

Welcome!



Thank you for your interest in volunteering for The Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails. By volunteering with us, you will be playing an essential part in our work of maintaining, improving and promoting the National Trails to ensure that they are safe and enjoyable for everybody to use.

This pack is divided into 4 sections:

1. General Information that everyone will need, like how to claim expenses, newsletters and training.
2. Specific information about our various opportunities for practical, monitoring, administrative and workshop opportunities.
3. A copy of our volunteer's policy for your information.
4. Appendix containing all the forms you will need.

The aim of this pack is to give you all the information you might need to settle into your role as soon as possible. However, if there is anything that is unclear, or you have unanswered questions, please feel free to contact us either by phone on 01865810211 or email nt.volunteers@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Section 1: General Information

Background to the scheme

The National Trails network crosses some of the finest landscapes in England & Wales. They provide a series of nationally and internationally recognised walks and rides. The aim of our National Trails Team is to manage and maintain The Ridgeway & Thames Path to a standard that is consistent and sympathetic to the landscape through which the trails pass, meet the requirements of its users and is appropriate to their use.

The National Trails Volunteer Scheme was set up in 1990 to provide a more efficient and cost-effective way of undertaking the maintenance of The Ridgeway whilst enabling local people to be involved in its management. In

1997, the scheme was expanded to include management of the Thames Path National Trail. The volunteer scheme has continued to develop, with volunteers playing a vital role in maintaining and improving the trails, monitoring their condition and, until recently, leading guided events on both trails.

The Ridgeway & Thames Path National Trails Team



Steven Tabbitt - *Thames Path
National Trail Manager*



Sarah Wright - *Ridgeway
National Trail Project Officer*



Elaine Townson - *Thames Path &
Ridgeway Information and
Administrative Officer*



Andy Mawer - *Project & Volunteer Coordinator*

Volunteer Newsletter

Our newsletter is mailed or emailed out to our volunteers 4 times a year. You will receive it as a PDF unless you do not have an email address, or you have specifically asked for it to be posted.

Each edition will contain the task diary for that period for our practical and workshop volunteers, plus regular updates about the project, work on the trails and volunteer training.

We are happy to receive short articles and photographs from our volunteers for inclusion in the newsletter. These should be emailed to nt.volunteers@oxfordshire.gov.uk with text saved as a Microsoft Word compatible document, and images as JPEG files. The copy deadline for each newsletter is the beginning of the month before it is published (i.e. the beginning of Dec, Mar, Jun, Sept).

Volunteer Expenses

As far as possible we try to make sure that our volunteers are not out of pocket because of volunteering and are happy to reimburse reasonable travel expenses for getting to tasks and monitoring.

We will pay for a maximum 50-mile round trip (i.e. a radius of 25 miles per trip) at 45p per mile for cars and 24p per mile for motorcycles or the equivalent cost per trip for public transport. Longer trips will be reimbursed only if approved in advance by our Project & Volunteer Coordinator. Where a longer trip is made without prior approval, we will pay £22.50 towards the cost.

As we are committed to reducing the carbon footprint of our scheme, we pay an extra 5p per mile for car share. In addition, we will pay 20p per mile for travel by push bike, or any other carbon neutral method.

At the end of this pack, there is an expenses claim form. Expenses can only be paid in the same financial year as they were accrued in, so it is important that you submit a claim every three months and every March (for the end of the financial year).

This form, plus any tickets, should be sent to National Trails Office, Speedwell House, Oxford, OX1 1NE

Training

A lot of training that we provide will be informal on the job training, delivered by staff over the course of your volunteering. However, we do provide more formal training where there is a need, either by sending volunteers on courses or where possible by running courses in-house. We are a relatively small project with limited funds, but endeavor to deliver training where a need is identified.

Volunteering equipment

Volunteer Cap: Each of our volunteers will be provided with a free National trails baseball cap

Volunteer Mug: These break proof recycled plastic mugs are provided free to practical and workshop volunteers, who are requested to bring them to each task they attend. Other volunteers can purchase one if they wish for £3.50.

