



Norfolk Trails

Volunteer Scheme Handbook

This handbook provides you with an introduction to the Norfolk Trails volunteer scheme. We have tried to make it as complete as possible but if you have any other questions please do not hesitate to contact a member of the team.

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Introduction

Who we are

Norfolk Trails consists of 1200 miles promoted routes around Norfolk. There are 10 main spinal routes and nearly 200 circular routes.. The vision for Norfolk Trails is to provide the best way to explore and experience Norfolk culture, heritage and countryside and to represent a sustainable resource for the community, economy and environment.

Why we have set up the volunteer programme

The scheme has been established to involve and engage local people in the maintenance and development of the Trails. Volunteers perform a vital role in the management of these routes

A volunteer you can expect:

- Training
- The support of Norfolk Trails' staff.
- To be valued and treated fairly.
- To be safe and secure whilst volunteering.
- To be provided with insurance cover for task you might undertake on behalf of NCC/SCC.
- To meet people and have an enjoyable experience.

A volunteer is expected to:

- Act responsibly and safely as an ambassador for Norfolk Trails.
- Respect the confidentiality of information as appropriate.

Training, induction and support

You will be given relevant on-the-job training and guidance from a member of staff or an experienced volunteer. If you believe you have not received adequate training to enable you to undertake a task safely and efficiently, it is your responsibility to say so. Norfolk Trails will then address your concerns.



Health and Safety

Every year more than two hundred people lose their lives and hundreds of thousands of people are seriously injured in workplaces across Great Britain. The moral, reputational and economic reasons for good health and safety practice in the workplace are clear. Millions of working days are lost in the UK every year due to occupational ill health and injury, imposing an annual cost to society of £30bn. But the need to manage health and safety appropriately goes much deeper than just being a cost saving exercise. As members of society we all have a moral obligation to 'do what's right' and no-one would want to feel responsible for someone having an accident as a result of your actions or inactions.

Norfolk County Council has a good safety record and incidents that do occur due to our work activities are relatively low. To achieve this we have adopted a robust health and safety management system.

The Trails staff will carry out a written risk assessment for all practical activities undertaken on the Trails. However it is the responsibility of individual volunteers to assess the risks for themselves when carrying out inspections along the Trails.

All volunteers have individual responsibility to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and for those other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions. In particular, volunteers must:

- Comply with the Council's Health and Safety Policy and procedures at all times;
- Co-operate with their Trail Officer in complying with relevant health and safety safe systems of work and procedures;
- Use all work equipment and substances in accordance with the instruction and training received;
- Wear, use, store, maintain and replace personal protective equipment as appropriate;
- Not intentionally misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety and welfare;
- Report all accidents (personal injury and vehicle), ill-health, incidents of violence and aggression, near misses, hazardous situations, general health and safety concerns, defective equipment as an issue on the report form.
- Attend training as offered by Trail Officer.

The following highlights the issues for consideration in self-assessing potential hazards and appropriate control measures for lone monitoring.

1) Travel to and from the work site.

Driving to and from site is the single most dangerous activity you will do when volunteering. It is not for us to start telling you how to drive and we do not intend to, except to point out that you should:

- Allow plenty of time for your journey; particularly be aware of the time needed for your site visit so that you are not rushing on your return.
- Park considerately and well off the road. If there is an issue with parking please let us know to see if we can perhaps arrange something.
- Is the access to the Trail from a busy or fast road?
- Do you need to be careful not to park in a sight line? - your sight line of the oncoming traffic and other drivers sight lines to you.

REMEMBER IT'S YOUR LIFE AND DRIVING LICENCE

2) The Site Area or Section of Trail.

Remember that the Trails and circular walks are country paths where the terrain is varied and may well change between visits e.g. rabbit holes may appear, brambles will grow and furniture may become loose.

In general be aware of:

- Slopes, particularly in or following wet weather
- Rabbit holes in the path
- Woods or large hedges can produce branches at eye poking level
- Brambles, both at eye level and tripping height
- Countryside Furniture – loose, slippery, falling
- Roots and stumps
- Cliff edges
- Water courses / Ponds

Of course these are all issues that need to be reported during an inspection.

