



# Office Volunteer's Handbook for Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust

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## Introduction

The Trust was formed in 1961 by a group of local people who had concerns about the increasing loss of wildlife in the county. The Trust has since gone from strength to strength and now has 26,500 members and up to 500 volunteers on its database. From the beginning, the Trust has relied on the vital contribution made by volunteers. The scale and diversity of volunteering provides the Trust with flexibility and a wide skills base to call upon. We hope that volunteering and the opportunity to contribute to the work of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust will bring you enjoyment and new challenges.

## Volunteer in the office

### **Why is office volunteering important?**

Office volunteers are key to achieving our aims, assisting in the day to day administration side of running a charity. As an office volunteer responsibilities and tasks can vary considerably from data entry to helping us complete reports or assisting with mapping our nature reserves. As an office volunteer you can commit to ad-hoc tasks and assist when workload is high or volunteer regularly and assist on a project. Office volunteers can get involved in reserve, event, finance, fundraising, ecological and media administration task which are all part and parcel of wildlife conservation.

### **Duties/ Responsibilities** (these will vary depending on project)

- Assist with on-going database work, inputting records and helping the Trust move towards a paperless system.
- Having access to potentially confidential material. You will be asked to sign our data protection policy.
- Assisting in report writing
- Digitising documents
- Proof reading and editing
- Scanning documents
- Using geographical information programs such as ArcGIS
- Using Recorder 6, software which records species sightings and information
- Using Progress our membership database
- Working with maps and paper records
- Have experience of using computers, Microsoft Office and online programs.

### **Insurance and safe guards**

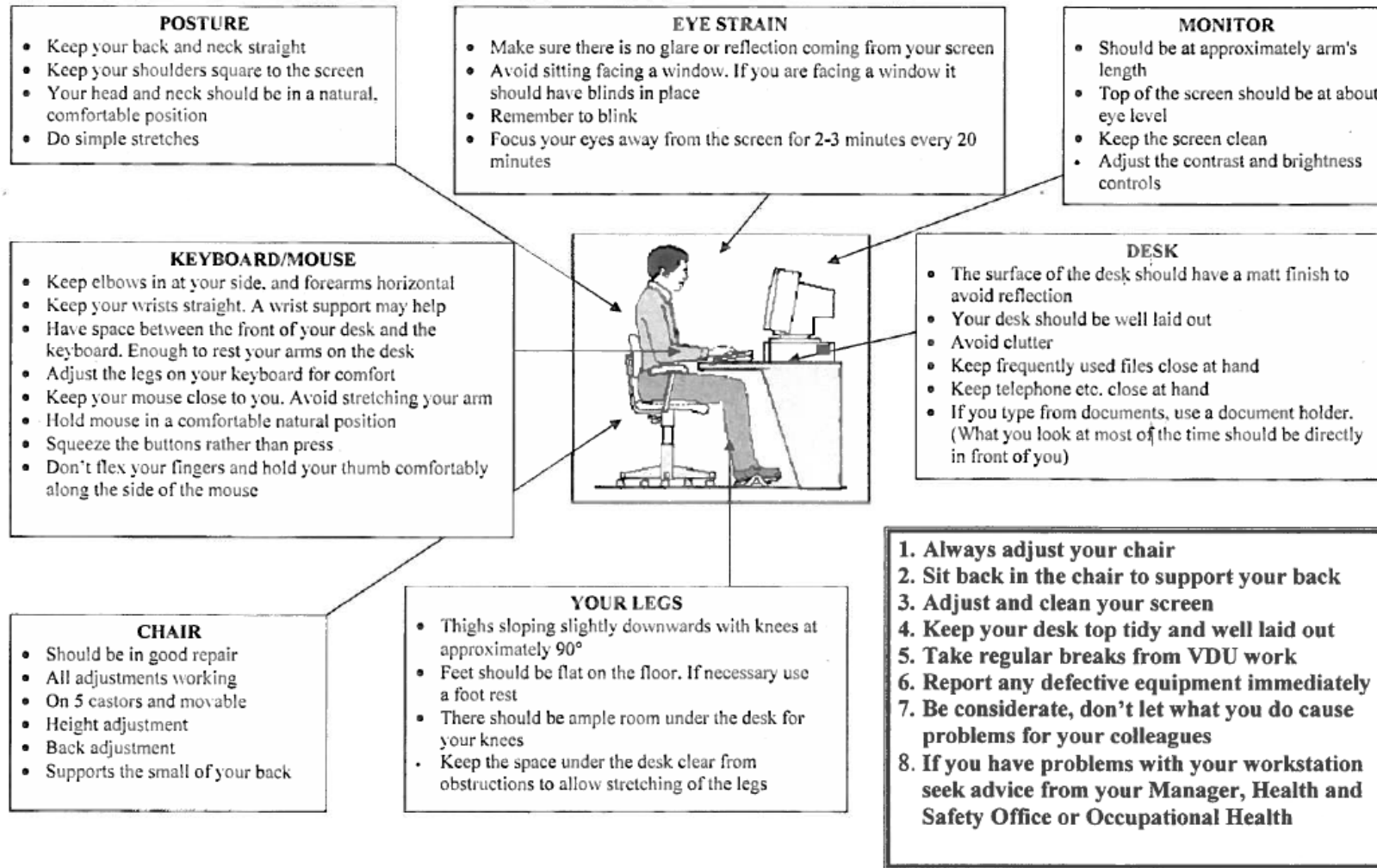
Volunteers are insured under our public liability insurance. At induction information about key safety points such as fire escapes, first aiders and hazarders will be run through. A further talk about working safe in an office environment will be given to long term volunteers.