Gloves: These are provided free to our practical volunteers who are requested to bring them to each task. Gloves are replaced on a 12-monthly basis, or sooner if required

Section 2: Volunteer Roles

Practical Task Volunteers

Our practical volunteers play a crucial role in maintaining both trails by carrying out routine maintenance like mowing and vegetation clearance, projects to improve signs and gates and helping us to deal with reactive issues like fallen trees or vandalism.



Task Diary

Every three months, all our practical volunteers receive a task diary which is on the centre pages of the newsletter, as well as the online newsletter. This will include a chronological list of tasks, plus a map showing their approximate locations. Once you have had a look through the task diary, you should contact us to book onto all the tasks that interest you.

How to Book on to Tasks

To book, please contact us at nt.volunteers@oxfordshire.gov.uk and give us the date and location of each task you would like to book on to. Spaces can be limited depending on the nature of the task and the equipment being used. Bookings are made on a first-come-first-serve basis, so booking early is important to avoid disappointment.

Once you have told us which tasks you are interested in, you will be sent an email by the volunteer coordinator, who will confirm which of the desired dates you have been booked on to. Around a week before given task, the volunteer coordinator will send a second confirmation email with details of meeting locations, times etc. for the day.

Changes to Tasks/ Canceling Tasks

It is occasionally necessary to change or cancel tasks but we will ensure that you are contacted if this is the case. Likewise, volunteers may sometimes wish to cancel a task booking, this can be done at any time, but we ask that you let us know as early as you can to give us the chance of filling the vacancy, or so we know not to expect you on the day.

Types of Tasks

The volunteer scheme carries out a range of practical tasks, most of which fall into three broad categories:

- **Vegetation Clearance**

The bulk of the work that goes into maintaining the trails involves clearing encroaching vegetation. This varies seasonally - in the winter its HVC - hard vegetation clearance – which involves hedge cutting, scrub clearance and some tree clearance. In the summer most of the work is SVC – soft vegetation clearance such as mowing the grass and seasonal weeds that grow on the path surface.

- **Infrastructure Installation and Maintenance**

The volunteer scheme carries out the bulk of the maintenance work on the countryside 'infrastructure' for both trails. This includes gates, signposts and information boards, which we both repair and replace.

- **Workshop**

Workshop tasks are where we carry out machinery maintenance sessions and construct the fingerposts and information boards that are installed on both trails.

Before Your First Task

Before you attend your first task, you should ensure that you have told us if

you have any relevant medical conditions, given us contact details for your next of kin, and have had a tetanus shot in the last 5 years. Please use the relevant form at the back of the pack to send us this information. You should also read all the Health & Safety guidance contained in this section, and contact our Project Coordinator if you have any questions about it.

What to Bring/Wear

You should wear clothing suitable for outdoor work that you don't mind getting dirty, and which is appropriate for the time of year. In wintery weather it is better to wear multiple thin layers rather than a few thick ones, so that you can easily remove some if you get hot while working.

You should wear stout footwear such as walking boots, or ideally steel toe capped work boots, to protect your feet (workshop tasks require work boots). Trainers or normal shoes are not suitable. It is also a good idea to bring a waterproof coat, regardless of the weather forecast or time of year. Unfortunately, we do not have the resources to provide boots and waterproofs to all our volunteers.

Protective clothing, such as work gloves, will be provided. Subject to availability, you will also be given a National Trails mug, t-shirt, and hat. We provide hot drinks (tea & coffee) but if you prefer de-caffeinated or herbal tea please bring this along. Please also remember to bring a packed lunch.

How Tasks Are Run

The exact times for meeting vary from task to task and you will be advised of these when your booking is confirmed. Generally, most tasks start at 10am, stop for lunch at around 12 noon, then end around 2.30pm.

Each task will start with a briefing from the supervisor who will carry out an on-site risk assessment. They will explain what work is to be done and why, how this should be done, as well as reminding everyone about the safe use of tools and identify any special considerations and site hazards. If any volunteers haven't used specific equipment before (particularly power tools) then the task supervisor will spend time with them delivering on-the-job training to ensure safe and effective use.

