuesday** each month, 10.00-1230	Nick Aitken, Countryside Ranger naitken1@eastlothian.gov.uk	G
Friends of Yellowcraig	Sea buckthorn control; species (pirri-pirri bur) mapping and removal, lime and mortar repairs	Yes	Yes	1st **Thursday** each month, 0930-1500	Robbie MacEwen, Countryside Ranger rmacewen@eastlothian.gov.uk	G, L
Dunbar Conservation Volunteers (John Muir Country Park and wider area around Dunbar)	Practical management, perhaps some monitoring work.	Yes	Yes	Last **Wednesday** of every month, 1000-1300	Tara Sykes and Nick Aitken Countryside Rangers dcv@eastlothian.gov.uk	G
Friends of North Berwick	Various, focussed mainly on North Berwick Law and the Glen wood.	Yes	Yes	2nd **Thursday** morning of each month 1300 - 1500	Jen Newcombe, Countryside Ranger jnewcombe@eastlothian.gov.uk	G

Longniddry and Gullane roving volunteer squad	Assisting with various practical tasks (scything, sea buckthorn control, path upkeep, beach cleans etc.) and Butterfly transect monitoring opportunities available.	Yes	Yes	3rd **Tuesday** each month. 10:00 – 13:00	Meryl Norris, Countryside Ranger mnorris@eastlothian.gov.uk	G
Way out West volunteer group	Undertaking conservation tasks at countryside sites in the west of the county— from Gifford to Wallyford, Macmerry to Humbie, and all points between. The type of work varies but tasks will include maintaining paths, scrub clearance, meadow management and litter picking.	Yes	No	2nd last Wednesday of the month. 10.00-13:00	Richard English renglish@eastlothian.gov.uk	G
Pony checking, Traprain Law / North Berwick Law	Checking grazing animals. Ragwort / gorse control	Yes	Yes	Varied, mostly lone working	Dave Wild, Countryside Officer dwild@eastlothian.gov.uk	L, G
Sheep checking, Barns Ness	Checking (and counting!) grazing sheep	Yes	Yes	Varied, lone working; group work to be planned for last Wednesday each month	Nick Aitken, Countryside Ranger naitken1@eastlothian.gov.uk	L,G
Path wardens	Monitoring and maintenance	Yes	Not	Mostly lone working;	Dave Wild, Countryside Officer	L, G

	of local paths; monthly opportunity to get together and tackle larger repair issues		really	wardens meet up for an (optional) team task 1 x month	dwild@eastlothian.gov.uk	
Plant / bumblebee surveyors	Regular surveys of both at (up to) 4 sites – Aberlady, Barns Ness, North Berwick Law and Traprain Law – to monitor impact of grazing animals upon the land. (You don't have to do more than one site)	No	Yes – training given!	Bumblebees; fortnightly surveys in summer months Grasses – one series of survey quadrats per site each year	Catherine Cumming, Biodiversity Officer ccumming1@eastlothian.gov.uk	L,G
Eider surveyors	Monitoring breeding success / disturbance of an eider duck colony at North Berwick, April - July	No	Yes	Varied, mostly lone working	Jen Newcombe, Countryside Ranger jnewcombe@eastlothian.gov.uk	L



What sort of training could you get?

- Induction – a chance to meet you all and make sure what we offer, and what you want, are the same thing
- Safety – will be covered in all the tasks you undertake, tools talks and risk assessments are undertaken for all activities
- Tools usage – how to use hand tools safely. Occasional use of some power tools will be on a needs basis and will always be optional

- Species ID training – if undertaking some of our monitoring work, we'll ensure you are trained up to identify what it is you are monitoring!
- Survey skills – along with identifying things, you'll need to know how to record and survey them. So we will assist
- How to destroy stuff – some conservation work is really about destroying stuff you don't want, but you need to know how to do this effectively!
- How to eat and drink in the great outdoors – hard work merits rewards, at least in biscuit and tea format. We'll train you in this for sure!

What will we give you in return?

