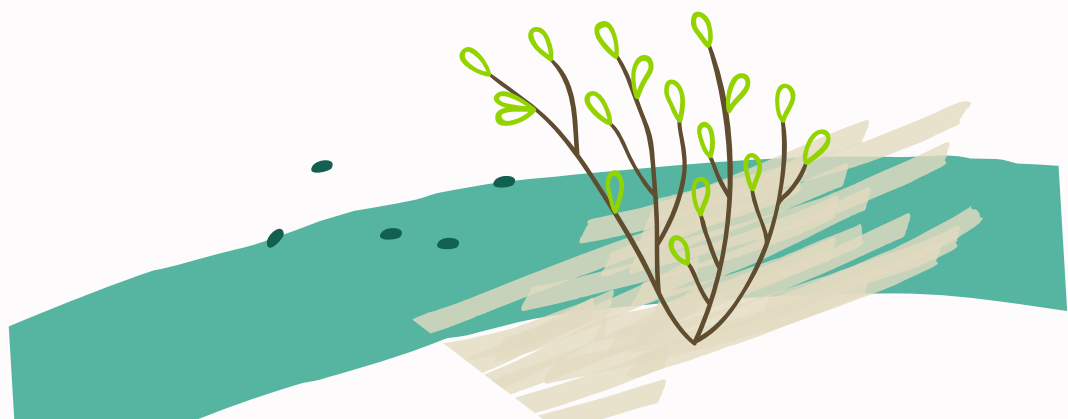




Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

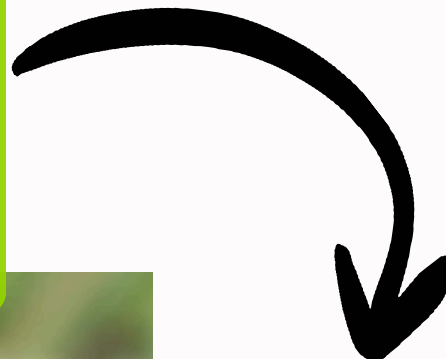




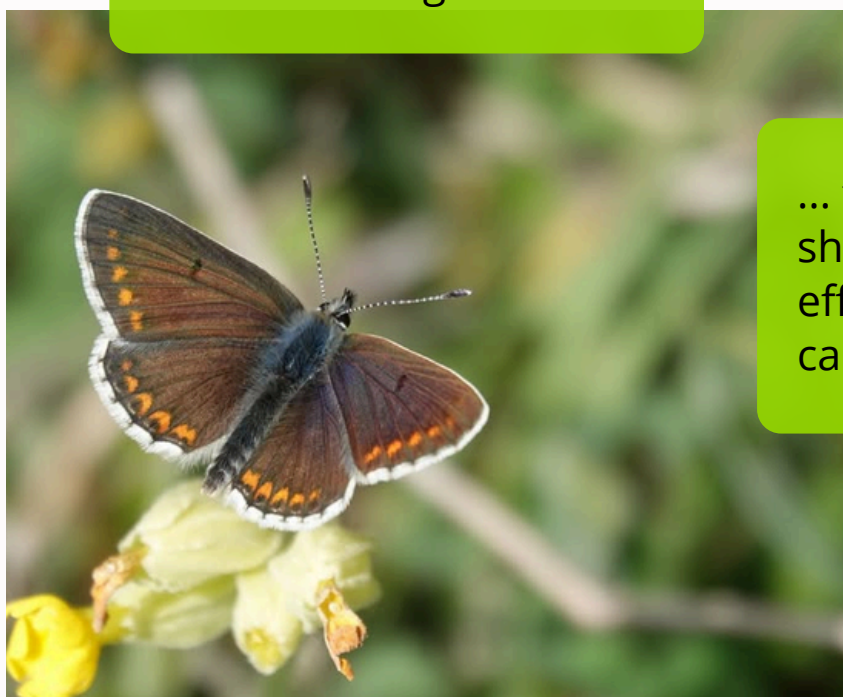
Contents

1. Why People Volunteer
2. Who Volunteers
3. Benefits of Volunteering
4. Where to Recruit Volunteers
5. Designing a Recruitment Campaign
6. Top Tips for Volunteer Retention
7. Essential Legal and Safety Responsibilities

To get the most out of this guide, work through sections 1–4 with your team. This will give you deeper insight and understanding ...



... then use section 5 to shape a focused and effective recruitment campaign.





WHY DO PEOPLE VOLUNTEER?

What are the motivations for people to volunteer?