During the task, the supervisor will circulate to ensure that everyone is happy and that work is being done to the required standard. If you have any questions about what you are doing or why, please ask the supervisor straight away – as far as task safety goes, there are no “stupid questions”.

General Health & Safety on Practical Tasks

Every task and site will vary and all the risks associated with the job and site will have been assessed beforehand. These risk assessments will be covered before any task and are also available to examine on request.

The points that follow are for general guidance only:

Emergencies and First Aid

Task supervisors are trained first aiders and will have a mobile phone with which to call the emergency services if required. If any volunteers on the task are also first aiders, they will also be identified. Accidents and injuries should be reported to the supervisor.

Personal Protective Equipment

Depending on the nature of the task, you may be asked to wear a range of protective equipment. In all cases, you must comply with these requests, as it is for your own safety. We are aware that some PPE can be hot or uncomfortable to work in, but we would not ask you to wear it if it was not necessary.

Fitness

You are only required to work at a pace which suits you. The task is not a competition to see who can do the most, so don't be afraid to rest if you feel the need. Where possible we will rotate tasks so that you aren't doing the same thing all day. If you find any specific task to be too hard for your health or level of fitness, speak to your task supervisor.

Biohazards

Working in an outdoor environment, we are inevitably exposed to certain environmental hazards, which we collectively term 'Biohazards'. These are always addressed in task risk assessments, but usually amount to plant thorns and stings and insect bites. Whilst every precaution is taken to eliminate exposure through protective equipment such as gloves/ helmets/ safety glasses etc., the occasional thorn or nettle sting is inevitable.

Tool Use

Nearly all tasks involve using hand tools or power tools. Hand tools are mainly used for infrastructure tasks, whereas vegetation clearance tasks tend to use power tools. You will never be asked to use a tool that you have not been instructed on or are comfortable with.

Weather

Volunteer scheme tasks are held throughout the year, although there is no

requirement to book on all through the year and some volunteers choose to miss periods when the tasks or weather are not to their liking. Tasks are rarely canceled due to weather unless conditions are extreme – when the task becomes difficult or impossible or there is a danger to wellbeing. Volunteers are free to cancel their task booking if they are unhappy with the weather conditions.



Volunteer Monitors

We rely on reports from our monitor volunteers to let us know what is happening on the trails. The feedback helps us to respond quickly when hazards occur, keeping the trails safe and enjoyable to use.

Equipment: When you register as a volunteer, you will be sent an A3 laminated map of your section, a set of A4 report forms (with maps on the reverse), a set of freepost envelopes, car sticker, cap and volunteer t-shirt. If you have requested a littler picker this can be collected from our offices.

Working together: Our aim is to ensure that each of the sections of trail have two monitors assigned to it. This is to ensure continuity of cover if one person leaves, goes on holiday etc. Where sections do have two monitors we encourage them to work together or at least share information to avoid duplicating reports. However, the Data Protection Act means that we cannot give your information to anyone without your consent or vice versa.

What to report: As well as checking all the furniture along your stretch, you should also note any overhanging vegetation, fallen trees, damage to the path surface or bank erosion. (Thames Path only).

You only need to report each problem once. We take all reports seriously, but have to prioritise work along the length of both trails according to its urgency. Therefore, it may take a little while before we get round to fixing a problem that you have reported. If it is going to take a long time to fix, if it is not our responsibility or if we are not going to repair it for any other reason, then you will be given appropriate feedback by our administration assistant.

When carrying out your checks remember that the trail has a number of different users, and you should try to put yourself in their position when looking for issues and defects. For example, horse riders on bridleways and byway sections will require a higher clearance (normally 3m) than that provided on footpaths. Similarly, those with mobility issues, such as those in wheelchairs and parents with pushchairs might be more affected by uneven surfaces and/or small obstructions than you are. If you would like further guidance on the kinds of user you should take into account for your section, please contact your project coordinator on nt.volunteers@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Specific things to look out for are:

Signs & waymarkers: On The Ridgeway these are made from black recycled plastic – while those on the Thames Path will be oak in rural areas, and either metal or polycarbonate in urban areas. All signs and waymarkers:

- Should be upright and held firmly in place
- Should be clear of overhanging branches and vegetation (if minor, please cut back if it is safe to do so)

- Should be easy to read and clear of graffiti. If certain parts of the sign need repainting, please indicate which letters are needed (so that we can assess the scale of the job). If damaged, please indicate which part of the sign needs replacing.

