

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK



Charity registration no. 1093176



Charity registration no. 1080838



Charity registration no. 1004132

Hello!

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with the Groundwork North Wales Group! Whether you are volunteering to learn new skills, meet new people, or give back to your community, we are thrilled to have you join us. This handbook is designed to guide and support you every step of the way. Inside, you will find everything you need to know, from getting started to making the most of your volunteering journey.

Our varied range of volunteering opportunities includes both indoor and outdoor roles so there is something for everyone, no matter what your level of experience, across our range of sites. **Thank you once again for deciding to volunteer with us.**

Find out more visit
groundworknorthwales.org.uk/volunteering

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ABOUT THE GROUNDWORK NORTH WALES GROUP



The Groundwork North Wales Group consists of 3 individual charities – Groundwork North Wales, Wild Ground and Refurbs.

- **Groundwork North Wales** is dedicated to supporting the vulnerable and disadvantaged in our local community through social, environmental, and economic well-being initiatives. Volunteers play a vital role in delivering our aims of empowering people, transforming places, and protecting the planet.
- **Wild Ground** manages a significant number of nature reserves. Connecting communities with nature through volunteering opportunities, hands-on conservation activities and educational programmes. Working to engage, inspire and enthuse local communities to act together to protect wildlife, and enhance habitats and eco-systems.
- **Refurbs** offers affordable household furniture at their site in Flint along with repair and reuse initiatives, and a community garden in Buckley. Combining environmental sustainability with social impact through volunteering, reducing waste, supporting low-income households and empowering individuals through practical and creative workshops.

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

We deeply value the time our volunteers give. Your contributions help us achieve incredible results, and we love shining a spotlight on the people who make it all happen. Whether it's celebrating volunteering journey milestones, highlighting achievements, or simply saying thank you, your impact never goes unnoticed.

- **Skill Development:** Enhance your skills through practical experience and training opportunities.
- **Social:** Meet new people, make friends, and build connections within the community.
- **Personal Growth:** Gain confidence, improve your mental well-being, and achieve a sense of achievement by making a positive impact.
- **Employability:** Boost your CV with practical experiences and references from your volunteer work.
- **Recognition:** We regularly nominate volunteers for their contribution in local volunteering awards and celebrate volunteer activities in our newsletter and through social media with your consent.



Tony Watkin, one of our dedicated volunteers, has made a significant impact during his time with us. In 2023, he was a finalist in the Inspire Adult Learning Awards (Ageing Well category) and was shortlisted for the Reuse Network Awards' Volunteer of the Year. Tony's contributions have supported individuals with their well-being and mental health – a testament to the incredible work our volunteers achieve.



OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR VOLUNTEERS



We want you to be fully informed:

- About the Groundwork North Wales Group and what we do.
- Who will be your main contact.
- About the tasks you are being asked to undertake.

We want you to be fully prepared for your role:

- You will receive an induction.
- You will have training opportunities to support your volunteering activity and personal development.
- You will receive appropriate support and supervision.

You will be consulted on:

- The tasks you are asked to do and how they will be achieved.
- Any decisions affecting your volunteering.
- Any changes to your Volunteer Lead.

Your safety is our priority:

- Risk assessment and management practices are to be followed.
- Training, support and supervision is in place.
- Necessary PPE is provided.
- Relevant and adequate insurance cover for activities.

We ensure you won't be out of pocket:

- We will supply the necessary tools and materials.
- We will reimburse out of pocket expenses.
- We will reimburse reasonable travel expenses.

You will be valued:

- Through acknowledgement in our annual impact report, newsletters, online and other marketing publications.
- Through recognition of achievements with awards and certificates.
- By being appreciated and thanked for your support.

STARTING YOUR VOLUNTEERING

Here is a quick guide to how our volunteer process works.



Submit Your Application

Express your interest and take the first step towards joining our volunteer community. Meet, chat or email to explore roles that match your skills and passions. Together, we'll find the perfect fit for you.



Join the Induction Session

Learn about your role, our values, and essential safety guidelines. Receive a copy of our Volunteer Agreement and our Volunteering Policy. Meet your Volunteer Lead and discover the guidance and support available throughout your journey.



References and DBS checks

You may be asked to provide referees who have agreed to be contacted, and you may be asked to agree to a DBS check if required, depending on your volunteering activity.



Training and Preparation

Receive any necessary training to ensure you are prepared for your task and build your skills.



Start Volunteering!

Begin your exciting journey, making a difference in your community.

ABOUT YOUR VOLUNTEERING ROLE

To ensure a positive and productive experience for everyone, we have clear policies, procedures, and guidelines in place. These are designed to support you in your role and maintain a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all.

Volunteer Roles

We have a varied range of volunteering opportunities that include both indoor and outdoor opportunities such as practical conservation, gardening, hospitality, retail and administration. We will find the perfect fit for you when you start your volunteering journey with us.

Policies and Procedures

Our policies are here to support you. If you have any concerns or would like to review them, your Volunteer Lead is always available to help.

Volunteer Agreement

As a volunteer, you are a valued part of our team, and we ask that you read and commit to your volunteer agreement, which promotes respect, inclusivity, and professionalism. By signing your Volunteer Agreement, you confirm your understanding of your role, responsibilities, and the level of commitment expected. This agreement is not a contract but helps ensure clarity and mutual respect as we work together to achieve our goals.

Health & Safety

Volunteers are expected to follow all Health & Safety procedures we have in place. This means looking after your own safety, the safety of those around you, and anyone affected by your actions. Please follow any specific health and safety rules relevant to your activities.



