



**Yorkshire**  
Wildlife Trust



# Volunteer Handbook



[ywt.org.uk](http://ywt.org.uk)

# Inside

<b>Welcome</b>	<b>5</b>	Health, safety and welfare	19
<b>Volunteering with the Trust</b>	<b>6</b>	Medical information and support needs	19
What is a volunteer?	6	Your health and safety responsibilities	19
What do volunteers do?	6	Insurance	20
Who can volunteer?	6	Vehicle insurance	20
Why volunteer with us?	7	Lone working	21
Do volunteers have to be members?	7	Out of hours emergencies	21
Do you need prior experience to become a volunteer?	7	Safeguarding	21
Can I volunteer if I'm receiving benefits?	7	Finance	22
What about young volunteers?	7	Information management	22
		Supervision and support	22
		Problem solving and escalating issues	23
		Training, learning and development	23
<b>Volunteer code of conduct</b>	<b>8</b>		
<b>About Yorkshire Wildlife Trust</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Staying in touch</b>	<b>26</b>
The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts	10	Website and social networking	26
Our work in Yorkshire	11	Volunteer newsletter	26
Where do we work?	11	Practical conservation calendar	26
Our staff structure	12	Volunteer meetings	26
Our volunteering structure	13		
Our values	13	<b>Feedback and moving on</b>	<b>27</b>
Meet some of our volunteers	14		
<b>Volunteer administration</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Contact us</b>	<b>28</b>
Registering as a volunteer	16		
Travel expenses	16		
Time sheets	16		
<b>Policies and procedures</b>	<b>18</b>		
Equal opportunities	18		
Representing Yorkshire Wildlife Trust	18		







## Welcome

...to a community of hundreds of volunteers who are helping Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to make a lasting difference for nature!

No matter what role you'll undertake, as one of our volunteers you'll be helping us to create and connect a network of high-quality habitats on land and at sea by:

- **Managing 111 local nature reserves** – these popular places are havens for people, but vital 'Noah's Arks' for our wildlife!
- **Regenerating whole landscapes** from our seagrass meadows to the iconic peak of Ingleborough and an area of upland peatland the size of Bradford!
- **Giving wildlife a voice** by influencing local decision makers, businesses, investors and 500+ planning consultations each year
- **Reintroducing loved and lost species**
- **Empowering and organising Yorkshire's communities** to take long-term positive action for wildlife through #TeamWilder
- **Tackling invasive species**
- **Connecting people with nature and inspiring them to care for it** through unforgettable events, educational school visits and more

Volunteers are at the heart of our vision of a Yorkshire that's rich in wildlife for the benefit of everyone. We were founded by volunteers in 1946, and today over 1,000 volunteers give us their time, skill, experience and enthusiasm every year to drive nature's recovery in Yorkshire. Without people like you, we simply couldn't achieve as much as we do!

The Volunteering Support Team have compiled this handbook to help ensure that your experience with us is a safe and satisfying one. It includes almost everything you'll need to know about volunteering with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and has been designed not only as a great introductory document, but also as a useful resource to refer back to as you progress in your role.

Welcome to the Trust – and thank you for being here!

*Rachael Bice*

*Rachael Bice, Chief Executive*



# Volunteering with the Trust



## What is a volunteer?

At Yorkshire Wildlife Trust our definition of a volunteer is: any person who freely chooses to carry out a task or role that we have specifically agreed for them to do, which contributes to the aims and objectives of the Trust and for which they do not receive any financial or material reward.

“ My volunteering is  
enthusing and inspiring  
adults and children about  
the wonders of nature. ”  
Event & Engagement Volunteer,  
Potteric Carr

## What do volunteers do?

Our volunteers participate in a wide range of activities. From dry stone walling, tree planting, counting butterflies in our meadows, pulling up non-native invasive plants on our nature reserves and checking on our livestock, to inspiring children and kick-starting a life-long love of wildlife, showing visitors where to spot puffins, processing new memberships, and responding to local planning applications, there's a role (or two!) to suit everyone.

