

# Volunteer Handbook





# A warm welcome

## Welcome to Earth Trust!

You are joining a dedicated team, passionate about making a difference to sustainability, biodiversity and wellbeing using the power of natural green spaces.

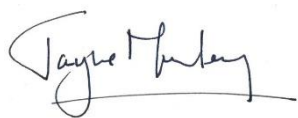
Whilst there are a myriad of reasons that people have for getting involved with Earth Trust we all have one thing in common; we share a passion to help people and nature thrive together.

It is an exciting time to join us and thank you so much for choosing to do so. Our new 5 year strategy – Connecting communities for change – includes plans to redevelop our visitor centre by reaching out and encouraging more people than ever before to connect with the environment and think differently about how to address the issues facing our planet.

We have big ideas for the future on how we can do this, and volunteers will be at the heart of our work, helping us make these dreams a reality.

I look forward to meeting you soon, and thank you for joining our community of changemakers.

Best wishes,



Jayne Manley  
**Chief Executive**



## Contact Details

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# Introduction

We hugely value and appreciate the time that our volunteers donate to us, no matter how big or small. By volunteering with Earth Trust you are not only giving your time but your skills, knowledge, enthusiasm and passion for making a difference.

You are a valued and appreciated member of our team and we hope your time with us is enjoyable and of value to you too.

We want to make sure that you have the best possible experience with us and this **Earth Trust Volunteer Handbook** aims to provide you with everything you need to know about being part of the team.

This pack includes an overview of what you can expect from volunteering with us, what we ask from you in return, as well as details on our policies and safety information which are covered in the companion **Earth Trust Volunteer Safety Guide**.

Whilst there is no formal contract between Earth Trust and our volunteer, together we enter into a non-binding agreement based on a reciprocal approach of trust and honesty.

Please take the time to read through this handbook and the safety guide, and sign the Volunteer Agreement Form to acknowledge you have read understood and will abide by the contents of both. As your volunteer activities are covered by our Employers Liability Insurance, we do ask that you sign the form and return to us before you begin.

**Thank you so much for getting involved. We hope you enjoy your time with us!**







## To begin, a bit about us

Earth Trust is an environmental charity with 40 years' experience in caring for and inspiring others with natural green spaces.

We believe that everyone has a responsibility to care for nature and understand our role within our ecosystem. But for people to understand their environment, their place in it and their role in caring for it, they must have the opportunity to experience its impact and nurture a deep connection.

Together with our supporters, Earth Trust is guardian of some extremely special and inspiring places full of nature and heritage.

We care for over 600 hectares of woodland, farmland, wildflower meadows and wetlands, which receive some 200,000 visits a year.

We use these amazing places to engage and inspire people and to demonstrate nature-based solutions to climate, biodiversity and health crises, that we hope others will take and use elsewhere.

**Earth Trust is currently a team of over 30 staff, hundreds of active volunteers and more than 500 regular supporters.**

# Our purpose

We are facing a triple threat of climate change, loss of biodiversity, and a public health crises, made worse for those in disadvantaged communities who have little or no access to nature.

Our purpose is to inspire people to address these crises through the power of natural green spaces.

# Our vision

Our vision is a society where accessible, engaging green spaces enable nature and people to thrive in balance.

# Our mission

Our mission is to champion access and engagement with natural green spaces for everyone, so that together we take action for people and planet.

Earth Trust has been working towards this for 40 years, but it has never been more critical than now.

**Demonstrate. Engage. Influence.**



# What you can expect from us

## Induction

When you join us you'll be warmly welcomed into our volunteer community and fully supported by a dedicated staff member. They'll provide you with role-specific training, advice and guidance, through your induction and on an ongoing basis.

## Keeping you informed

All volunteers receive the weekly Volunteer Bulletin by email every Tuesday and are invited to regular volunteer training and information sessions. Together these keep you up-to-date on our strategy, news and projects and others ways to get involved.

## Fair and respectful treatment

People come to Earth Trust, whether they are staff, volunteers or visitors, from all walks of life. We embrace diversity, and everyone is treated equally, with respect, dignity and appreciation. We do not tolerate ill behaviour towards anyone.

If we need to make any adjustments (e.g. accessibility) in order to support you better, then please speak with your Staff Lead so we can do our best to make this happen.