Gates/stiles: The main thing is to check that all part of the gate/stile is still in-situ and that the gate opens/closes effectively. Upright posts should be secure in the ground.

Check and ensure that all latches are in good working order. The structures should be clear of overhanging/encroaching vegetation and in particular be aware of prickly, stinging or poisonous plants which could be a hazard to users. Also, bear in mind that pushchairs and wheelchair users will be closer to the ground than someone standing.

Vegetation: The trail should have a corridor/tunnel clear of encroaching vegetation and overhanging branches of the following minimum dimensions:

Footpath: 2.5m height 2.0m width
 Bridleway/byway: 3.0m height 4.0m width

Surface: Has the surface deteriorated significantly since your last monitoring report? In particular, are there any potholes which are more than 2” deep or more than 24” across? If there has been recent damage, please give a full description of damage and location.

Litter: If litter is present which you can't or don't want to clear yourself please report both location and quantity to us. If you have cleared litter from your section, please report it to us regardless.

Travellers: Record the date you first noticed their presence, (then report) and the date you noted that they had gone. Give approximate numbers of vehicles/caravans. Are there any loose or dangerous animals with the travellers? Describe the state of the trail after they have left.

Monitors are not expected to approach travellers – just to report their location to the offices.

Obstructions/fallen trees: State the type of obstruction and whether or not the trail is completely blocked or still passable. In the case of fallen trees, please tell us whether they are on the ground or “hung up” and give us an approximate diameter of the trunk.

If there are small obstructions, such as stones, small branches etc which could be a hazard to wheelchairs, pushchairs etc please move these to one side if it is safe to do so.

Abandoned vehicles: Along with the date of monitoring, please record number plates if present and whether the vehicle still has a tax disc. Let us

know about any damage to the vehicle (as this may indicate if we are dealing with a stolen or dumped car) and in particular, if the vehicle still has wheels (we often have to tow these vehicle to the roadside, so this information is critical). State whether or not the vehicle has a "Police Aware" sticker. Let us know if the vehicle has done other damage to the trail, and surroundings, such as rammed signs, broken fences or trees damaged by a burning vehicle.

Note that you should not touch burnt out vehicles, as acids created by the oxidised paint can burn your skin.

If a burnt out vehicle has been removed, let us know whether remaining glass/metal has also been cleared.

Restricted Byways/TRO sections (Ridgeway only): 4x4s, cars and motorbikes should not be using the restricted byway sections (or bridleway/footpath sections) at any time of year. Nor should they be using the byway sections that are subject to TROs (Traffic Regulation Order) between the beginning of October and end of April. If you see any vehicles which might be violating this, please record the registration number, make and model, the time and date and the direction of travel then report these to the office as soon as possible. These reports will be forwarded to the regional police contact for further investigation.

River banks: Report a bank collapse or erosion when it is intruding into the footpath, unless the path is through open meadowland.

State whether the width is restricted (e.g. by fence or hedge) or unrestricted and the user can move past the bank problem easily. As well as reporting how far into the trail the collapse extends. Also note the length of the path it affects. Please report areas of the path that have an adverse slope (normally as a result of being undercut) which could be a hazard to wheelchairs, pushchairs etc and let us know about major collapses (those that encroach the actual path) straight away, rather than waiting for your monthly report.

Additional hazards: Whilst monitoring, please record any additional hazards for walkers/cyclists/riders that you encounter which are not covered by the previous guidance e.g. barbed wire, rabbit holes etc.