## Who can volunteer?

We have volunteers of all ages and abilities, including children and families, with no upper age limit. Our volunteers are from all over Yorkshire (and sometimes beyond) and they come from all walks of life, bringing a variety

of skills and experience. Whether you are interested in our natural environment, inspiring people to value and act for wildlife, or just getting some exercise in the great outdoors, we'll have an opportunity for you!

## Why volunteer with us?

Volunteering has many benefits for both you as a volunteer and for us as an organisation. Not only is it a great way to make a difference to our cause, it's an excellent way to stay fit and healthy in body and in mind, to learn new skills, be inspired and have some fun. Plus, it's a brilliant way to meet new, like-minded friends.



We're fully committed to providing opportunities to develop and empower our volunteers – we have an excellent Volunteer Training Programme, we run a series of Discovery Days and digital events for you to meet other volunteers and learn about the Trust, as well as a big celebration event annually during Volunteers' Week.

## Do volunteers have to be members?

Not at all. Volunteering is a great way to support our work in and of itself. However, if you are interested in becoming a member in addition to helping us as a volunteer then you can find out more at [www.ywt.org.uk/membership](http://www.ywt.org.uk/membership) or by giving our friendly team a call on 01904 659570. Our members receive a range of exclusive benefits, including complimentary access to our visitor centres, discounts on some of our great wild events, invitations to exclusive events and quarterly copies of

our *Wildlife Yorkshire* magazine, which is packed with inspiring features and hints and tips to help you get closer to wildlife.

## Do you need prior experience to become a volunteer?

No. We encourage people from all walks of life, with all kinds of experience (or none!) to become involved. Some roles require specific skills, but most allow you to learn as you go, sometimes after receiving appropriate training. You will always receive an induction for your role and the tasks you will be involved in, and we will make training available as and when it is needed to develop and grow your skills.

## Can I volunteer if I'm receiving benefits?

Yes! Volunteering can help you to develop new skills and try something new. It can help you prepare for paid work by increasing your confidence and experience. You can volunteer while receiving benefits if you continue to meet all the conditions of your benefit. You will need to speak to your benefits office to find out more about the specific conditions of the benefit you are in receipt of.



## What about young volunteers?

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust welcomes volunteers of all ages, as long as you can take part safely. Anyone under 16 must be supervised by a parent or guardian. For those aged 16 or 17, you can volunteer without an accompanying adult but require parental consent (a signed form) before you start.

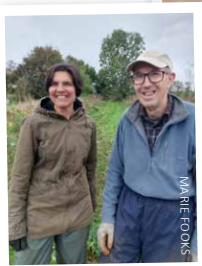
# Volunteer code of conduct



## Your responsibility to the Trust

Each volunteer role entails different tasks and carries different responsibilities. These are outlined in the role descriptions which are produced for every opportunity. Your Volunteer Manager will go through your role description with you when you start. In addition to this, you will also be expected to abide by our Volunteer Code of Conduct and:

- ✓ Help Yorkshire Wildlife Trust fulfil its aims and objectives by performing the tasks and undertaking the responsibilities as outlined in your role description (issued at recruitment) to the very best of your ability.
- ✓ Inform your Volunteer Manager immediately if you feel that you have not received the information, training or equipment necessary to carry out your role as described, or if you encounter any problems during your volunteering.
- ✓ Adhere to the Trust's policies and procedures at all times, including our Health and Safety, Safeguarding and Equal Opportunities policies and procedures.
- ✓ Demonstrate our organisational values and expected behaviours of Courage, Responsibility, Integrity, Trust and Respect.
- ✓ Ensure that no illegal or criminal misuse of Trust assets takes place.
- ✓ Respect the confidentiality of the information which you may become privy to whilst volunteering for the Trust.
- ✓ Provide the details of referees who may be contacted as part of the recruitment process, and to agree to a Disclosure and Barring Service check being carried out where necessary.



“ My Volunteer Manager is patient, knowledgeable, caring, good at sharing their knowledge and extremely hard working. ”



## In return we are committed to:

- ✓ **Induction and training**  
We will provide a thorough induction on the work of Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, its staff, your volunteering role and the training necessary to assist you in meeting the responsibilities of your volunteering role.
- ✓ **Supervision, support and flexibility**  
We will provide a named Volunteer Manager who will meet with you regularly to discuss your volunteering, offer support and guidance and address any issues that may arise.  
  