## Your data

Your personal information is kept securely and treated confidentially, in line with the requirements set out in the Data Protection Act (1998) and the General Data Protection Regulation (2018). We will never share your information with anyone without your explicit permission and only contact you for areas you gave consent for on your registration form. For more information, please request a copy of our Data Protection Policy.

## Expenses

Earth Trust will pay all expenses incurred as part of your volunteer role as long as they have been **agreed beforehand** with your Staff Lead or Volunteer Officer. We do not pay commuter expenses or any other form of work expenses such as food, clothing, accommodation, books or childcare. For more information you can find a copy of our Volunteer Expenses Policy here

<https://earthtrust.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/policies/>

## Grievances

If there is something you are not entirely happy with, you can raise this with either your Staff Lead or with the Volunteer Officer. If we still haven't quite got it right, a member of our Senior Leadership Team can meet with you. If any issues arise we aim to resolve them in a positive and timely manner.

## Feedback and input

We have a Volunteer Steering Group that meets every month, comprised of volunteers and staff members, who together work to develop the volunteer programme. We always want to hear your thoughts and ideas on our work so please speak to your Staff Lead, the Volunteer Officer or a member of the Steering Group at any time to provide feedback.

# What we ask of you

Whichever volunteer role you undertake, you are an important ambassador for Earth Trust. For many members of the public, you are the 'face' of the Trust, so please always extend a warm welcome.

## **Fair and respectful treatment**

Please treat everyone at Earth Trust, whether they are fellow volunteers, staff or visitors with dignity and courtesy, and use respectful language.

## **Reliability**

We ask that you arrive on time for your volunteering to enable days to run smoothly and without delay. If you are running late please let us know as soon as you can.

## **Honesty**

Share your thoughts. If you are struggling with something, or would like a change of role, we will try and find alternative opportunities. Please speak with your Staff Lead or the Volunteer Officer.

## **Confidentiality**

Please treat the information you have access to, and/or discussions with fellow volunteers and staff, about Earth Trust and our work as confidential. When something can be made public we will encourage and enable you to do so.

## **Safety**

Health and safety is a shared responsibility and of paramount importance for the wellbeing of everyone including all volunteers, staff and visitors. It's important you familiarise yourself with the Safety Guide included alongside this pack. Please listen to staff and follow their instructions. You should also take the time to familiarise yourself with the policies and risk assessments on our useful documents page <https://earthtrust.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/policies/>. If you are ever in doubt, please just ask.

If there is an accident or near miss, tell your Staff Lead as soon as possible. If it is an emergency, phone 999 immediately. Should anything untoward happen to you, we will contact those people you gave as emergency contacts when you registered with us.

## **Keep us informed**

Please ensure that your contact and health information is always up to date so that we have the correct details registered on our system for you.

You are free to stop volunteering at any time. We just ask that when you want to finish you do let us know. Any feedback on why you want to finish is always helpful.

## **References**

We are happy to provide references once you have volunteered. Requests should be sent to the Volunteer Officer who will complete the reference with your Staff Lead.





## Our culture

### **Earth Trust is a friendly, positive and collaborative place.**

People are at the heart of what we do. You are joining a motivated team who are passionate about making a positive difference to climate sustainability, biodiversity, environmental impacts and health and wellbeing.

### **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

Earth Trust strives to be a diverse and inclusive place where we can all be ourselves and we are committed to equality of opportunity for all our people.

Individuals are supported to volunteer with us regardless of age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity, religion or belief.

## Our Values

We are a values-led organisation, committed to putting **People at the heart of Connection to nature, and Learning together to Make change happen.**

[earthtrust.org.uk/about/our-values](https://earthtrust.org.uk/about/our-values)



# Support for you

## **Exclusive events and activities**

We run a year-round programme of events and activities, exclusive to our volunteers. From sessions to keep you up-to-date on our strategy and projects, to socials and get-togethers to meet your fellow volunteers, a private Facebook group, podcasts and more.

These are a great opportunity to get to know Earth Trust, staff teams and your fellow volunteers. All events are detailed in the weekly Volunteer Bulletin.

## **Part of the team**

We provide free Earth Trust branded t-shirts and sweatshirts for our volunteers to wear, and in the winter months beanie hats too. Please speak to the Volunteer Officer to order the items right for you.

## **Building skills**

If there are skills or an area which particularly interests you, let us know and we may be able to arrange for you to work with or shadow a particular member of staff or specialist volunteer.

We would love to know if there is anything we can do to help make your aspirations a reality, so please let your Staff Lead know!