Illegal activities: If you see any activities that you think are illegal (e.g. raves, harecoursing, wildlife crimes etc) please report directly to the police but do keep us informed.

Making your report: When you find a problem, defect or issue, describe the problem in the appropriate box on that month's monitoring form and mark the position with the corresponding problem number on the map on the reverse.

Try to give us a decent amount of information for each problem, as well as a photo if possible, so that we can go to the site knowing what needs to be done to resolve it without going out there first. For example, if a sign is damaged,

let us know which fingers have been torn off (if you look around, they may be lying nearby) or if a gate is damaged, tell us which parts/rails need replacing.

If you are reporting fly-tipping, try to give us a factual description of how much there is and give us a rough idea of how many large items there are and what they are. If this isn't feasible (as with a big pile of garden waste) tell us how many wheel barrow/van loads you think there are.

Finally, please ensure that your report is legible. This means that if you have been monitoring in the rain, you may need to make a fair copy to send to us.

Reports should be sent to us every month in the Freepost envelopes provided. If you wish to file your report by email, please ask the Administration Assistant, as report forms can be provided as DOC files and maps in JPEG format. If you have nothing to report, then it is sufficient to either ring or email us, rather than wasting a report form. However, we do still need to hear from you, so we know that the path has been checked.

Health & Safety for volunteer monitors

Particular Health & Safety precautions for this role are limited. However, there are some general considerations to bear in mind.

Lone working: If you are going to be monitoring alone, please let someone know where you are going and when you intend to return, so that they can come and look for you or alert us and the emergency services if you fail to return.

Weather: As your section only needs to be walked once a month, there should be no need to monitor in really bad conditions. However, you should still be prepared, and take waterproofs or a sun hat as the weather dictates.

Flooding: If your section of the Thames Path or the riverside sections of The Ridgeway is flooded, do not walk it. It is better to miss a month's monitoring than to put yourself at risk. Even relatively shallow waters can pose a significant risk, especially when there is a current.

Burnt out vehicles: As mentioned above, chemicals in the oxidised paint of burnt out vehicles can react with the moisture in your skin to form hydrofluoric acid, which can cause severe burns. Therefore, do not touch them. If you do suffer such burns, rinse them immediately under plenty of running water and seek urgent medical attention.

Confrontations: Your role is to observe and report, not to police the trail. Therefore you should avoid getting into confrontations with anyone. If you see anyone committing a crime, please call the police at once. Do not try to prevent them yourself.

Litter picking: If you choose to litter pick your section of the trail, we will issue you with a litter picker and a pair of work gloves. Please use these and avoid picking litter up with your bare hands.

You should not attempt to remove any of the following – please report them to us for professional removal instead: hypodermic needles, clinical waste (normally in clearly marked yellow or green bags), any form of flytipping, chemical containers or barrels, anything which is in the river or down steep banks or anything which is too heavy for you to lift on your own and carry comfortably. It is important that no member of the public is requested to help with any task, as they will not be covered by our insurance.

Information for Administration/Research volunteers

As one of our admin and/or research volunteers, you will play an important role in keeping our information and website up to date and ensuring that all our staff have the information necessary to do their jobs effectively.

Our basic administration volunteers come into the office when needed, to help with various tasks at the National Trails Office, Speedwell House, Oxford, OX1 1NE.

Our administration volunteers are required to sign a simple confidentiality agreement due to having access to National Trails files and data, and this can be found in the appendix of this document.

You need to enjoy working on a computer in an office environment. Office work might include gathering information about events for listing on our website, writing articles for our newsletter and online blogs; updating media contacts. For some of the tasks it is desirable that you have existing social media experience (in your personal or professional life) but this is not essential as we can provide training.

Our office is a friendly place with basic kitchen facilities for you to have lunch. Under normal circumstances, it will be the Administration & Information Officer who contacts our administration volunteers to arrange their days. In return for regular volunteering, we offer reimbursement of travel expenses. Travel expenses can be claimed as detailed in Section 1.3, and a maximum travel radius of 25 miles applies.