We will do our best to help you develop in your volunteering role with us and to remain flexible in how we use your volunteering.
- ✓ **Health and safety**  
We will provide adequate training in support of our Health & Safety and Safeguarding policy and procedures, details of which can be found on pages 19–21. A copy of the Health & Safety policy can be made available at your induction or upon request.
- ✓ **Insurance**  
We will provide adequate insurance cover for all registered volunteers whilst they are undertaking the voluntary role approved and authorised by us.
- ✓ **Equal opportunities**  
We will ensure that all volunteers are treated in accordance with our Equal Opportunities Policies.
- ✓ **Paying expenses**  
We will reimburse any expenses incurred by you in doing your voluntary role in accordance with our policies and by agreement of your Volunteer Manager.
- ✓ **Responding to feedback**  
We will endeavour to resolve any problems, complaints or difficulties which may be encountered while you volunteer with us in accordance with our Volunteer Feedback Policy.



By making our commitments and standards clear, we hope to ensure that your volunteering experience with us is a positive and rewarding one.



# About Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

## A wilder future for Yorkshire

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is the only charity entirely dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring wildlife and wild places in Yorkshire. Our vision is of a Yorkshire that is abundant in wildlife, where more people have a genuine and meaningful connection with nature.

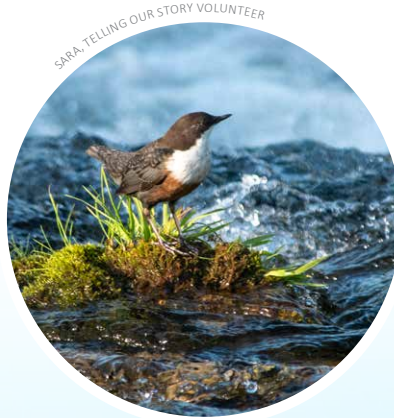
We were established as a charity in 1946 and we are part of The Wildlife Trusts movement. We look after 111 nature reserves across Yorkshire and we are involved in hundreds of other conservation-related projects. Our work inspires people to understand the value of nature and to take action for it.

We're supported by over 45,000 members and more than 800 volunteers. We employ over 190 members of staff.

## The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts

Did you know that we're part of one of the biggest grassroots movements in the UK?

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is one of 47 independent Wildlife Trusts who come together in a federated structure known as the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts. As a movement, we share the same vision to restore and protect wildlife and to bring people together from all walks of life and different backgrounds to have more meaningful connections with and for nature.



## Our work in Yorkshire

For almost 80 years, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, with the support of our volunteers and members, has been protecting Yorkshire's wildlife and wild places. We work together to bring about a recovery of wildlife across land and sea; from hills and dales, to beaches and city streets.

## Where do we work?

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust works for wildlife across the whole of Yorkshire, with the exception of the Sheffield and Rotherham area, which has its own Wildlife Trust with whom we work closely.



We do four main things to bring about a wilder Yorkshire:

- 1. Save wild places:** We manage and restore over 100 nature reserves across Yorkshire and actively work to create new wild areas and wildlife corridors.
- 2. Save wildlife:** We protect the incredible species that call Yorkshire home, by understanding what they need and creating spaces where they can flourish.
- 3. Connect people with nature:** We inspire people, of all ages from children to adults – to experience wildlife and nature!
- 4. Protect the environment:** We campaign to protect and restore Yorkshire's irreplaceable natural heritage.

Now more than ever before, we need a society where nature matters. Supported by our volunteers, we inspire thousands of children, families and individuals every year; helping them to connect with their local wildlife through events and engagement programmes.

# Our staff structure

We are governed by a Board of Trustees, who are elected annually at the AGM from the membership of the Trust and serve for a maximum of three continuous years. Our Board is made up of about a dozen volunteers who bring a range of skills, knowledge and experience to the organisation. In legal terms, each member of the Board is a charity trustee and a company director. The Board elects a Chair who runs their meetings and takes a lead role in representing the Board and wider organisation.

