

9. Practical Conservation Volunteering FAQs

What will I be doing?

Conservation work is very varied and what you will be doing can change depending on the time of year, the weather conditions or the type of site you are working on.

Common tasks for volunteers include clearing scrub to prevent loss of grassland or heathland habitat; clearing overhanging vegetation from footpaths and access ways; repairing or installing footpaths, fencing or posts; woodland work such as coppicing and hedge laying. Woodland work and scrub clearance is typically done in the winter months when there are fewer nesting birds and the trees have dropped their leaves. Access and maintenance jobs such as footpath work and fencing are more likely in the spring and summer. Most of our conservation groups take a break in mid summer.

How long do you work for?

Start times vary and each volunteer group has its own arrangements so make sure you have been given the details beforehand. Work days usually last from 3 to 6 hours. Volunteers are encouraged to work at their own pace and are usually able to leave earlier in the day if they choose.

Do I need to have done this sort of thing before?

No, no experience is necessary. You will be shown how to approach conservation work appropriately and safely, and by attending regularly you will build up a wide range of practical skills. All tools and protective equipment are provided and you will be advised on how to use them. Conservation volunteering is also a great way find out more about the natural world. You will learn how the practical work we do benefits wildlife and in time you will be able to see the results for yourself.

What should I wear?

You need to wear comfortable clothing (including waterproofs) that is suitable for outdoors. Wear layers as you will get warm whilst you work. Sturdy footwear with good grip and ankle support is a must, and should be steel toe-capped if possible.

What should I bring with me?

A packed lunch or snack and a drink. Please bring along any medication you might require, such as an asthma inhaler.

How can you learn from other groups?

1. Firstly it is important to understand your own local green space, how people already use it and how you can improve it for EVERYONE.
2. The Friends Forum is your point of contact with other groups and issues, your group will benefit if you attend the meetings. Visit their website at www.friendsforum.org.uk
3. Do not be afraid to ask for help, your idverde Community Manager is there to help. Other local, or similar groups are willing to help and will work alongside you and experienced people with specific skills can be bought in.
4. Go to, and arrange your own, social events. Even if it's a walk around your area with a drink in the local pub afterwards, people are always nice and nosy and enjoy meeting other groups.

5. Make sure you have. At least, email addresses, Facebook page, web site, twitter account or any social media blog that suits your group. Then make sure the friends Forum have a copy of it. (and look at others)
6. Could members of your group be willing to mentor other newer groups local or similar to your own group? There are already mentors who will help you, just ask your *idverde* Community Manager.
7. Always attend events bringing Friends groups together, like the annual receptions, or award ceremonies.
8. Check out other groups newsletters, these are usually available on the Forum web site.

How do we run an event?

1. Decide, as a group, what type of event your area needs. If you're not sure ask or survey your park users.
2. Talk to another group who has already arranged a similar event, this will allow you to talk through everything that may arise and also you will be able to borrow all of their paperwork.
3. Once you have a date you MUST inform the park department and fill in a Ground Hire form. This will then give you limited insurance cover through the Friends Forum, for your event. Please do this however small your event is.
4. If you are having any type of Music (Live or recorded) Food or Alcohol, you MUST apply for a Temporary Events Notice. This will cost you £21.00 (at time of printing) and is downloadable from the LBB or Friends Forum websites. A copy of this form must then be sent to all the different departments stated on the notice.
5. Delegation and responsibility will be down to you and your group, however *idverde* have access to some equipment, including gazebos and tables, that you may borrow free of charge.
6. Don't forget the obvious, people need to go to the toilet, rubbish needs to be collected, make sure you meet with your *idverde* Community Manager before the event to talk through any issues/ideas.
7. You will need to ensure that there is adequate insurance for some stalls including fun rides, bouncy castles etc. Most of the providers of these items will carry their own third party indemnity insurance and it is essential you check that this is in place and that any assistance you offer does not invalidate this insurance. Please note the event insurance provided through *idverde* will NOT cover services provided by second party suppliers.