Health & Safety Guidelines

- Smoking or vaping is not allowed on any of our sites. Your Volunteer Lead will inform you of designated smoking/vaping areas.
- Fire exits and fire extinguisher locations will be shown to you upon arrival.
- The appointed First Aider will be identified to you, and they will handle any accidents or emergencies.
- Lone working is only allowed if agreed with your Volunteer Lead, with clear timeframes and regular contact checks in place.
- A buddy system ensures you always have a point of contact for support.

Reporting Accidents and Near Misses

If an accident or near miss occurs, report it to your Volunteer Lead immediately. They will have completed a Health and Safety Risk Assessment for the site and can guide you through the process. Use the incident report log to record key details, including:

- Location of the incident.
- Time it occurred.
- People involved and what happened.
- Who you reported it to.
- Actions taken.

Submit the completed report to your Volunteer Lead, who will ensure it is addressed promptly and appropriately. For serious incidents, you may be asked to attend a follow-up discussion to provide more details.



Data Protection & GDPR

We handle your personal information in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Your data is securely stored and only shared with those directly involved in your recruitment and coordination. We never transfer your information to third parties without your consent. As part of your induction process, we will request your consent for photographs to be taken and used for internal or promotional purposes. You have the right to decline or withdraw your consent at any time.

Confidential Information

While volunteering, you may come across confidential information. It's essential to handle this with discretion. If you're unsure whether something should be shared, always check with your Volunteer Lead first.



Equal Opportunities

We are committed to making volunteering inclusive and open to everyone, regardless of background, beliefs, or personal circumstances. We ask that you always treat staff, supporters, and fellow volunteers with respect and consideration.

Our commitment to equal opportunities means we will:

- Always treat you fairly.
- Challenge and remove unfair barriers to your progress.
- Value and respect you as an individual.
- Support your right to contribute and achieve your potential.
- Provide full support if you need to raise concerns or challenge unacceptable behaviour.

Alcohol, Drugs, and Medication Guidelines

We are committed to ensuring a safe and effective volunteering environment for everyone. To support this, volunteers must not take part in activities while under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. If you are taking medication that may affect your ability to volunteer safely, please let us know so we can provide any necessary support or adjustments.

Accessibility Statement

We are committed to making volunteering as inclusive and accessible as possible for everyone. However, due to the nature of some of our reserves and activities, certain locations and tasks may not be fully accessible for wheelchair users or individuals with more severe disabilities or health conditions.

If you require additional support, we ask that you to attend with a support worker to ensure your safety and comfort. We are happy to discuss any specific needs in advance to explore how we can best accommodate you and make your experience as enjoyable and rewarding as possible.

Sickness or Cancelling Volunteering

Please try to keep to the arrangements you have made with your Volunteer Lead. If you expect you will be late or unable to attend, please contact your Volunteer Lead as soon as possible to eliminate concerns regarding your absence.

Performance and Complaints

All volunteers have the right to raise concerns. If you have any, please speak to your Volunteer Lead or refer to the External Complaints Policy in your induction pack.



Evaluation and Suggestions

Your feedback is crucial for improving our volunteering offer. We regularly send out volunteer surveys and welcome your views on how to enhance your experience. Your insights help us grow and ensure the best environment for our volunteers. Share your thoughts and suggestions with us through these surveys or by contacting your Volunteer Lead. We value your input and appreciate your help in shaping our volunteering activity.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Before Starting

How old must I be to volunteer?

We have some volunteering opportunities for individuals aged between 16 and 18 years old, these opportunities may require a guardian. We have a wider range of opportunities for individuals aged 18 or older with no upper age limit! We welcome volunteers of all ages and backgrounds, as long as the role is a good fit for you.

Can I volunteer if I have limited time?

Absolutely! We are happy to work with your schedule to find a role that suits your availability.

Do I need any special skills or experience?

Many roles require no prior experience, and we provide any necessary training to get you started. However, roles that require specific skills will only be allocated to individuals with the correct skill set, as determined during the application process.

What should I bring to my first session?

Your Volunteer Lead will inform you of anything specific needed for your role. For example, comfortable clothes (waterproof if outdoors), sturdy footwear, and enthusiasm.

During Volunteering

What happens if I can't make it to a session?

Life happens! Just let your Volunteer Lead know as soon as possible so we can adjust accordingly.

Who do I contact if I have questions or concerns?

Your Volunteer Lead is your main point of contact and is here to help you with anything you need.



Roles and Responsibilities

Can I try different roles or projects?

Of course! If you'd like to explore other opportunities, let your Volunteer Lead know, and we'll work together to find a good fit.

What happens if I want to stop volunteering?

We hope you enjoy your time with us, but if you need to step back, your Volunteer Lead will guide you through our simple exit process.



KEY CONTACTS

Volunteer Lead: Your Volunteer Lead is the person who oversees your sessions at the site where you volunteer. They are your main point of contact for everyday questions, training, and guidance. Your volunteer lead will be assigned to you at your induction.

Volunteer Coordinator: Responsible for your enrolment, feedback, and general inquiries about volunteering opportunities
volunteer@groundworknorthwales.org.uk

General Enquiries:
info@groundworknorthwales.org.uk
01978 757 524



VOLUNTEER NOTES

During your induction, you'll receive important information related to your new volunteering role. Use this section to jot down details specific to your volunteer activities.

Stay Connected with Us!

Discover more about us. Follow us on social media, visit our website and join our online community to stay connected and informed.

groundworknorthwales.org.uk

✉ info@groundworknorthwales.org.uk



By staying connected with us online, you'll never miss out on exciting opportunities and important information. Join us and be part of a community that's making a difference!



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