Health & Safety for Administration volunteers

If your volunteering involves coming into the offices in Oxford, you will be given an induction, including procedures for fire evacuation etc.

Section 3: Volunteer policy

This policy sets out the principles, practices and procedures with which the National Trails office will follow in the recruitment, training and support of volunteers.

This policy:

- Formally acknowledges that volunteers can make a considerable contribution to our work and objectives and that volunteering can offer significant benefits to volunteers themselves.
- Ensures that volunteers will not be used to replace paid workers.
- Confirms that the National Trails team is firmly committed to diversity in all areas of work. Volunteering opportunities with the team are open to anyone, regardless of gender, disability, ethnic origin, religion or sexual orientation but may be restricted by the nature of the work.

All volunteers:

- Must be over the age of 18.
- Should declare if over 70 years of age.
- Will be issued with a Volunteer Information Pack.
- Will be fully supported by the Project Coordinator and National Trails Assistant.
- Will be asked to give next-of-kin contact details in case of an emergency.
- Should provide information about any significant medical conditions that may restrict any activities carried out, or which should be known to the emergency services in the case of an accident.
- Should perform their duties in a civilised and reasonable manner.

Volunteer recruitment

There is no formal interview or selection process but prospective volunteers have an informal chat with the Project Coordinator to establish what volunteer activities best suit the person and the level of commitment to be expected, e.g. time available to volunteer.

There are a variety of volunteer activities available so most people will find something to suit them but there will be occasions when there are no opportunities to suit. Some volunteer activities require booking in advance and sometimes can be over-subscribed. It is possible for prospective volunteers to request to be put on a 'reserve list' in case opportunities crop up in future and the Trail Team will store information for up to 3 years to accommodate this.

All new volunteers receive our Welcome Pack, are added to the Trail volunteer database and are automatically covered by Oxfordshire County Council insurance whilst they are volunteering for the Trails.

Health and Safety

The National Trails Office has a duty of care to assess any risks to which volunteers are exposed and to ensure that they are reduced to an acceptable level. All volunteer tasks have been risk assessed by the National Trails

Team and the risk assessments are reviewed annually. Prior to a task volunteers will be briefed of any potential risks and the procedures involved in reducing or eliminating those risks.

All volunteers are provided with Health and Safety guidance and are required to sign a form to confirm that they have read this before their volunteering commences.

The National Trails Assistant is fully trained in First Aid and a First Aid box is carried in the works vehicle at all times. Volunteers must complete a registration form with their personal details including the contact information for a relative or other person who they wish to be informed in the case of an emergency.

Insurance

All National Trails Volunteers are covered by Oxfordshire County Council Employers Liability Insurance in respect of injury to themselves and Third Party Public Liability Insurance in the event of a claim by a third party arising from the actions of the volunteer.

The County insurers require all volunteers over the age of 70 to be risk assessed individually. This simply involves passing on personal health details to the County insurers to confirm that an individual's health does not conflict with the work that they are doing. This information will be treated confidentially.

Equal Opportunities

All volunteers working with the National Trails team will be treated in a manner that is consistent with the Oxfordshire County Council Equal Opportunities Policy. The Council (and the National Trails Team) is opposed to any form of unfair discrimination and will not be unfairly prejudiced by disability, gender, marital or parental status, age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, sexual orientation or spent offences.

However we may require any volunteer who is experiencing mental health issues or learning difficulties to be accompanied by a support worker or care assistant to enable them to get the most out of their volunteering and to ensure that their health and safety and that of others is not compromised.

Confidentiality Procedures and Personal Data Management

Personal information about volunteers will be handled in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council's data protection policies. The council's Privacy Notice is available on the council's website or can be requested from the Trail Team. The National Trails Team will not disclose to third parties any personal information given to them unless it needs to be passed on for health and safety reasons. There is an option for volunteers to agree to sharing their email addresses with other volunteers where the Trail Team thinks this will make a volunteer activity work more effectively – volunteers can give the Trail Team permission to share their email address at the time of registration or at a later date.

