# Thinking of Volunteering for Countryside Services?

We aim to follow up all volunteering enquiries as soon as possible after receiving these details. We like to meet face-to-face to discuss volunteering opportunities, but if you can give us further information about your interests and skills, we will be able to find the best person to contact you directly. The more information you can give us at this stage, the more prepared we can be when we meet you, but please don’t let this form put you off. We would love to hear from you.

## Your Details

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| --- |
| **Today’s date (day/month/year):** |
| **Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other:** |
| **Full name:** |
| **Address:****Postcode:** |
| **Contact telephone:** |
| **Email:** |
| **Preferred method of contact:** Telephone [ ]  Email [ ]  |
| **Date of birth:**  |
| **Which site(s) would you prefer to volunteer at? (please tick)****St Ives sites**Holt Island [ ] Wilhorn Meadow [ ] **Huntingdon sites**Hinchingbrooke Country Park [ ] Stukeley Meadows Local Nature Reserve [ ] Spring Common [ ] Views Common [ ] **St Neots sites**Paxton Pits Nature Reserve [ ] Barford Road Pocket Park [ ] St Neots Common [ ] Sudbury Meadow [ ]  |

If you are mainly based at one site, then transport will often be provided if the group is working at an alternative site for the day.

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| **Which volunteering opportunities are you interested in? (Please tick)**Practical conservation work [ ] Horticulture [ ] Assisting with site checks [ ] Leading guided walks [ ] Helping with school groups or events [ ] Assisting with wildlife surveys [ ] Working in the cafe at Hinchingbrooke Country Park [ ] Manning the Visitor Centre and serving refreshments at Paxton Pits Nature Reserve [ ] Marketing [ ] Fundraising [ ]   |
| **Please give details of any medical conditions we should be aware of that require support or details of any medication that may affect your ability to carry out the volunteer role:** |
| **Do you have any special requirements that we need to consider to help you carry out your role as a volunteer for Countryside Services? For example, communication and/or mobility?** |
| **Do you hold a full driving licence?** Yes [ ]  No [ ] **Do you have use of a vehicle?** Yes [ ]  No [ ]   |
| **Why do you want to volunteer?** |
| **What skills would you like to develop while volunteering with us?** |
| **During your working/academic life you will have gained many skills. What skills, knowledge and experience can you now offer Countryside Services?** |

## Your Availability

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| **Date you are available to start volunteering:** |

Please indicate the approximate number of hours you may be willing to work in each session. If you are flexible about days / hours, please tell us.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Day** | **AM** | **PM** |
| **Monday** |  |  |
| **Tuesday** |  |  |
| **Wednesday** |  |  |
| **Thursday** |  |  |
| **Friday** |  |  |
| **Saturday** |  |  |
| **Sunday** |  |  |
| **Totally Flexible** |  |  |

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| **What is the maximum number of hours you can offer Countryside Services each week?** |
| **Please add any further information about your availability you feel might be useful, for example, are you only available in school holidays?** |

## References

Before you start volunteering, we will need 2 references, written or oral, from people (such as a previous employer or family friend) who have known you for at least 12 months. These people should not be related to you or living with you. To help us speed up your volunteer application, please provide their contact details below:

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| **Reference 1** |
| **Name:** |
| **Email:** |
| **Telephone:** |
| **Address:** |
| **Occupation:** |
| **Relationship to you:** |

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| **Reference 2** |
| **Name:** |
| **Email:** |
| **Telephone:** |
| **Address:** |
| **Occupation:** |
| **Relationship to you:** |

**Please return your application form to Russell Taylor (Volunteer Co-Ordinator) at** russell.taylor@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

**Alternatively leave it for the attention of Russell Taylor at one of the sites below:**

Paxton Pits Nature Reserve

High Street

Little Paxton

St Neots

PE19 6ET

Tel: 01480 406795

Or

Hinchingbrooke Country Park

Brampton Road

Huntingdon

PE29 6DB

Tel: 01480 388666

Fax: 01480 451568

## What happens next?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this application form. We would like to meet you face to face to discuss the opportunities available. Please can you suggest suitable days and times when you would be available to do this and a member of staff from Countryside Services will get in touch.

## What do our volunteers do?

### Habitat Management

* Scrub removal
* Hedge planting and laying
* Coppicing and tree planting
* Strimming and grass cutting
* Pond maintenance
* Log splitting

### Health and Safety

* Tree surveys and safety work
* Site checks and litter picking

### Estate Work

* Fencing and gate installation
* Footpath creation and maintenance
* Bridges and boardwalk repairs
* Bench/seat making and maintenance
* Maintaining wildlife gardens

### Wildlife Surveying

* Breeding and wetland bird surveys
* Site surveys – flora, invertebrates etc
* Assisting with bird box schemes

### Visitor Services

* Leading guided walks
* Working in the cafe
* Manning the Visitor Centre

### Environmental Education

* Helping with school groups
* Helping with events

### Become Involved in Friends Groups

* Raising funds to support sites
* Joining Friends group committees
* Helping with membership recruitment
* Helping with events and publicity

Volunteers are an important and valued part of Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and Countryside Services relies heavily on volunteers to help them manage many sites across the district.

## We aim to provide:

* A safe and enjoyable volunteering experience where volunteers are respected, treated fairly and are covered by HDC’s employer’s liability insurance
* An opportunity to meet and work alongside like-minded people
* The opportunity to acquire and improve practical skills whilst carrying out a wide range of tasks
* A comprehensive induction to the volunteer role, to the team and to HDC’s Countryside Service
* A named member of staff for support
* Appropriate training and development opportunities
* Corporate clothing to wear while volunteering
* Personal protective equipment when required
* Free hot drinks whilst working as a volunteer
* Social events

## In return we ask our volunteers:

* To work reliably and to the best of their ability
* To give us as much warning as possible whenever they cannot work when expected
* To have enthusiasm and a sense of humour
* To adhere to Countryside Services health and safety procedures
* To respect all other volunteers, members of the public and Rangers
* To act professionally at all times and comply with the spirit of HDC’s code of conduct
* To be open and honest in their dealings with HDC and Countryside Services
* Not to make representations or speak on behalf of HDC
* To join in with daily tasks
* To undertake appropriate training
* To undertake a probationary period of four volunteer sessions
* To promote HDC’s Countryside Service and help to create a positive image
* To supervise vulnerable people as required
* To undergo a DBS check if necessary
* To provide 2 written or oral references
* To undergo checks of their eligibility to work in the UK
* To return clothing / safety footwear on completion of volunteering

HDC is collecting this information because you are offering to become a volunteer for Countryside Services. By completing this form you are agreeing to let us store the details both digitally and on paper and to use the information you have freely given. We will keep the information to enable us to communicate with you regarding your volunteer application / shifts / work parties / socials etc or in case of emergencies. The medical information you have given is confidential and will only be used in an emergency by Countryside Services staff when we will pass the relevant information to the emergency services if the need arises. We will keep the information whilst you are a volunteer and up to 12 months after we last see you (unless you have told us that you will no longer be a volunteer). During the 12 months we will try to contact you to discuss your involvement. If at any time you no longer wish to be a volunteer, we will remove your details from our records within 21 days. However, induction and training records will be retained for a period of 7 years, in case of any insurance claims. In these circumstances we will comply fully with any requests we may receive from involved parties.