Our team is made up of around 190 staff and over 800 volunteers and we work through four Directorates.

## Our directorates

### Finance & Central Services

- HR
- IT
- Finance
- Health & Safety

### Fundraising & Engagement

- Communications & Marketing
- Supporter Engagement
- Fundraising
- Visitor Services
- Volunteering Support Team

### Nature Recovery

- Planning
- Advocacy
- Policy

### Operations

- North & Central
- Wild Ingleborough
- South & West
- Yorkshire Peat Partnership
- East
- Marine

Each of these teams has a Director who reports to the Chief Executive, who is responsible for the operations of the Trust and, in turn, reports to the Board of Trustees who govern the organisation.

Our Operations Directorate is divided into three regional teams (North, East and South & West) which are each led by a Regional Manager and three programme delivery teams (Living Seas, Wild Ingleborough and Yorkshire Peat Partnership) which are led by Programme Managers who report to the Deputy Chief Executive.

Each Regional Manager and Programme Manager has a large team of staff and volunteers who help to create Living Landscapes or Living Seas by carrying out conservation projects and inspiring people to get involved. These teams, with your help, have responsibility for bringing the Trust's vision to life.

# Our volunteering structure

## Volunteer Support Team

The Volunteer Support Team provides support and guidance to our staff and our volunteers across the whole Trust.

The team is here to:

- Provide volunteering best practice guidance through training and support
- Ensure we have robust volunteering policies and procedures
- Lead on Yorkshire wide volunteer events and activities
- Keep you updated through newsletters and social channels
- Respond to volunteer enquiries, concerns, and complaints
- Monitor and evaluate our volunteer programme
- Organise the Volunteer Training Programme

Most volunteers are **individuals** who get involved in a variety of ways and sometimes in more than one role. Whatever part you play, you'll fit into one of our Departmental or Regional Teams. You will have a Volunteer Manager who will be your first line of support. In some cases, this may be a volunteer themselves, who in turn liaises with a staff member from one of these teams.

**Supporter groups** are groups of individual volunteers who have come together around a specific area of interest and activity in support of the Trust's work. They usually have a volunteer who acts as Leader, liaising with Trust staff and helping to organise and lead the group's task days. Supporter Groups also get involved in fundraising, organising guided walks and more.

# Our values

At Yorkshire Wildlife Trust we aspire to make a positive and significant difference for wildlife and people in Yorkshire. Our values define who we want to be, they serve to remind us of what's important and how we should act. We believe in demonstrating our values every day through our work with our volunteers, colleagues, supporters and partners, whilst also providing the opportunity to learn and reflect from our experience.

## Courage

- Be curious, ask questions
- Empower others
- Stand up for wildlife

## Responsibility

- Be a YWT ambassador
- Speak up if something's not right
- Communicate

## Integrity

- Lead by example
- Consistent behaviours
- Honest and transparent

## Trust

- Supportive
- Listen
- Reliable

## Respect

- Respect other people's opinions
- Considerate of one another
- Celebrate our differences



# Meet some of our volunteers!



**Louisa, Research Volunteer**

“Whilst volunteering as a researcher with YWT I have gained an insight into the conservation practices of the Trust. I have been able to produce a relevant and practical piece of work that will contribute to the bigger picture of species management under future climate change within Yorkshire. I have really enjoyed my time with the Trust and have learnt a huge amount and feel equipped with skills that I can take into my future career.”

**Helen, #TeamWilder Community Champion**

“I’ve become a Community Champion through working with friends in the Molescroft Wildlife Network to support nature recovery in our local area. It’s all about collaboration: working with local councils, churches, farmers, health workers, natural history experts and the community to rethink our public spaces to support nature. We’ve had a huge amount of practical support from Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and are now helping to inspire other regional groups.

We’ve already created a ‘pocket meadow’ and now have grant money from our Parish Council for management plans to restore a Millennial Meadow and to rewild parts of our local graveyard.

