

REPORT OF DISCOVERY TEAM

SUBJECT: PEMBROKESHIRE COAST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY VOLUNTEER FORUM

Purpose of Report

To request member representation on the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's Volunteer Forum

Introduction/Background

Volunteers have been contributing to the work of the National Park Authority and helping the Authority to achieve its purposes for at least fifty years. We currently have 145 volunteers registered. They do a variety of tasks, including practical conservation work, support funded projects such as Stitch in Time, the Pollinator Project, Walkability, invigilate in the gallery at Oriel y Parc, manage the herb garden at Carew, and work with the photos sent in for the Changing Coasts photo project. We have recently integrated the tree wardens into our volunteer family and we are currently working on opportunities for archaeology monitoring and footpath and site monitors. Volunteers helped out at the PAVS volunteering fair and also at County Show.

In recent years there has been increasing recognition of the health and wellbeing benefits of volunteering. This combined with the fact that people are living longer has increased the demand for volunteering opportunities. The National Park Authority is at a crucial stage in the volunteering journey. In order to develop volunteering in a sustainable way we need to build stronger foundations by putting policies and procedures in to place, strengthen the relationship between staff and volunteers and increase, improve and diversify our offer to potential volunteers.

As part of the work to more actively engage volunteers in the work of the National Park Authority, a Volunteer Forum was established in October 2019. The Forum has two key objectives:

- To be aware of the role of volunteers and the contribution they make to the management and promotion of the National Park
- To represent the views of volunteers in a respectful manner, and to report back to other volunteers as effectively as possible

The terms of reference (ToR) provided as a supporting document to this paper provide more information on the Forum and how it is intended to work. The ToR were produced by volunteers with the support of the Volunteer Development Officer.

Comparisons

Our volunteering offer is less developed and structured than many other National Parks, however we do offer a range of volunteering opportunities. To our knowledge

we are the only National Park to offer a supported volunteering programme (Pathways).

Financial considerations

There are limited financial implications in relation to the Volunteer Forum, they would primarily be the costs associated with supporting volunteer/member attendance at meetings.

Risk considerations

No significant risks associated with the volunteering. Volunteers are covered by insurance and appropriate risk assessments are in place.

Compliance

Volunteering supports the NPA's duty to 'foster the social and economic well-being of local communities'. Volunteering is a strong demonstration of the Authority's work towards WG directives, the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act for example.

Human Rights/Equality issues

Volunteering supports PCNPA Equality plan, and is a strong demonstration of the Authority's commitment to Equality and Diversity etc. Volunteers have been invited to have input in to the equality plan through the volunteer forum.

Welsh Language statement

All information and opportunities relating to the Forum will be presented in a way which takes account of PCNPA's commitment to promote the Welsh language.

Recommendation

That a Member of the Authority be co-opted on to the Volunteer Forum as a representative and 'champion' for volunteering.

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Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Volunteer Forum

Terms of Reference

Purpose of the group

The Volunteer Forum was established to:

- i. Provide National Park Authority volunteers with a voice, recognising that they are important stakeholders in the National Park and the work of the Authority.
- ii. Represent the views of volunteers and enhance communication between volunteers, staff and Members of the National Park Authority.
- iii. Contribute to and drive forward effective support for and development of the volunteer contribution to the management and promotion of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, including involvement in new initiatives and projects where appropriate.
- iv. Provide a 'volunteer perspective' with respect to a range of National Park issues, policies and developments.

Examples of standing agenda items might include:

- Guest speaker (staff member)
- Report from each forum member on recent volunteering activities or issues
- National Park Authority Update
- Volunteer Update

Membership

- There will be a core group of members, ideally at least one representative from each of the volunteering groups. Numbers will not exceed 15.
- Other volunteers are welcome to come to meetings in addition to the core members.
- Ideally, we will have one Authority Member who will be a champion for volunteering, who will seek to attend at least one Forum meeting annually

Role of the forum members

- To be aware of the role of volunteers and the contribution they make to the management and promotion of the National Park
- To represent the views of volunteers in a respectful manner, and to report back to other volunteers as effectively as possible

Meetings

- These will initially take place on a quarterly basis, although the regularity of meetings will be subject to review by the forum.
- An agenda will be circulated ahead of each meeting and notes will be taken which highlight key actions
- Additional meetings can be organised if required and agreed by the forum. The forum may also wish to set-up specialist 'task and finish' groups should the opportunity and need arise.

Communication

- Forum members will be part of a group email list.
- Issues for discussion will be sent in advance.
- The volunteer newsletter will have a section with forum news.
- Other communication tools such as an 'online forum' might be a feature of future communications

Amendment, Modification or Variation

- These Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing after consultation and agreement by forum members

Agreement of the Terms of Reference

- These Terms of Reference are effective from October 2019.