JOB DESCRIPTION

Post title: Volunteer Development Officer
Directorate: Resources
Grade: 5

Location: Parke, Bovey Tracey, with regular travel throughout Dartmoor

Responsible to: Head of Organisational Development

Primary objectives of the post:

To develop, coordinate and grow volunteering across Dartmoor National Park Authority, increasing volunteer capacity, capability and participation to support the delivery of National Park purposes and organisational priorities.

To lead the development of a coordinated volunteering programme, ensuring volunteers are effectively recruited, trained, supported, recognised and retained, whilst matching volunteer skills, interests and aspirations to opportunities across Authority services.

Main purposes of the post:

To coordinate and support volunteering opportunities across all Authority services, including attendance at events across the National Park, as required.

To support the recruitment, induction, training, development and retention of volunteers.

To work with managers and service leads to identify opportunities where volunteers can contribute to Authority priorities and National Park purposes.

To maintain systems, processes and records that support effective volunteer management.

To support the development of volunteering opportunities for a diverse range of people, including younger people, community groups, partner organisations and corporate volunteers.

To work closely with Rangers, specialist officers, HR colleagues and partner organisations to ensure volunteering is safe, effective, rewarding and inclusive.

To help embed volunteering as a valued and sustainable element of service delivery across the Authority.

Key Responsibilities

Volunteer Recruitment and Development

- Lead and coordinate the recruitment, induction and ongoing support of volunteers across the Authority.
- Coordinate volunteer induction, training and development programmes.
- Support managers and volunteer supervisors to effectively engage and work with volunteers.
- Promote volunteering opportunities to a wide and diverse audience.
- Develop initiatives to improve volunteer recruitment, retention, diversity and inclusion.
- Assist with the development of volunteer role profiles and volunteering pathways that meet organisational needs and volunteer aspirations.
- Maintain information on volunteer skills, experience, interests, availability and aspirations to support effective matching of volunteers with opportunities.
- Develop opportunities for younger volunteers and support progression routes from Youth Rangers and other youth engagement activities into wider volunteering opportunities.
- Ensure volunteers have a positive and rewarding experience and feel valued, supported and connected to the Authority.
- Identify and promote learning and development opportunities for volunteers.
- Liaise with the Safeguarding Lead / Deputy Safeguarding Lead to ensure safer recruitment processes are followed for volunteers, including identifying roles requiring Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, in accordance with the Authority's safeguarding policies and procedures.

Supporting Authority Services

- Work with Rangers, specialist officers and managers to identify volunteering opportunities and support delivery of work programmes.
- Act as a central point of coordination between volunteers and Authority services.
- Support volunteering opportunities across a range of areas including:
    - Nature recovery and biodiversity enhancement
    - Conservation and land management
    - Access and Public Rights of Way
    - Cultural heritage and archaeology
    - Education and learning
    - Community engagement and outreach
    - Visitor engagement
    - Youth engagement

- Monitoring, survey and research work
- Technical, professional and administrative projects

Supporting Volunteer Activity

- Build and maintain positive relationships with volunteers by regularly attending established volunteer activities, events and work parties, taking time to check in with volunteers and volunteer leaders, understand their experiences and identify any support they may need.
- Work with volunteer leaders to facilitate the development of new volunteer events/initiatives, including attending on site as required.
- Provide practical, on-site support as required, helping volunteers and volunteer leaders to feel valued, confident and equipped to deliver meaningful and rewarding activities.
- Encourage feedback, ideas and learning from volunteers to continually improve the volunteering experience and use this to identify opportunities for future volunteering contributions.
- Assist with practical activities where appropriate and where these support wider volunteering objectives.
- Promote safe working practices and support compliance with health and safety arrangements.

Volunteer Programme Management

- Maintain accurate volunteer records and data.
- Lead the development and maintenance of volunteer databases and volunteer management systems.
- Maintain volunteer training, safeguarding and compliance records.
- Coordinate volunteer monitoring, reporting and performance information.
- Support internal reporting on volunteering activity, outcomes and impacts.
- Develop and maintain volunteer guidance, induction resources and training materials.
- Coordinate volunteer communications, ensuring volunteers receive relevant Authority updates, information and key messages.
- Coordinate volunteer recognition and appreciation initiatives, including volunteer events and annual recognition activities.
- Support the development of a positive volunteering culture across the Authority.

Coordination of Volunteer Groups

- Support existing volunteer groups and help develop future volunteering opportunities and initiatives.

- Encourage collaboration, knowledge-sharing and good practice between volunteer groups operating across Dartmoor.
- Attend volunteer events, meetings and activities as required.
- Provide advice, guidance and practical support to staff and volunteer leaders coordinating volunteer activities.
- Support officers by identifying, recruiting and coordinating volunteers for activities, events and projects.

Corporate and Partnership Volunteering

- Support appropriate corporate volunteering opportunities where identified.
- Explore opportunities for joint volunteering programmes with partner organisations and neighbouring protected landscapes.
- Identify opportunities for specialist, professional and skills-based volunteering.
- Develop relationships with organisations that may provide volunteering opportunities, placements or partnership initiatives.
- Participate in regional and national volunteering networks and forums as required.

Volunteer Strategy and Development

Working closely with the Head of Organisational Development and colleagues:

- Support the development of volunteering strategies, policies, procedures and guidance.
- Work with managers to identify skills, capacity and resource gaps that may be supported through volunteering.
- Review and further develop existing volunteer schemes, including the Voluntary Warden programme.
- Identify opportunities to increase volunteering across all Authority services.
- Support innovative volunteering opportunities that contribute to Authority priorities and National Park purposes.
- Help embed volunteering as a core element of service delivery across the Authority.

Working Relationships

The postholder will work closely with:

- Head of Organisational Development
- Human Resources Team
- Head Ranger, Deputy Head Ranger and Sector Rangers
- Access & Recreation Team

- Cultural Heritage Team
- Ecology Team
- Land Management Team
- Education Team
- Community Engagement Team
- Visitor Centre Teams
- Volunteers and volunteer leaders
- Community groups and partner organisations

Special Working Conditions

- Regular travel across Dartmoor National Park.
- Access to the Authority's pool cars.
- Occasional outdoor working in varying weather conditions.
- Occasional evening, weekend and public holiday working.
- Occasional overnight stays for meetings, conferences and training.
- To work safely, ensuring all safety procedures and controls identified through risk assessment are complied with and incidents reported promptly and appropriately.
- To support the development and implementation of appropriate health, safety and safeguarding arrangements for volunteers and to support staff coordinating volunteers in fulfilling their responsibilities.

This job description outlines the current duties required for this post to indicate the level of responsibility. It is not a comprehensive or exclusive list and duties may be varied from time to time which do not change the general character of the job or the level of responsibility.

November 2026