All information provided at the time of registration on the 'Volunteer Registration Form' is stored and used by the National Trail Team to communicate with volunteers, match volunteers with the most appropriate volunteer activities and meet Health & Safety and insurance requirements. The information is deleted after 3 years following the last correspondence the Trail Team had with the volunteer. Information is retained for 3 years in case people return to volunteering or a situation arises where it would be useful for the Trail Team to communicate about Trail matters, e.g. historical knowledge of a problem on the Trail. A volunteer can ask for their information to be removed from the Team's records upon 'retiring' as a volunteer or at any time before the usual 3 years.

Complaints

If a volunteer experiences any problems or issues related to their volunteering with National Trails, it is their responsibility to raise these at the earliest opportunity with the Project Coordinator.

The National Trail staff are happy to receive comments on the scheme and be informed of potential improvements to be made.

Any issues/problems discussed will be treated as confidential.

In the first instance the coordinator will try to resolve the issue by:

- Agreeing with the volunteer any action that will be taken and the timetable for it.
- Meeting with the appropriate staff and volunteers to try and resolve the issue.
- Agreeing a monitoring process.
- Contacting the volunteer to report any action taken and to offer any necessary support.

If either the Project Coordinator or any other National Trails staff member is

unable to resolve the issue in this way, if the volunteer is unhappy with the resolution or if the issue is in connection with the staff, further action may be taken following discussions with those involved.

The Ridgeway and Thames Path National Trails Minimum Volunteering Criteria to assess potential future volunteers.

We operate a volunteer scheme to help us maintain both National Trails. We have work objectives to achieve and are accountable to all the Highway Authorities, Natural England and on the Thames Path, the Environment Agency, to achieve this work. Our job, working with volunteers is to ensure the trails are open and available for public use at all times. Working with volunteers, the tasks we undertake include soft vegetation management, (grass cutting during the summer using walk behind reciprocating blade mowers) and hard vegetation clearance (scrub clearance during the winter using mechanical pole saws and other machinery). We do also use hand tools. We undertake other works ranging from replacing towpath gates through to digging out drainage grips. These works are undertaken on areas where the public will be walking or horse riding. The supervisor has the right to terminate the agreement, should we have concerns over volunteer safety, officer safety or safety to the public when carrying out a task.

It is essential for everyone's safety that our volunteers will be able to adhere to the following criteria:

1. Is able to work within a team safely.
2. If carer/support worker is required then they must be present at all times during a task.
3. Is physically able to undertake the tasks.
4. After guidance and tool talk is able to undertake task safely with minimum supervision.
5. Is able to understand and sign off task risk assessments.
6. Is able to work on rough terrain in all weathers, sometimes in isolated rural areas.
7. Is able to drive/meet on site. Due to the isolated nature of some of the tasks away from any roads, we sometimes have to carry tools and materials to the work site. This can be up to a distance of half a mile or more.
8. Dignity at work
Oxfordshire County Council are committed to the provision of a healthy, safe and productive working environment for all our employees, prospective employees and others working in or visiting our premises. Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect at work, and bullying or harassment will not be tolerated. Specific forms of bullying and harassment may constitute offences under discrimination legislation in relation to race, colour, nationality, ethnicity, sex, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and gender reassignment. - In accordance with Oxfordshire County Council policy.

Emergency Contacts

Obviously in an emergency dial 999 and ask for the service required, however below are the police contact numbers for the Police forces close to the Ridgeway and Thames Path.

Thames Valley Police **0845 8505505**
Gloucestershire Constabulary **0845 0901234**
Wiltshire Constabulary **0845 4087000**
Hertfordshire Constabulary **101**
Metropolitan Police **101**
Surrey Police **0845 1252222**

Section 4: Forms

Volunteer Registration Form

Health and Safety, Personal Data Management
and Confidentiality Declaration

Volunteer Travel Expenses Claim Form

To register as a volunteer please complete the ‘Volunteer Registration Form’ and the ‘Health and Safety, Personal Data Management and Confidentiality Declaration’ and return them to National Trails Office, Speedwell House, Oxford, OX1 1NE



National Trails Volunteer Scheme

Volunteer Registration Form and Health & Safety Information

Please complete, sign and send this form to nt.volunteers@oxfordshire.gov.uk or post to National Trails Office, Speedwell House, Oxford, OX1 1NE. Any queries please phone 01865 810211.

