

Volunteer Policy – CPRE Norfolk

The Role of Volunteers within CPRE Norfolk

The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) is a national campaigning organisation, working to protect the English countryside for future generations.

CPRE Norfolk is the county branch of CPRE in Norfolk.

As a voluntary organisation with limited resources, CPRE Norfolk recognises volunteer involvement as vital to its work. Contributions made by volunteers are invaluable and allow the organisation to grow and expand its influence.

We also recognise that volunteers have expertise that adds value to our work.

What Do Volunteers Do?

An Executive Committee of volunteers manages the organisation and act as Trustees of the charity.

Volunteers in local areas hold committee meetings, organise events, communicate with local members, respond to planning matters and fundraise.

Volunteers with specialist interests form campaigning groups, sit on steering groups, meet with MPs, councillors and planning officers and conduct research.

Volunteers help out at the county office with administration, planning events, fundraising and newsletter delivery.

We undertake to create and support a wide variety of volunteer roles within the organisation. We aim to match our needs for volunteers with individuals' skills and interests.

How Do We Recruit Volunteers?

Volunteer roles are advertised as widely as possible. These include the CPRE Norfolk website, the local Volunteer Bureaux, National Volunteering databases, and local universities and colleges.

We have a standard application form that we ask prospective volunteers to complete and may then invite individuals to an informal discussion about their interests and the scope for volunteering. We may take references if this is deemed appropriate.

If we are not able to offer a volunteer a role within the organisation, we will write to the volunteer and explain why.

Equal Opportunities

We welcome diversity amongst our volunteers and aim to involve volunteers from many different backgrounds. Our only requirement is that volunteers are broadly sympathetic to the beliefs of CPRE. We enjoy a mixture of younger and older volunteers and seek to improve the bank of skills and interests that are available to the organisation. By law, trustees must be at least 18 years old.

However, we currently do not have the capacity to support individuals with high supervision needs.

How Do Volunteers Work?

Many of our volunteers work from home and their contact with our office may be irregular and/or infrequent. Many work on ongoing projects and build up their own contacts and research. Others may only contribute to CPRE work when called upon to do so, getting involved when there is work requiring their particular interests or skills.

Some volunteers attend our office regularly; use office facilities; have regular contact with paid staff; and receive regular direction and support. This way of working is preferred by volunteers who are developing new skills or gaining work experience and by those who enjoy team working. Although we value their contribution, volunteers should not expect to be offered paid work at any time in the future.

Working with Volunteers

Volunteers will not be expected to contribute more time than they freely offer nor will they be asked to do things that they do not feel comfortable about.

Volunteers will be invited to attend an induction day for new volunteers at CPRE National Office. These happen throughout the year. Additional training may be offered to the volunteer if it is deemed relevant to their role.

Volunteers will be supervised by a particular individual within the organisation to which they will report any problems and discuss ongoing work. This may be a paid member of staff, such as the Branch Director or an experienced trustee such as the Chairman, District Chairman or member of the Planning Team.

Volunteers may be asked to work with data that is classified as confidential, such as information on our members. Rules about working with confidential data will be clearly explained by the volunteer's supervisor. Mistreatment of this data may result in the termination of the volunteer's role.

Volunteer role descriptions will be willingly provided if required. Appraisal of the volunteers work will take place after three months and then on request from the volunteer. Although volunteers are free to leave at any time, we ask that where possible we are given two weeks notice. An exit interview may be requested by the volunteer or the supervisor. References are willingly provided at any time.

Expenses

Volunteers may claim travel expenses for trips made by volunteers during the course of their work, for example to our National Office, or to a training day. These expenses must be agreed in advance.

As required, volunteers can also claim travel expenses to and from the usual place of volunteering and for car parking. Volunteers will be advised as to the current mileage rate.

Volunteers can also claim expenses for stationery, I.T. and for any other reasonable costs incurred during the course of their work. Normally, we do not provide lunch for volunteers at the county office but teas and coffees can be provided.

An expenses form will be provided at the beginning of the volunteering, that can be used at the volunteer's discretion. We are happy to discuss any issues about expenses.

Disciplinary Procedures / Grievance Procedures

We encourage volunteers to air grievances. If volunteers are unhappy with their role or have a grievance with the organisation, then we would like to hear.

If disputes cannot be resolved, the problem will be referred to the Trustees of the charity at the next available opportunity (the Trustees meet once a quarter) who will take a final decision. Volunteers can be accompanied by a friend or colleague in any meeting.

We reserve the right to terminate a volunteer's role at any time, although this is unusual. This will be done in consultation with the volunteer and a written statement can be provided upon request.

Membership

CPRE Norfolk is a membership organisation and many of our volunteers are also members, paying an annual subscription.

However, there is no obligation for volunteers to become members, although information will be willingly provided to new volunteers at their request. We hope that volunteers will be moved to join CPRE in their own time, as they get involved with our work.

Insurance

Volunteers are covered under employee liability insurance while engaged on voluntary work for CPRE Norfolk.

Volunteers using their cars for voluntary work should make sure they have the necessary insurance cover.