Getting involved with #TeamWilder has made me feel I’m taking positive action for nature, rather than just being a passive observer of environmental crisis.”



**Helen and Phil, Seawatch and Shoresearch volunteers**

“We have always had a love of sea life and on holidays we lived in hope of seeing cetaceans. For 25 years we were not rewarded in our quest. Then in September 2021 on the cliffs by the YWT Living Sea Centre we spotted our first dolphins! Soon after this we learned of the Seawatch Project and couldn’t resist the opportunity to become volunteers.

Opportunities to get involved in training and events led to us signing up to become Shoresearch volunteers too. In both roles we record sightings and findings that catalogue the current situation of cetaceans and the coastline, so that changes over time can be assessed.

Each time we see a cetacean is still as exciting as the first and, so far, each shore survey has revealed new species to us.

Volunteering helps with our mental health and fitness – we complete 20,000 steps when volunteering and the outdoors is a great place to put your worries aside.”

**Keith, Practical Conservation Volunteer & Volunteer Warden**

“After a varied career as a carpenter and joiner in the military and being self-employed, I began volunteering as nature reserve warden for Barlow common. Four years on and I still enjoy my weekly visit to litter pick and inspect the reserve.

I also take part practical conservation days at YWT nature reserves, which involves various tasks from coppicing to balsam pulling, plus much more!

I’ve had the opportunity to learn dry stone walling, hedge laying, brush cutting, task day leader and first aid which all help develop my role within the Trust.

Volunteering is important to me as I wanted to give something back to the community, but also I get a lot from it by being outdoors, doing physical work and making new friends.

I would recommend becoming a volunteer for Yorkshire Wildlife Trust!”





# Volunteer administration

## Registering as a volunteer

Practical Conservation Volunteers will be asked to complete a **Registration Form**. For all other roles such as helping at events, offices, surveying, etc., you would apply and then be registered using an **Application Form**. We keep this information securely on our volunteer database and only use it for purposes relevant to your volunteering (unless you have chosen to receive additional information from us about our work).

**Young volunteers** aged 16 or 17 also require a consent form completed by a parent or legal guardian. Any adults accompanying under 16's must also complete a registration form.

If you are going to be **driving** as part of your role (not just commuting) we will also need a **driver declaration form** from you.

Here is a list of the information we need to hold about our volunteers, and why:

- **Basic contact details:** To keep you informed.
- **Emergency contact details:** In case you are involved in an accident whilst volunteering.
- **Criminal records:** We only need to know about unspent offences. You will not be automatically excluded; it depends on the individual and role.
- **References:** We only ask for references for certain types of volunteer roles (e.g. working with children and adults at risk directly, or handling sensitive data and finances.) This would be discussed with you when you register as a volunteer.

We'll also need you to sign a **Declaration** which sets out our mutual expectations and responsibilities. This is on every registration and application form.



## Travel expenses

Within reason, we can help with a small contribution towards your travel costs to and from your usual place of volunteering. Please contact your manager if you need help with travel expenses for more information.

## Time sheets

All volunteers are required to record their volunteering hours. This helps us to promote recognition of the amazing contribution you make to Yorkshire Wildlife Trust by registering your hours with us. We also make use of our time-given records in applications for funding new work and in helping to evidence what we have achieved as part of current funding that we receive.

This can be done in a couple of ways – if you take part in a group task day you will sign the Task Day Register at the beginning of the day and then your hours will be recorded here. For all other roles, you will record your own volunteering hours with a timesheet that can be supplied by your Volunteer Manager or the Volunteering team and then returned to [volunteering@ywt.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ywt.org.uk) once completed.



“ It's wonderful to be able to be outdoors doing something good for nature with nice people every week. So good for my mental health! ”  
Practical Conservation Volunteer





## Policies and procedures

The Trust has policies and procedures in place to ensure we work effectively, fairly and consistently and to provide a framework to deal with any concerns or issues that may arise. You will be introduced to policies as they affect you, but we've provided an introduction to some of our most important policies below. All policies are available to read on request from the Volunteer Support Team.

### Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are **Wild about Inclusion!** To us, this means inspiring, empowering and engaging people from all backgrounds, cultures, identities and abilities, to change the natural world for the better. We are

taking action to engage with people from diverse backgrounds by increasing opportunities and removing barriers. We strive to be fully inclusive, embrace and celebrate our differences and provide a space where people feel safe and valued as an individual. You can help us achieve this by treating everyone with respect, dignity and kindness.

### Representing Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

As a volunteer your role may require you to interact with the public. As you are representing the Trust, we expect you to be guided our values of **Courage, Respect, Integrity, Trust and Responsibility**. During your volunteering, if you receive any media enquiries or difficult issues from members of the public you can refer them to a member of staff or to the York office.

Formal representation with other organisations, the media or individuals

can only take place if authorised by your staff contact. This may require more senior approval and is governed by further procedures and guidelines. If you think this affects you and you have not done so already, please speak to your manager.

### Health, safety and welfare

The Trust has a legal and a moral obligation to provide and maintain safe working conditions, equipment and procedures which will not adversely affect the health of our staff and volunteers. We must also provide the information, training and supervision required to achieve this. There will be risks specific to your volunteering role which will be discussed with you individually as part of your induction, when undertaking a task or in a practical task day tools talk.

We use a risk assessment process to identify risks and how best to control them. For all tasks carried out by volunteers, a risk assessment must have been carried out by the activity organiser (staff or volunteer) and recorded in a standard format. We also carry out regular risk assessments of all the sites we work on, and activity organisers must be familiar with these prior to undertaking work on that site.

To prevent accidents, we identify and implement appropriate training and controls such as personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce or remove the risk. Finally, we consider what to do in the event of an accident and what first aid provision is required.

### Your health and safety responsibilities

By law, everyone is responsible for looking after their own safety, that of their colleagues and anyone else that their activities may affect. You must follow any health and safety guidance you are given, either verbally or in writing, and ask for clarification of anything that you are unsure about.

If you join a practical task day part way through the day and have missed the health and safety briefing, ask the leader for guidance before starting your tasks.

You must tell your Volunteer Manager of any medical conditions relevant to your role and provide emergency contact details as requested when you register as a volunteer. You should also let us know if these details change.

Finally, if you observe anything that you think might be unsafe or you are involved in or see an accident or near miss you must report it to your Volunteer Manager in the first instance.





## Medical information and support needs

We want volunteering to be fully inclusive and consider your wellbeing when you volunteer with us. Please let your Volunteer Manager know if you have any access requirements, health conditions or medication you take that we should be aware of.

## Insurance

All registered volunteers are insured by the Trust for their volunteering as long as they are undertaking activity agreed by the Trust, have followed our policies and procedures and any instructions or guidance we have given.

This includes cover if you are injured by another person or if you accidentally injure someone or damage something. You may wish to check whether you have your own personal accident cover. Personal equipment and belongings are not insured.

## Vehicle insurance

It is your responsibility to ensure you have adequate vehicle insurance. Driving activities while volunteering would come under the categories of commuting or business use. As insurance cover can differ with each provider, it's **vital you check with your provider** that you have the appropriate insurance cover for your volunteering activities. Please contact the Volunteering Support Team if you have any questions.



## Accident reporting

All accidents, near-misses and incidents, however minor they might appear to be, must be recorded and the report submitted to your staff or volunteer contact for escalation as required. All offices and out-posted staff or volunteers will have access to an accident book and reporting forms for you to use – ideally these will be located with the first aid kit.

## Lone working

We try to eliminate this where possible but some of our roles (surveying, stock checking or being a warden) may require lone working at times. You should always plan for when you might have to volunteer alone and follow our Lone Working Procedures. If it is a regular part of the role, we will have risk assessed it in detail and discussed the implications and relevant procedures with you in advance.



## Out of hours emergencies

If you volunteer outside of normal office working hours (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm) and you need to contact us in an emergency, you should try your staff contact first. If you cannot reach them, please telephone the out of hours duty phone on 07824 446919 for assistance.

