



# **Suffolk Coastal District Council**

## **Volunteer Pack**

## **WELCOME & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Thank you for agreeing to donate your valuable time for the benefit of the wildlife and people of Suffolk Coastal.

### **1. Who are we?**

The role of the SCDC Countryside Team is to manage 36 countryside and urban green spaces sites. Some of which hold international, national or regional designations on account of their wildlife interest.

The variety of habitats on our sites include heathland, marshland, grassland, reedbed and woodland as well as urban green spaces.

### **2. What would you do?**

Outlined below is the sphere of activity in which volunteers would be likely to be involved with.

- ◆ Heath clearance and reclamation, felling, coppicing and control of invasive species – autumn/winter.
- ◆ Woodland clearance – autumn/winter.
- ◆ Hedge maintenance – autumn/winter.
- ◆ Ditch and pond clearance – autumn/winter.
- ◆ Litter picking and site clean ups – any time of year.
- ◆ Plant and animal surveys – spring /summer
- ◆ Footpath improvements - any time of year.

### **3. Sites where we require volunteers?**

Sutton Heath

Upper Hollesley Common

The Grove, Felixstowe

Melton Riverside

Bawdsey Picnic Site

Leeks Hill, Melton

Farthing Wood, Kesgrave

Corporate and/or organised groups are welcome on any of the above sites, with at least one month's notice in order to make suitable arrangements.

#### 4. Our Mission

**“To protect, improve and make sustainable use of our environment for the people who live, work and visit the area, leaving a rich and diverse legacy for future generations.”**

#### 5. Our Volunteer Code

- ◆ Treat others with respect and thoughtfulness
- ◆ Take care of Health & Safety of yourself & others
- ◆ Work at your own pace, to your own abilities, training and experience.
- ◆ Pay attention to the Task Leader and follow instructions
- ◆ Feel free to make suggestions to or raise any concerns with the Task Leader
- ◆ Enjoy yourself!

#### 6. Out on site

- a) A **TASK LEADER** is in charge of every task and gives the group full instruction. They are responsible for the group and its activity as a whole.
- b) A **SAFETY TALK** is given at the start of each task. The specific hazards of the day and other important information are highlighted. Please listen carefully; it is for the benefit of you and those working alongside you.
- c) A **RISK ASSESSMENT** is prepared for each task and you will be asked to read it.
- d) A person trained in **FIRST AID** attends every task. They will be pointed out to the group at the beginning of the task, together with the location of the First Aid Kit.
- e) A **MOBILE PHONE** is taken out on every task for emergency use and to contact volunteers.
- f) **REFRESHMENTS** – Hot drinks are available on every task. You will need to bring your own lunch and cold drinks.
- g) We operate a **NO SMOKING** policy in vehicles and buildings. You can smoke on task but we ask you to smoke away from non-smokers.
- h) You will need to wear **OUTDOOR CLOTHING** suitable for gardening, boots or wellies (steel toe-caps recommended) and waterproofs. We will supply you with a pair of gloves.

## 7. Basic precautions

While out on task we recommend that you:

- ◆ Wear gloves
- ◆ Wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking
- ◆ Cover any cuts
- ◆ Wear clothing that covers arms and legs
- ◆ Wear goggles to protect eyes from splinters and debris.
- ◆ Make sure that your Tetanus immunity is up to date.
- ◆ Bring any medication you may need in an emergency with you (such as anti-histamine if you are allergic to wasp or bee stings) and make sure that the Task Leader is aware.

## 8. Health Hazards

1. Many jobs include cutting and handling **sharp and thorny** plants and volunteers should take care that to protect themselves from scratches and cuts and flying debris.
2. **Tetanus** can be caught from wounds contaminated with soil. Please make sure that your tetanus immunity is up to date (a booster is needed every 10 years).
3. **Dog faeces** whether visible or not volunteers should be aware of dangers from soil contamination.
4. **Wasp's nests** are common and volunteers should be aware that they might come across one on site. Please report any found to the Task Leader. If you have an allergy to any stings from insects let your Task Leader and colleagues working nearby know.
5. Do not overexert yourself in **hot weather** and make sure that you drink plenty of fluid. Please wear sun block when necessary. In **cold and wet weather** wear warm clothing and waterproof trousers and coats.
6. **Weils' disease** is a bacterial infection carried in rats' urine, which contaminates water, and can be present on lake, river and canal banks. The bacteria are absorbed by the mucus membranes of the mouth and eyes and also through the skin via minor cuts. Treat all water as if it is contaminated.
7. **Lyme disease** can sometimes be transmitted to humans when bitten by a tick from a deer or a sheep. Ticks can be picked up from tall vegetation such as bracken. When working in such areas, make sure you have tucked your trousers into your socks and that your cuffs are fastened.
8. The **sap** from certain plants can cause itching, rashes and in severe cases blistering burns, especially when combined with exposure to sunlight, including Hemlock Water-dropwort, Hogweed and Ragwort. Some plants are also poisonous to eat.

9. **Adders** are can be found on many of our Sandlings heaths, so volunteers should inform the Task Leader if any are seen, but do not handle them yourselves.

## 10. Tools and Other Equipment

1. Techniques in conservation activities are demonstrated before you start.
2. All tools are provided and ongoing training is given for their correct use and handling.
3. All tools are regularly checked and maintained; if you find a tool that is damaged in any way report it to the Task Leader who will remove it from use.
4. Vehicles and power tools may be used on task, however, volunteers must not operate these unless authorised by the Task Leader.

## 11. Training

The Task Leader will provide training on the use of tools and how to tackle particular jobs during the tasks.

## 12. Insurance

While you are volunteering on behalf of Suffolk Coastal District Council Countryside Team you are covered for personal accident and public liability insurance, until you are 75 years old. These Policies are with Zurich Insurance.

School aged children can attend events but they must be accompanied and supervised by an adult and there with their parents permission.

The countryside rangers are CRB checked.

## 13. Health & Safety

Risk assessments have been carried out for each task. For your own safety and the safety of others, please comply with any safety instructions that are given by the Task Leader. While on task you must take reasonable care for the **Health & Safety** of yourself and other people working around you who may be affected by your actions:-

- ◆ Report any accidents or near misses to the Task Leader.
- ◆ Any damage or loss of equipment or material liable to affect **Health & Safety** must also be reported.
- ◆ No person will carry out work while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

- ◆ Should volunteers' actions or behaviour threaten the safety of themselves or others in the group the Task Leader will request the individual to stop working.

### **Want to know more?**

If you want to attend an event or for further information about any aspect of volunteering with SCDC not covered here, please do not hesitate to contact the Countryside Rangers.

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