### **Who to report to:**

This is dependent on who you are assigned to assist within the office which may change depending on the project. The volunteer coordinator will be your initial point of contact and will continue to support you throughout your volunteering experience. Contact information is available at the end of this document

Workstation assessment

**OH**net WORKSTATION ASSESSMENT



## Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust's aims for volunteers

- Recognise volunteering as an established area of the Trust, valuing their contributions to the Trust and their local community.
- Provide and maintain a safe and healthy environment for all volunteers and staff and to give appropriate training, induction and supervision for their welfare.
- Recruit volunteers for specific roles, matching Trust needs with volunteers' skills, knowledge and experience.
- A commitment to equal opportunities and believes for all volunteers and staff. Further details can be found in the Trusts Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Recognise Volunteer contribution to Trust and individual volunteer's motivations within the scope of the Trust's needs and resources.
- Appreciates that all offers of help should be acknowledged, but realises that not all offers can be taken up.
- Ensure all volunteers are trained correctly so that they can carry out their role to best effect.
- Committed to implementing and improving standards and best practice for the management and resourcing of voluntary activity by carrying out an annual Volunteer Investment and Value Audit.
- Look for new opportunities for volunteers to become involved in the work of Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.

## Volunteering Guidelines

As a volunteer you have a designated member of staff or fully-trained volunteer to guide and advise you in your role. Your role description names that person and you should try to have regular contact with them. We also aim to hold at least one social event for all volunteers each year. This is an opportunity to meet other volunteers and Trust staff.

A Volunteers Coordinator is also available to give advice, information and support and to deal with any complaints by or about volunteers.

### Representing the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust

As a volunteer you are an important ambassador for the Trust and should always try to represent its best interests. Volunteers are often seen as "the face" of the Trust and offer the first point of contact for many members of the public who are potential new Trust members and supporters. It is therefore important when representing the Trust that anything you do say to the public reflects the aims, objectives and visions of the Trust. Training will be provided if you are in a public speaking role. If you are ever asked a question you are not sure about, please refer it onto a member of staff. You can also find a brief overview of our aims in the Trust's Strategic Plan, which can be found on our website, on our [who we are page](#)

### Attendance

Attendance is not compulsory in voluntary positions however it is important to inform us if you cannot attend so that alternative arrangements can be made. Some projects will need regular commitment from volunteers if you feel you can only offer ad-hoc volunteering please let us know as we can offer other opportunities. The Trust realises that volunteers can decide to leave their voluntary position at any time. If you feel unable to continue volunteering for the Trust, we would be grateful if you could let us know as soon as convenient. Likewise, we will inform you if we can no longer make good use of your contribution.

### Confidentiality

As a volunteer you may be party to information about other volunteers, Trust members or information which is not in the public domain. This information must be kept confidential at all times and not be misused. If you are unsure, please ask your supervisor. Where needed, we can provide data protection training.

### Communication

It is vital to ensure that such a large organisation works effectively. Trust staff aim to keep volunteers informed of current developments within the Trust and of any matters which affect volunteer roles on a regular basis. We have a monthly volunteer e-newsletter, sent out to all registered volunteers and contains important information for volunteers about the Trust, including upcoming events, potential training

opportunities, volunteer stories and new volunteer roles. Please do take the time to read this publication! Your assigned supervisor will also provide you with regular updates about the Trust.

### **Claiming Expenses**

All volunteers can claim out-of-pocket expenses which must be agreed with your supervisor when you start volunteering. This includes claiming mileage for travel to and from your place of volunteering (up to a 40 mile round trip at 35p per mile). You are asked to complete a Volunteer Expenses Form and submit this to your supervisor for authorisation on a monthly basis.

### **Recording your Contribution**

Your contribution to the work of the Trust is greatly appreciated. In order for us to allocate resources to volunteers and the work that is carried out, it is helpful to know the amount of time you spend volunteering. While out on site with us we will ask you to sign the risk assessment. This not only gives you the opportunity to read the risk assessment but allows us to record your volunteer activity. For those volunteers not part of a practical group, we will instead ask you to complete a record of your hours through the Volunteer Hours Form or by completing our quarterly online volunteer hour's survey.

### **Vehicle Usage**

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust has a limited pool of vehicles which may be available for use by volunteers for certain tasks. Volunteers who wish to use a Trust vehicle should ask their supervisor for further information. Any person who drives a Trust vehicle must submit a copy of their driver's license for inspection, have an acceptable claims and conviction record and sign a copy of the Trusts vehicle policy.

### **Health & Safety**

In terms of health and safety, there is no difference between a paid member of staff and a volunteer. The Trust is committed to providing a safe working environment and will provide appropriate instruction, supervision and training to ensure the health and safety of its staff, both paid and unpaid. As a volunteer, you have a duty of care for your own safety and that of others around you.

You should always ensure that your own actions do not affect the safety of other volunteers and staff with whom you are working. You should always report any defects to equipment or any accidents that have occurred, to your supervisor.

## **Contact details**

Donna Cavill  
Volunteer Coordinator

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