- Being part of a team
- Meet new people
- Improve fitness
- Keep active
- Save the planet
- Share experiences
- To have fun!
- Altruism and desire to help others
- Personal growth and skill development
- Social connection and community involvement
- Career development and networking
- Mental health and wellbeing benefits



WHO VOLUNTEERS?

What types of volunteers does your organisation attract?
Who are you missing?

DEMOGRAPHICS & PROFILES

- Students and young professionals
- Retirees and older adults
- Corporate employees (CSR programs)
- Parents and caregivers
- People with lived experience relevant to your cause





BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

What are the benefits.

For Volunteers:

- Skill-building and experience
- Increased confidence and self-esteem
- Social connections and reduced isolation
- Pathways to employment or education

For Organisations:

- Expanded capacity and reach
- Diverse perspectives and energy
- Stronger community ties

Mental health boost

Studies have shown that spending time in nature can significantly reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Volunteering in the countryside can provide a much-needed escape from the pressures of daily life and promote mental clarity and calmness.





WHERE TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS

- Online platforms: VolunteerMatch, Do-it.org, local volunteer centers
- Social media: Facebook groups, LinkedIn, Instagram
- Community spaces: Libraries, schools, places of worship
- Events: Fairs, festivals, open houses
- Corporate partnerships: CSR programs
- Word of mouth: Encourage current volunteers to refer others

Create a recruitment map - list local and digital spaces where you can find volunteers.





DESIGNING A RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

Steps:

1. Campaign Goals

- Describe the specific objectives of your volunteer recruitment campaign.

2. Target Audience

- Identify the groups you want to reach. Consider demographics, interests, availability, and motivations for volunteering.

3. Key Messaging

- Craft compelling messages that highlight the benefits of volunteering, the impact of your organisation, and the roles available.

4. Recruitment Channels

- List the platforms and methods you will use to reach your audience.

5. Timeline

- Outline the schedule for your campaign, including launch date, key milestones, and deadlines.

6. Evaluation Metrics

- Define how you will measure the success of your campaign.

Draft a mini recruitment campaign for a specific volunteer role.

Example:

Goals: Recruit 50 volunteers in 3 months across the service

Audience: Students, retirees, professionals.

Messaging: Help us look after nature so nature can look after you.

Channels: Social media, flyers, university outreach.

Timeline: 12-week campaign with milestones.

Metrics: Sign-ups, engagement, feedback.

Top tips for retaining volunteers

Kate – Community Engagement Ranger



The Access Team is responsible for almost 3,000 miles of rights of way. Kate coordinates volunteers in Southwest part of Hampshire and is responsible for 192 volunteers.

- **Clear meaningful tasks:** People don't like chipping away at different things, they want a project that they can say "I did that"
- **Make sure they are prepared:** Really clear instructions for tasks –timings, where to meet, what to bring, and what facilities there are.
- **Communication:** Get to know your volunteers and what they're interested in. Some like variety, some like consistency. You can provide a variety of tasks to suit different preferences.
- **Help them feel proud:** If you can't provide uniform try to provide something to make them feel visible e.g. a "volunteer" mug or 'volunteers at work' signs – this can help engage new people too.
- **Be welcoming and inclusive:** Post to social media with photos of everyone having a great time. Be inclusive – welcome neurodivergent people and those with disabilities - adapt to them.

Top tips for retaining volunteers

Martin – Ranger



Martin Works with 5 different volunteer groups at specific locations, he also has task specific volunteers e.g. administrators, site champions and volunteer recruiters. Martin is responsible for almost 50 volunteers and works with volunteers every day of the week.

- **Communication is key:** always keep volunteers in the loop for all tasks and dates. Even self-led groups need to know exactly what is going on.
- **Treat as individuals:** listen and take an interest in them.
- **Work to their strengths:** by getting to know them and what makes them tick you can help assign them to best-suited tasks.
- **Inclusion and patience are key** to building a strong volunteer base. Taking time to get to know individuals, beyond first impressions, might reveal strengths, passions, and reliability.
- **They need to enjoy it or they won't come back:** Make them feel valued. They don't want a medal but they do want to be thanked.
- **Bribe them with hot drinks, biscuits and cakes!**

Top tips for retaining volunteers

Barry - Cheriton Conservation Volunteer Group



Established in 2016
predominantly focused on
management of Cheriton Stream
- the upper part of the River
Itchen.

Also involved in general wildlife
and countryside projects around
the village e.g. planting trees and
hedgerows, installing kissing
gates.

