

Volunteering update



1. Volunteer Survey 2023 feedback

- Learning and development
- Communication
- What we can do better

2. Volunteer Plan 2023-2026

- Our focus & why
- Diversifying our model
- Step change in the volunteer experience
- Supporting a growing organisation



Volunteering today



- **353** registered volunteers - about 50% bigger than 2016
- **218** active volunteers (time in last 12 months), contributing **16,086** hours
- **12** regular roles (most at capacity) plus additional ad-hoc roles
- **1 in 20** people do 2+ types of volunteering
- Our largest cohorts of volunteers are in Land Management, Events and Education
- We have introduced new roles this year: Forester, Education and Office
- Roles we still need support with: Ambassador, Maintenance and Events



“Earth Trust is the best place I have volunteered. I feel you have the balance right and always endeavour to make the volunteers feel valued and included. ”

“Hard to think of any possible improvements. I would instead like to say a big thank you to all involved whose efforts make volunteering with Earth Trust so rewarding.”



“I feel involved and well cared for.”

“Give yourselves a pat on the back for really trying.”

“I love volunteering with ET. The team are so friendly and welcoming.”



“We are incredibly lucky to have volunteers who support the Operations team...

Maintenance volunteers help with projects like solar lighting in the car park, a new pizza oven, putting up the composting, woodstore and shed for the education team, as well as all the day to day tasks that keep the centre running.

As well as this we have a gardening team; so often visitors comment about our shrub and flower displays at the centre. The dedication and knowledge of our gardening volunteers helps showcase the activities of the Trust, as well as giving us all beautiful surroundings to enjoy.

We also have our office volunteers who have become additional team members and are a joy to have with us every week. No task is ever too big or too small and they take whatever we throw at them!”



“Land Management volunteers have supported us in delivering huge infrastructure tasks which would have otherwise required contractors to undertake at a huge cost and would therefore not have been possible.

These tasks include fencing grassland areas for grazing to promote wildflower diversity, as well as other access and infrastructure tasks which enable the public to visit our green spaces.

They support us with the farm, woodland and enable us to deliver large scale projects like River of Life II.”



“With a small Communications staff team, we struggle to keep on top of our data reporting and transferring visitor details from events onto the charity’s contact database.

Both of these projects are vital, to be able to track the effectiveness and impact of our comms campaigns and to grow and develop our supporter community, yet they often slip out of reach.

Our volunteers are trained on complicated processes and systems and remain unfazed! They are enthusiastic about getting involved in extra projects, willing to get stuck into any tasks we have, helping us improve our work and expand our abilities.

They are a joy to work with and indispensable members of the team.”



“Volunteers have played a critical role this year in enabling the Fundraising team to spread the word about Earth Trust and grow our community of supporters.

Through office support and inspiring conversations at events and green spaces they have contributed towards us growing our individual and corporate membership base, as well as helping to inspire people to support us in other ways.

Thanks to all of you for your help!”



“Just over a year ago, there were no Education volunteers at Earth Trust. Today, we have more than a dozen amazing people who give their time to support and enable the Education team in our work with schools.

By giving their time, these volunteers allow us to give every child more time and attention, supporting their learning with us whilst meeting any additional needs.

Without our volunteers, we simply couldn't do what we do, which is ensuring every education visit to Earth Trust is impactful, great fun and will be remembered for a lifetime. Thank you to all of you! ”



“Volunteers play a crucial part in the smooth-running of all of our events.

Large-scale events such as Pumpkins wouldn't have been able to happen without volunteer support.

The visitor feedback from Pumpkins was fantastic - 'volunteers are warm, friendly and clearly passionate about Earth Trust' – it's the perfect insight to their dedication and kindness. So thank you!”



“I am hugely appreciative of the two incredible volunteers who have now been supporting the volunteering team for three years!

They help with tasks like registrations, advertising and marketing, events and research, and pretty much anything else I throw at them!

We are a team and work through things together to make volunteers’ experience the best it can be.”

Volunteer Survey 2023



Thank you to everyone that contributed

The survey was sent to all active volunteers and we had 67 returns, fairly representative of the types of volunteers we have with Land Management and Events making up the majority.

30%
completion
rate

13% more than
2022

You said...

....what volunteers found **most rewarding about volunteering?**

Spending time with like minded people, taking action for the environment, doing something for my local community

.... what is **most important for volunteers about the programme?**

Flexibility, variety, support



Taking action!



- 1. Learning and development for volunteers**
- 2. The ways in which we communicate with volunteers**
- 3. What we can do better**



1. Learning & Development

This year

- Woodland walk with Forestry Ranger Tim followed by practical coppicing session
- Regenerative Farming with Senior Ranger Tristan
- Tree Identification – summer & winter
- Insect talk & beetle monitoring
- Ancient & veteran trees project
- Brushcutter training
- Hedgelaying skills sharing

Ideas for next year

- Advertise in the Volunteer Bulletin for longer, try a variety of different times & dates
- Woodland walks with Forestry Ranger Tim
- Regenerative farming update with Senior Ranger Tristan
- Talks/Walks on why we manage the land in the way that we do
- River of Life II update & walk
- Plant & Bird Identification
- Talk on sustainable agriculture
- How to make your garden more eco friendly
- Tool handling & maintenance
- Taster sessions of other volunteer roles
- Leading a volunteer work party
- Owl talk, surveying and box making

2. Communication

- Volunteer Bulletin – very practical suggestions for appearance & content
- Facebook Group – reached 50 members, great photos, stories & events shared.
Doesn't work for everyone - whats app & other platforms used.
- Podcasts & Monthly blogs
- Face to face
- Survey
- Volunteer Handbook & Safety guide
- Social media

3. What we can do better

- Reach out and offer more training to volunteers in lone roles
- Introducing training for staff around volunteer management
- More opportunities to co-create with volunteers
- Offer personal development for volunteers

Volunteer Plan 2023-2026

We've been reflecting on what we're good at, what we think others are good at, how we can learn and what you need over the next three years. All of that analysis led to three areas of focus

1. Evolving our model to increase weekend and one-off volunteering
2. A step change in the quality of the volunteer experience
3. Supporting a growing organisation

1. Evolving our model

What we're planning to do about it this year?

1. Piloting Saturday land management from November onwards
2. Better capture data
3. Using DofE to introduce structured youth volunteering (HH project)

Subsequent years

1. New materials for one-off volunteering (Employer supported volunteering)
2. Expand the pilots
3. Proactive approaches on employee volunteer days

2. Step change in the experience



What we're planning to do about it this year?

1. Volunteer Handbook and Safety Guide
2. Session leader role and training defined
3. Volunteer management capabilities defined

Subsequent years

1. Session leader materials
2. PDPs for volunteers
3. Volunteer management training / programme
4. External recognition

3. Supporting a growing Earth Trust



What we're planning to do about it this year?

1. Volunteer roles for the welcome hub
2. Organisational scenario planning

Subsequent years

1. Recruitment for roles



Thank you!