

Volunteer Forum Meeting: Minutes

24th March 2025, 2.00pm – 4.30pm, White Room Llanion

Present:, Sally Boyton (SB), Joy Arkley (JA), Cllr Mike James (MJ), Jon King (JK), Ellie Sherwin (ES) Helen Clarke (HC), Gordon Lewis (GL), David Fisher (DF), Julian Stanton (JS), Sally Ross (SR), Marie Sture (MS)

Apologies: Karin Howells, Granville Watson, Roy Partington

1. Welcome, Apologies & Introductions

2. Updates from previous meeting

Update	Action
Footpath monitoring An annual meeting with Chris Taylor. Training on use of software went well but there are some limitations to the app which is causing inconvenience (signal, loading times, unable to access previous reports) Volunteers would have liked more information on <ul style="list-style-type: none">Who is allocated to monitor each path and if there are overlaps. Could a Volunteer coordinate this?More guidance on how to grade issues found to ensure consistency and prevent unnecessary work for Warden team.There is no log feature on the app. Updates on scheduling of work would be helpful to avoid duplication of reports.	<p>MJ to explore potential of further integration with Access team to support volunteering activity</p> <p>SB to speak to Chris Taylor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Summary and Map of monitored area.More regular catch up.Discuss possible volunteer role for co ordination
Wellbeing walks Volunteers query the legalities of Volunteers leading walks / work parties if Ranger not available. Confirmed risk assessments for walks are completed by Volunteer line manager and should be shared and all volunteers are covered under the organisations insurance policy. Participants are not always registered and there is a concern as leader often has no health or contact information. A new piece of software (Ticket Tailor) is soon to be launched to enable participants book onto sessions which should provide this, but it has not filtered to volunteers yet.	<p>SB – Speak to Angela Robinson to ensure leaders have access to software with participant information before walks commence.</p> <p>JA – Review Volunteer leading groups as part of wider volunteering review</p>

3. Forum member updates

Update	Action
<p>Update format</p> <p>Updates highlight the variety of activities undertaken by Volunteers and the amazing difference they make.</p> <p>Agreed that a basic template for the updates including 'What period / What happened / Any Issues' maybe useful for some and that updates should be included in the volunteer newsletter to capture the volunteer voice.</p> <p>Committee and staff are very interested in volunteers and the contribution they make.</p>	<p>MJ – Would like copies of Minutes and updates to share with Members</p> <p>SB – Template and updated format for Volunteer newsletter.</p>
<p>Hour Logs</p> <p>Better Impact – Volunteer hours logged does not display in chronological 'Volunteer View' which is not very efficient for when volunteers want to check they have submitted all their activities. SB has previously spoken to Better Impact but could not the off the shelf software is limited in certain areas.</p> <p>Hours logged currently need to be approved which was set up to monitor incidents. Can this be removed to make things more efficient</p> <p>Carew Hours- Volunteers are completing a paper form and passing to Mark confirming hours and tasks completed. This information does not seem to be filtering through to the official statistics so why collect this?</p>	<p>SB – To remove approval for hours logged I Better Impact.</p> <p>SB – To check with Mark what is happening with forms and if things could be handled more efficiently.</p> <p>JA Consider all as part of wider volunteering review</p>
<p>Planting</p> <p>Volunteers are disappointed at the lack of acknowledgement or in person contact from Landowners when completing tasks such as large-scale tree planting on private land.</p> <p>Volunteers would be interested to hear if survival rates for tree and hedge planting are monitored or reported. It is important as shows the value of the tasks completed by the volunteers for nature.</p>	<p>SB -Can in person thanks and acknowledgement be part of the agreement when booking the sites?</p> <p>JA – to Speak to Mary Chadwick / External Funding Officer to see if this information is kept for funding reviews.</p>
<p>Minibuses</p> <p>There have been 2 occurrences of minibuses either being unavailable to potentially breaking down while with a group. SB confirmed if a vehicle breaks down another from the fleet will be sent to collect. The Vehicle Use policy has recently been revised but a focus group may be needed for more detail as should include breakdown.</p> <p>Volunteers are surprised an 11-seat electric minibus was purchased for the Castlemartin Range and question if it is suitable for the terrain or large enough. Repairs have been organised at Stack Rocks.</p>	<p>JA –Driver Handbook is being tabled at Health & safety Group meeting on 8 April and this will be include in the review of the document</p> <p>SB- to Query Electric Minibus suitability.</p>