The National Trails Team are required to confirm and hold the following information for all people who volunteer with us. This information enables us to communicate with you, match you with the most appropriate volunteer activities and meet Health & Safety and insurance requirements. Any information you provide will not be used for any other purpose and we manage your information in compliance with Oxfordshire County Council's data protection policies – see www.oxfordshire.gov.uk for details, including the council's privacy notice.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Email:.....

Tel. No. (home)..... (mobile).....

Which Trail are you interested in? (please tick one or both Trails)

Thames Path The Ridgeway

What volunteering activities are you interested in? (please tick any that apply)

| | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Practical Tasks on the Trails and in workshop | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trail Monitoring | <input type="checkbox"/> | Computer-based tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|---|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|

Date of birth..... Over 16 and under 70 Over 70

Details of any relevant medical conditions:

.....

Please provide the name and contact number of someone who can be contacted in case of emergency:

Name:..... Contact Number:.....

How did you hear about our volunteering opportunities?

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| Volunteer centre | <input type="checkbox"/> | National Trail website | <input type="checkbox"/> | Poster | <input type="checkbox"/> | Social media | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do-it website | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|

None of the above – please describe:

.....

I declare that the above information is correct.

SIGNATURE.....**PRINT NAME**.....

DATE.....

The Ridgeway & Thames Path NATIONAL TRAILS

Health and Safety, Personal Data Management and Confidentiality Declaration

Please complete all information and sign all declarations that are relevant to your role.

Name: _____

Everyone to complete

- I confirm that I have read and understood the Health and Safety guidance in the relevant sections of this pack and will contact the Volunteers Scheme Coordinator if I have any questions about it.
- I confirm that I have read, understand and can adhere to the Minimum Volunteering Criteria.
- I confirm that I have informed the National Trails Office of any health issue which may affect my volunteering and will inform them promptly should any such condition arise.
- I confirm that I understand that my volunteering does not constitute employment and that nothing in this pack can be said to be or represent a contract of employment.
- I confirm the National Trail Team can email me Trail newsletters as a means of keeping me informed.
- I confirm the National Trail Team can store and use my personal information for the purposes of facilitating my volunteering with them. This information will be stored for up to 3 years after I last correspond with the Team so that, during this 3 years, I have the option of returning to volunteering and sharing information about the Trails. I can ask the Trail Team to delete my personal information from their records when I 'retire' from volunteering or any time before the usual 3 years.
- Optional, not compulsory: I agree to the National Trail Team sharing my email address with other volunteers in order to make volunteer activities work more effectively.

Yes No

- Optional, not compulsory: I agree to the National Trail Team and the Trail Partnerships using photographs showing me in their promotional material such as Trail leaflets, webpages etc.

Yes No

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Please continue to next page....

Practical, workshop and monitor roles

I have had a tetanus vaccination in the last ten years or have been advised by my doctor that I am covered by previous tetanus vaccinations.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Computer-based or administrative roles

I confirm that I understand that any information I am privy to as part of my volunteering may be confidential and I agree that I will not give, tell, or otherwise impart any of this information to any third party or use this information for any purpose other than that for which I am volunteering.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Volunteer Travel Expenses

Name Month

Address

.....

.....

| Date of Journey | Mode of Transport | Location + reason | Car share with | No. of miles |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
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| | | | | |
| | | | | |

Please continue on reverse of sheet as necessary

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Amount claimed (45p/mile for solo car journey, 24p/mile motorbike journey, 50p/mile for car sharing with another volunteer, 20p/ mile for push bike).</p> <p>Please note that each journey is limited to 50 miles round trip or the equivalent cost i.e. £22.50 if travelling by public transport.</p> | |
|---|--|

Signed by Volunteer.....

Authorised by.....

Cheque No..... Code.....NC9800-35100.....