3) Tools

For planned tasks there will be full instruction before work begins. If taking your own tools when inspecting the routes you need to consider

- Storage in the car
- Safety of carrying tools to work sites
- Safety of using the tool whilst on you own

4) Personal safety.

Volunteer Rangers are often alone and in remote areas which can place them in a potentially vulnerable position. It would be advisable for all rangers to employ some sort of reporting or 'Buddy' system. Leave the following details with someone who could raise the alarm if you do not return or call in on time:

- a) Your destinations (grid ref) - which sections of the Trail or your access points
 - b) Your expected time of arrival on site
 - c) Your expected time of return
- On your return you should inform your contact immediately.
 - Where possible carry a mobile phone.
 - If you have no one to act as your buddy on a particular day you are welcome to use the Trail Officer.

5) Protective Clothing

Don't plan to visit a site without sun protection or waterproofs, which ever is relevant. Tree stumps and roots can be quite unforgiving to toes in open sandals. If doing any sort of practical work - **be careful!** Be aware of your limitations, if there is a fallen tree, please do not injure yourself in trying to move it.

YOU ONLY HAVE ONE BACK.

6) Other Potential Hazards

- Tetanus - Norfolk is a high-risk area so ensure that you are up to date with jabs.
- Blackthorn infection - take care when removing thorns should you get one stuck in your skin. A wound where some of the thorn remains embedded in the flesh is liable to become infected and a visit to the doctor should be sought.
- Lyme Disease (see page 7)
- Leptospirosis (see page 7)

Lyme disease

Lyme disease is a flu-like illness caused by the bite of a tick infected with bacteria. If untreated it can, in severe cases, lead to arthritis and neck stiffness. Only one in every five thousand bites is likely to lead to illness so the risk of getting the disease is quite small.

Since surveillance began in the UK in 1986 there have been 5176 reported cases although it is believed that there is a considerable degree of under-reporting.

Ticks

Ticks spend most of their time in moist places close to the ground. When the 'host' animal (usually deer) is not available the tick will seek an alternative supply of blood; they climb up grasses, bracken and scrub and wait for a warm blooded animal to brush past.

Prevention

The best defence is to keep your skin covered – especially your legs. Check your skin and clothing frequently. Carefully remove any ticks and place a small dressing over the bite. The sooner the ticks are removed the less likely you will be infected.

Leptospirosis

Leptospirosis is very rare but it can be fatal. It is a bacterial infection carried in rat and cattle urine which can contaminate water. The chance of being infected – although small – is greater in slow moving or stagnant water and in sewers. The bacteria can enter the body through breaks in the skin or the mucus membranes of the mouth and eyes. Entrance through the intact skin is unlikely although prolonged exposure of the skin to contaminated water may provide an opportunity for infection.

The early stages of the disease are temperature, an influenza like illness, chills, malaise and joint and muscle pain.

Treatment of the disease is very effective in the first three days. It is therefore important that anyone who has recently worked in areas which could be contaminated by rat or cattle urine visit their doctor if they suffer from any of the above symptoms.

How to remove a tick

If you pull at the tick's body you are likely to crush it and leave the head buried in your skin. This can cause an abscess at the site of the bite.

To make the tick loosen its grip you should apply a drop of methylated spirit, alcohol, neat TCP or nail polish remover to its body and wait for a few moments before easing it out of the skin with tweezers.

What to do following a tick bite

Most tick bites will require no further attention. The first signs to look for are a RED SKIN RASH which starts at the site of the tick bite and spreads outward in a ring shape. This can be up to 50 cm (20 inches) in diameter.

This may be followed by; headaches, fever/chills, stiff neck, pain the joints, difficulty remembering and concentrating.

If you experience any of these symptoms or you are worried about possible infection contact your GP. Lyme disease can be treated with antibiotics. The earlier the disease is diagnosed the easier it is to treat.

Precautions against risk of Leptospirosis

1. Always use the protective clothing/equipment recommended
2. Always thoroughly clean your hands before eating or drinking whether or not your hands will be coming into contact with food.
3. Take immediate action to clean thoroughly any cut, scratch or abrasion of the skin as soon as possible, whether the injury was caused at work or not. Cover the wound with a waterproof adhesive plaster. Keep it covered until it is quite healed.
4. If you feel ill after working in an area which may be contaminated with rat or cattle urine, regardless of whether you have any cuts and scratches and have any of the symptoms mentioned opposite visit your doctor as soon as possible and show this card.
5. Every injury sustained at work, however small, must be reported and entered on the report form.