- Our unequivocal thanks
- Training – informally through the work you undertake
- An annual get-together to say thanks and so you can meet other volunteers
- Biscuits, copious amounts of; plus tea and coffee on occasion
- Camaraderie, bonhomie – well, it all sounds much better in French!
- Free exercise, fresh air, moisturiser (or is that rain?!)
- References, should you wish and need them, for job applications etc.
- Some travel expenses. Optional, some ask for these, others do not, but they are negotiable
- Involvement in our projects. We're doing these pieces of work for the good of the planet, but we like your input too. Ideas on how to do things always appreciated
- Occasional emails to inform you of some training course that may be of interest

Climate Change The Scottish government has legally binding targets of cutting greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2045 and IPCC reports have identified the urgency in continuing climate mitigation and working towards climate adaptation. To align with the Scottish governments targets, the council has created a climate strategy plan. This is to assure that we are preparing and working towards combatting the effects of human-driven climate change. The countryside team are working to meet and uphold these targets and we would like these climate conscious actions to be reflected in the work volunteers undertake. We encourage working in an environmentally and climate conscious way to reflect our climate emergency goals. Whether it be active travel, use of public transport to our sites or helping us work on creating resilient habitats.

What about all the admin side of stuff? Each countryside ranger / warden looks after their own group. I tend to arrange the larger events and hold the database of volunteers registered with us, so that I can email you all with any pertinent information – such as one-off volunteer activities.

Insurance / Policies / etc? All covered whilst you are working with us and you'll receive a detailed induction guide which explains all further.

Happy Volunteering!

APPENDIX A
REGISTRATION FORM

VOLUNTEER

All Countryside Volunteers complete a registration form, prior to undertaking any tasks. These forms are stored in accordance with the ELC procedures and the Data Protection Act.

A copy of the current registration form is below;

East Lothian Council Countryside Service (ELCCS) & East Lothian Countryside Volunteers (ELCV) application form

No.

Please complete and return to ranger@eastlothian.gov.uk

Contact Details	
Name:	
Address:	post code:
Email address:	Contact number
Emergency contact; name:	Contact number
Referees (Please give the contact details of 2 referees who we may be able to contact)	
1.Name:	2.Name:
Address:	Address:
Email:	Email:
Tel:	Tel:

Health. Please give any details of health / disability issues that may affect your ability to carry out volunteering work

Experience. Please give details of any skills or experience that may be of relevance

Conservation groups and areas where volunteering opportunities are:

(please tick those you volunteer with and / or would like to be involved with):

❑	Dunbar Conservation Volunteers	❑	Barns Ness sheep checkers
❑	Friends of Levenhall Links	❑	North Berwick / Traprain Laws Pony Checkers
❑	Friends of Aberlady Local Nature Reserve	❑	Junior Rangers
❑	Friends of Yellowcraig	❑	Plant, Bee & Butterfly Surveyors
❑	North Berwick Conservation Volunteers	❑	Invasive species monitoring
❑	Volunteer Path Wardens	❑	Other (please indicate):

As part of our commitment to the Climate Emergency our aspiration is that, as much as possible, volunteers travel to our sites by walking and cycling (active travel), public transport and car sharing.

Data Protection consent

When completed, this form contains personal data within the meaning of the Data Protection Act 2018. ELCCS and ELCV will hold, use and store it accordingly.

We will keep this information safely and securely. We will use your name, address and email address occasionally for notifying you of relevant opportunities. We will not share your details with any other third party. If at any time, you wish to resign from membership and have your address removed, just contact us.

I consent to ELCV / ELCCS holding and using this information. Yes ❑

Use of photograph consent

From time-to-time ELCV / ELCCS will make, store and use photographs of volunteers. Nobody will be named in the photos. I consent to my photo being used. Yes ❑ No ❑

ELCV Membership. Unless indicated, you will automatically become a member of ELCV. If you do NOT wish to do so please indicate:

❑ **I do NOT want to be a member of ELCV**

The Volunteer Agreement:

I,……(*full name in capitals),* agree to be a volunteer with East Lothian Countryside Service and East Lothian Countryside Volunteers and agree to abide by all East Lothian Council policies and terms *(see ELVC Volunteer Handbook)* which includes Health and Safety and equal opportunities policies.

Signature…….. **Date**……

East Lothian Council Representative:……

Signature:……..

Date: ……..

APPENDIX B RISK ASSESSMENTS

Risk assessments exist for all sites and tasks. The principle behind all, however, is straightforward and can be completed by any trained risk assessor.

Risks are identified, their severity given a numerical score (1-16; 1 being of low risk 16 being the highest risk). Control measures are then considered which (if applied) reduce this risk score. Within East Lothian Council's Countryside Service all staff have undertaken this training.