Volunteers Pin Badges SB update- Badges have been received and are available temporarily to new volunteers who are awaiting uniform. Started to be rolled out initially with Admin Volunteer. So far well received and have been a talking point for acknowledging roles volunteers are undertaking.	SB- Further Roll out to Volunteers
Car Park Passes Some volunteers have received car park permits at Carew but it does not seem clear how they are allocated and who manages the annual allocation. Some sites have permits available to collect for the duration of a volunteering session, but this is not always practical. The nature of some Volunteer Roles mean it would be more cost effective to provide a permit directly to the volunteer to keep. There isn't any consistency at present.	JA - Review policy of providing car park permits as part of wider review
Uniform Additional Fleece can be considered if a volunteer holds multiple roles (can be easily damaged in practical work but require smart uniform for public facing). Uniform is now laundered and reissued if returned in good condition. Volunteers do not want unisex uniform as it does not fit women's body shapes and is impractical. Samples maybe required to check sizes as inconsistent sizing in lady cut clothing.	SB – Do all Parks use same supplier? Could there be cost efficiencies with this? SB to meet with Angela Dooner to streamline uniform ordering process
Coast to Coast Previous concern about limited space due to format. JA confirmed all events are listed and it is due out at Easter. There are a reduced number of Bat Walks and other events which are a good source of income in difficult times. Increased prices does not affect demand. Also, will the Summer Rangers be employed this summer? No adverts	

4. PCNPA updates

Training Sexual Harassment - Following new Legislation in 2024, PCNPA have a duty of care and are required to take reasonable steps to prevent Sexual Harassment. All staff and volunteers will be asked to attend in person training which is being rolled out over the next 6 months. It will encourage open discussion and dialogue and will be pitched to be accessible for differing capabilities. Training Needs Analysis – Will be undertaken by people services in coming months and will include Midas and First Aid	JA Training Review part of wider review
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<p>First Aid – Following recent training first aid kits may need updating and review as to who should carry one and when. Tom Iggleden has updated some.</p>	<p>JA –First Aid Policy is tabled for Health and Safety Group meeting on 8 April</p>
<p>Admin roles JA is pleased that new admin volunteer, Emyr, has started in People Services. He will be volunteering weekly for a set period to achieve his goals. A second Volunteer has started working with Pembrokeshire Coast Trust which is very exciting.</p>	
<p>Joy Arkley update</p> <p>All Staff Meeting was held last week, with the main theme around the financial position of the organisation. There has been flatline budget over the past few years which is a reduction in real terms. There are a number of unknowns which will impact the costs eg NI Increase, Pay Settlement, and WG funding. Leadership have agreed to balanced budget 26/27 but to address deficit by cutting costs and trying to preserve jobs in 1st instance.</p> <p>As you are all aware Rebecca Evans left in December and is now at National Trust. JA will be backfilling the post as part of the review of Volunteering which will start in April.</p> <p>Anthony Richards is retiring from his role of Access and Rights of Way Team Leader. This role is currently being advertised.</p> <p>Countryside Management review Phase 1being implemented. Candidates have been interviewed for the Team Leader roles. Shortlisting has been undertaken for the Contracts and Technical Officer and Countryside Operations Manager roles with interviews due 3rd and 4th April.</p> <p>Phase 32 of the Review will begin with the appointment of the Countryside Operations Manager</p> <p>Volunteering Policies and procedures will all be reviewed in the coming weeks.</p>	
<p>Reps If a Rep is not available for the Forum would a deputy like to join instead. Current reps are North VW's– Granville Watson North West VW's– Dave Fisher South VW's– Sally Ross and Julian Stanton (deputy) South West VW's – No Rep Wildlife monitoring – Ellie Sherwin & Julian Stanton Carew – Helen Clarke Pathways – Jon King Roots2Recovery – Jan Milward Footpaths - Helen Clarke</p>	<p>Reps – Speak to groups to see if anyone would like to help.</p>

Health Walks – Gordon Lewis & Ellie Sherwin Activities & Events – Gordon Lewis Heritage – Dave Fisher Oriel Y Parc – No Rep Castell Henllys – No rep	
Good Housekeeping Mileage Forms – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The form is available in the Files section on Better Impact. • To look at carbon footprint engine size of vehicle is now required. • Please include line manager name on form who will authorise expenses. 	SB – Update mileage form and add to Better Impact

5. AOB

Stepping Stones at Carew These stones have sunk and are unstable. Although a survey has been done no work yet undertaken. An accident would reflect badly on park.	SB- Mention to Libby