- **Variety is paramount:** Avoid repetitive tasks - people get bored if they're always doing the same thing. Mix up activities and let volunteers choose what they'd like to do.
- **Offer Purpose and Community:** Seeing the impact of their work gives a strong sense of achievement and keeps motivation high. Volunteering can be a break from stressful jobs or isolation.
- **Build a Strong, Committed Core Team:** Having a reliable "core group" makes a huge difference. These are the volunteers who show up regularly and help drive momentum.
- **Get Tools and Financial Support:** Initial funding for tools and equipment can be a game-changer.
- **Build Partnerships:** Work hard to build relationships with farmers, landowners, and local councils. Sit down for coffee, introduce yourself, and build trust.

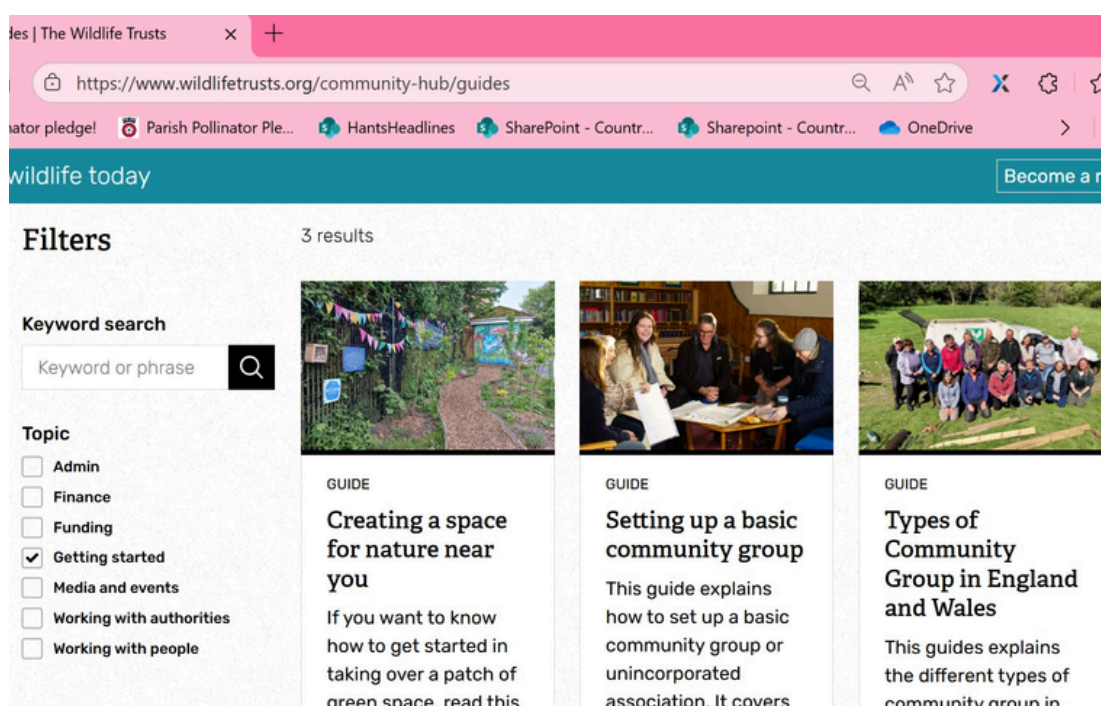
Essential Legal and Safety Responsibilities

This information isn't designed to guide you through setting up a volunteer group, or guide you through H&S obligations but it's important to be aware of the key responsibilities you'll need to meet before leading any volunteer activities. These include:




- GDPR compliance
- risk assessments
- public liability insurance

To access public liability insurance, your group will need to be formally recognized or "constituted." Most insurers and support organisations require this before offering cover or guidance. Don't worry - being constituted isn't complicated. It simply means having a basic framework in place so your group can work with confidence and accountability.

For further guidance, check out [The Wildlife Trusts' excellent Community Hub](https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/community-hub/guides)



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/community-hub/guides>. The page displays a search results page with 3 results. On the left, there is a 'Filters' section with a 'Keyword search' box and a list of topics: Admin, Finance, Funding, Getting started (checked), Media and events, Working with authorities, and Working with people. The search results are as follows:

Image	GUIDE Title	GUIDE Description
	Creating a space for nature near you	If you want to know how to get started in taking over a patch of green space, read this
	Setting up a basic community group	This guide explains how to set up a basic community group or unincorporated association. It covers
	Types of Community Group in England and Wales	This guides explains the different types of community group in