As a CV, you should be made aware at the commencement of any activity of the risk associated.

An example of a risk assessment – in this case for the monitoring of an eider duck colony – is presented below;

IDENTIFY HAZARDS **Eider Monitoring Project**

A. HAZARD	B. RISKS	C. RR	D. WHO MAY BE HARMED?	E. EXISTING CONTROL MEASURES	F. ADD CONTROL MEASURE (CM) ?
Uneven, rocky and steep terrain	Slip, trip or fall causing an injury e.g. Back injury Broken bone Bruise Head injury Neck injury Ankle injury	8	Staff Volunteer	On-site training provided by ranger to include identification of hazards, appropriate footwear and clothing to be worn and equipment to be taken Ranger demonstrated safe route to and from the monitoring site at on-site training and also provided a map Volunteer to undertake own risk assessment and change route or cancel monitoring Volunteer to remain on land at agreed monitoring point	No

Water	Drowning Hypothermia Remote stranding of individual	4	Staff Volunteer	Route to and from monitoring site is on land and away from the sea Volunteer to remain on land at agreed monitoring site Ranger to provide volunteer with tide times for April-July for information	No
Weather	Heat stroke Sun burn Skin Irritation	4	Staff Volunteer	Ranger to check weather prior to going out on site and advise volunteer if weather warning in place or inclement weather forecast Volunteer to carry waterproofs, sunscreen, hat and a drink as applicable	No
Members of the public	Stress / anxiety	2	Staff Volunteer	Volunteer to set up and follow lone working 'buddy' system Volunteer to take charged mobile phone with them Ranger has provided a list of emergency contact details Ranger has advised volunteer not to approach or confront any members of the public behaving antisocially in the monitoring area Volunteer to report any incidents of anti-social behaviour to ranger at earliest opportunity	No
Litter	Cut Skin irritation Slip, Trip or Fall	4	Staff Volunteer	Ranger provided on-site training to identify possible hazards such as broken glass, needles, bbq's, tents, fires Ranger has advised volunteer not to remove litter themselves but to alert ranger of any items	No
Insect bites and stings	Reaction to bites/stings Anaphylactic shock Skin irritation	4	Staff Volunteer	Any known sensitivity of personnel to insect stings ascertained prior to commencing survey work	No

ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES

G. HAZARD	H. ADDITIONAL CONTROL MEASURES	C. RR AFTER CM
Uneven, rocky and steep terrain	None	6
Water	None	3
Weather	None	4
Insect bites and stings	None	4
Litter	None	4
Members of the public	None	2

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SAFE WORKING PROCEDURES

Not required.

REVIEWS AND SIGN-OFFS

Date of review/sign off	User	Type
9/10/2021	Jenny Hargreaves	Countryside Officer

APPENDIX C GENERIC CHECKLIST FOR VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

ITEM	NOTES	WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY?	DONE (Y/N) ?
Volunteers	Have they all been contacted and given meeting point information and advice about any specific details?	Group organiser	
Tools and equipment	Have you a checklist of tools / materials required? Do you know how many of each you have?	Group organiser	
First Aid	Task leader to ensure a fully stocked, appropriate First Aid kit is in an agreed location	Group organiser	
Risk Assessment	Task organiser to complete & ensure all volunteers are familiar with risk assessment	Group organiser	
Safe Operating Procedures	Task organiser to assess & inform volunteers of any specific SOPs	Group organiser	
Tool Talk	Task organiser to explain safe manner for the use of any tools	Group organiser	
Health and Safety for Task	Additional H & S issues, e.g. correct lifting technique, to be identified and explained to volunteers	Group organiser	
Training	Task organiser to ensure all volunteers are suitably trained for the task	Group organiser	
Use of Power Tools	Only suitably qualified volunteers are to use any power tools (e.g. strimmers)	Group organiser	
Clothing	All volunteers to ensure they ore suitably dressed for the nature of the task	Individual volunteer / group organiser	
Accidents	Any accidents to be written up in accordance with ELC guidelines	Group organiser	
Food and Drink	Volunteers are expected to provide their own food and drink for the day	Individual Volunteer	
Health Issues	Any specific health issues which may affect the individual's ability to carry out the task are identified	Individual Volunteer / Group organiser	
Sign in / out	All volunteers to sign in and out at start of day	Individual Volunteer / Group organiser	