## Safeguarding

At Yorkshire Wildlife Trust we embrace our duty of care to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children, young people and adults at risk who come into contact with us, including our own staff and volunteers. We are committed to ensuring our [Safeguarding Policy](#) and practices reflects our statutory responsibilities, government guidance and the latest best practice within the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts. Volunteer roles that involve working with children or adults at risk are assessed to determine the extent of that involvement. If you undertake such a role you will:

- Need to provide two references.
- Undertake a comprehensive induction.
- Complete online training in Safeguarding and child safety & welfare.
- Some roles need an enhanced disclosure check via the Disclosure and Barring Service.

## Support and reporting a safeguarding concern

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead are the primary point of contact for staff, volunteers or members of the public who have safeguarding or child protection concerns. Safeguarding Leads can be contacted by telephone on 01904 659570 during normal business hours or by post addressed to: Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, 1 St. George's Place, York, YO24 1GN. Please mark your envelope as confidential, for the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead.





### Finance

Any expenditure as part of your volunteering role (for example to make a small, necessary repair) can be reimbursed by the Trust – however your manager must have agreed this spend with you beforehand. There is a simple form to fill in and complete to reclaim any agreed expenses which is available from your staff contact or the volunteering team.

### Information management

#### Confidentiality and data protection

Whilst volunteering for the Trust you may become aware of, or be tasked with handling, information which is of a confidential nature. This might be information about a protected species or a new project, or some financial or personal data. We expect you to respect this confidentiality and to check with us if you are unsure about the status of any information you are party to.

Data protection laws apply to personal data whether it is stored electronically or in a retrievable paper format. If your role involves access to data or filing systems, you will be shown how we process, store and use this data in accordance with our privacy policy and we will provide any necessary training. You should always treat personal data as confidential, to be used for specific purposes only and to be stored securely when not in use. Our privacy policy is available to view here:

[www.ywt.org.uk/privacy-policy](http://www.ywt.org.uk/privacy-policy)

### Copyright and intellectual property

Through your volunteering you might produce new materials, data or ideas of use to the Trust; including educational materials, interpretation, photographs or other media, project ideas or new procedures. You retain copyright and intellectual property rights over this material. However, we ask you to give us the right to use this material free of charge, in perpetuity and for the furtherance of our charitable objects. This voluntary agreement is incorporated into the registration and application forms so you don't need to take any further action. If you produce something where you'd prefer to make a more formal arrangement, just let us know and we can make the necessary arrangements.

### Supervision and support

Following your induction to the organisation, the amount of ongoing supervision and support you are offered will vary depending upon the individual and the role. We believe all volunteers should have the opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns and discuss the work they are involved in.

Due to the breadth of volunteering at the Trust, the ongoing support you require will differ by role. Your Volunteer Manager should discuss and agree this with you the level of support you may need.



## Problem solving and escalating issues

We aim to make all volunteering experiences positive and enjoyable, but we recognise that problems may arise from time to time.

We encourage the use of due process in resolving problems. The first thing you should do is to talk to your staff contact and arrange a meeting of those involved away from the immediate task. Most issues can be resolved in this way.

If this proves unsuccessful, or you feel the matter is more serious, please contact the Volunteering Support Team. You can read our full Volunteer Feedback Policy here: [www.ywt.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/useful-information](http://www.ywt.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/useful-information). You can contact us by email at [volunteering@ywt.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ywt.org.uk) or on 01904 659570.

Conduct which causes immediate danger to others will be handled swiftly by those leading on the day and you may be asked to leave immediately, in line with our policy on Addressing Inappropriate Volunteer Behaviour. You will have the opportunity to discuss the incident before a final decision is made.

## Training, learning and development

You will receive role-relevant training from your staff or volunteer contact or an experienced fellow volunteer. Often someone will continue to be on hand to

give you further support, advice and help or a refresher (some practical tasks can often be quite seasonal and done only a few times per year). If you are unsure about what you are doing, please ask as we want you to feel confident in your role.

For some roles, external or more training may be required, and this should be discussed during your induction. It might be arranged immediately, or you might be put on the waiting list for the next session. Common types of training required in some roles are brush-cutting, pesticide use and first aid.

Much of the training related to our volunteer roles is listed in the Volunteer Training Programme. This is an annual list of all our training courses and includes Task Day Leader, Identification and Surveying techniques and many more. If you require any of this training you will be directed to the programme by your Volunteer Manager.

Once you've started volunteering, if you feel you need further training to fulfil your role, please speak with your Volunteer Manager.

### Voluntary Trainee placements

We host around 20 Voluntary Trainee placements each year. These are normally 6–12 month volunteering opportunities working in a particular team or project, where you will gain a lot of experience and training relevant to a career in nature conservation. There is up to date information about current Trainee opportunities on our website.

“ The traineeship has given me a variety of different experiences and skills; I feel like I have really changed as a person and grown in confidence. It's been an amazing time and an experience I'll never forget. ”

Spurn Reserve Voluntary Trainee



# Staying in touch

## Website and social networking

The volunteering pages on the website are full of useful information for new and existing volunteers. You will find the latest news and opportunities as well as volunteer viewpoints. You might even be inspired to make a contribution yourself! There's also a Volunteer's Facebook Group where you can share your photos and stories. You'll be sent the link to join this with your welcome email.

You can find and follow us on Facebook, X, YouTube and Instagram.

## Volunteer newsletter

Our volunteer newsletter is sent out once a month and will be sent direct to you by email if you opted in to receive our newsletters when you registered. News contributions are always welcome. Please email [volunteering@ywt.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ywt.org.uk) with any suggestions, stories or to sign up for the newsletter.

“It was great to meet those involved, fabulous to visit the site and lovely to connect with other volunteers at the Discovery Day.”

## Practical conservation calendar

All our Practical Conservation Task Days are listed in the seasonal Practical Conservation Calendar. This can be found on our website or via a link in the volunteer newsletter.

## Volunteer meetings

We organise social meet-ups and events for volunteers to learn more about each other and the wider Trust. We hold an annual Volunteer's Celebration in June and Discovery Days throughout the year where you can meet fellow volunteers and share experiences. Local teams might also organise local events for volunteers who do the same thing or work in a particular area. Sometimes these are for training and development, sometimes they are social, often both, and hopefully always fun!

We encourage you to attend these valuable opportunities to meet other volunteers and staff to share experiences, find out about other opportunities which may be of interest and discuss wider Trust issues that could have some impact upon your voluntary role with us.



# Feedback and moving on

Your feedback is valuable to us. If at any time you feel that any aspect of your involvement with us as a volunteer could have been dealt with better, please let us know so we can make improvements. From time to time we send out volunteer surveys asking how we're doing. Your help in returning these to us, and your honesty in being critical where necessary, is appreciated.

## Tell us about your experiences

We are always looking for stories about our volunteers. It might be a 'day in the life of', a description of your role, a volunteer profile or a special achievement. These help us to paint a picture of volunteering for our newsletter, website, press releases and member's magazine and crucially to help involve more people through volunteering. Please get in touch if you'd like to see your story in print!

Email [volunteering@ywt.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ywt.org.uk) or call the volunteering team on the phone numbers on the back page.

## Moving on

If you decide to cease volunteering with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust please let us know, either by telling your staff or volunteer contact or direct with the Volunteering Support Team. It would be very helpful to us if you also tell us why you are leaving, positive or negative.

“I love sharing and enjoying the natural world with others through my volunteering. I learn a lot too!”

Carol, Event and Engagement Volunteer  
Potteric Carr





# Contact us

We sincerely hope that you will enjoy your time as a volunteer with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. If you have any further questions about any aspect of volunteering, please contact us at:

## Volunteering Support Team

1 St. George's Place  
York, YO24 1GN

T: 01904 659570

E: [volunteering@ywt.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ywt.org.uk)

[ywt.org.uk](http://ywt.org.uk)



**Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is the only charity  
entirely dedicated to conserving, protecting and  
enhancing Yorkshire's wildlife and wild places**

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is both a registered charity (no. 210807) governed by the Charity Commission and a company limited by guarantee (no. 409650) governed by Companies House. Front cover image: Rachel Loffman. Above image: Marie Fooks