Practical Tasks

From time to time there will be opportunities for volunteers to get involved in group practical maintenance activities. Specific details of these will be highlighted in the Volunteer newsletter.

These activities will be supervised by a Trails officer who will advise volunteers of any specific health and safety considerations. Volunteers will be required to provide appropriate footwear and clothing together with a packed lunch for an enjoyable and satisfying day out.

Public Liability Cover for Volunteers

As a volunteer, you will have Public Liability Cover but not Personal Cover. Public Liability cover will be provided by Norfolk County Council whilst in Norfolk and Suffolk County Council whilst in Suffolk. Further details are available on request.

What to Report Litter/Fly Tipping

As you inspect the Trail, it is extremely useful to pick up any small pieces of litter (we will provide you with litter pickers and bags if required) and dispose of it either with your own household rubbish or at the local tip.

If the rubbish is bulky or hazardous, note in your report what it is, how much there is and the precise location using a grid reference, (please ask the Trail Officer to show how read a grid reference if you are unsure), then contact the District Council for your area who will arrange removal. The contact details are as follows:

<i>Name of Organisation</i>	<i>Telephone</i>	<i>Webform</i>
Breckland Council	01362 656878	http://www.breckland.gov.uk/flytip
Broadland Council	01603 430534	http://www.broadland.gov.uk/environment/1076.asp
King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council	Freephone 0500 253 2687	https://secure.west-norfolk.gov.uk/officeforms/Fly%20Tipping.ofml
North Norfolk District Council	01263 516189	
South Norfolk District Council	0808 168 2999	http://forms.south-norfolk.gov.uk/pub/FlyTipping.ofml
Mid Suffolk District Council	0845 6066067	
Great Yarmouth	01493 742200	https://www.great-yarmouth.gov.uk/webforms/ContactForm.aspx

On the coast, sea-borne litter is a particular problem, which makes the area unsightly. The amount of litter involved can make the clearing of sea-borne litter a group task, so please inform the Trails Officer, especially following high tides, if an area becomes unsightly.

If you notice an area with a persistent fly tipping or dumping problem please note this down. This includes garden and household waste that is dumped over garden fences onto the edge of the Trail.

Should you happen to come across an abandoned vehicle, please note the make, colour, registration (if possible) and location in your report to the Trails Officer. Then contact the District Council for your area who will arrange removal.

If the situation remains please contact the Trails Officer.

Obstructions

If there are any natural (e.g: trees) or other objects blocking the path that you cannot move easily, please note what it is and where it is (grid reference) on the report form and the Trails Officer will arrange removal. Please report if any paths which go across arable fields have failed to be reinstated following ploughing or crops have been allowed to grow. Also if any access gates are locked and therefore causing an obstruction please note these in your report. These issues can then be dealt with by the Trails Officer.

Travellers

If you come across any travellers using the Trails or other Rights of Way, then please remember that they are perfectly entitled to do so, if they are using an unclassified county road as a means of getting from A to B. However, if travellers are camped out on the Trail at any place then please use the report form to tell the Trails Officer where they are and how many vehicles they have.

Damaged/Missing signs

Please give grid references of any damaged, uprooted or missing signs along the path. Please note in your report these specific defects, i.e. disc missing, finger broken etc. (It is also useful to have a footpath number where known).

Broken furniture

By 'furniture' we mean structures such as steps, stiles, bridges and boardwalks. If these are damaged or broken please give a grid reference/footpath number where possible and the nature of the problem and the length of boardwalk, fence etc affected.

Damaged/deteriorating surface

Any rutting, severe braiding, surface water, potholes and erosion (especially on the coastal sections) should all be reported. Please give grid references (footpath number if possible), length of damaged path and surface type should all be reported.

Overgrown vegetation

As part of Trail management, sections of the route are cut during the year. We have supplied you with details of the contract for your particular section so that you can report back to us if the work has not been carried out or does not meet the specification required. It would be helpful if you could carry with you some secateurs while inspecting, to cut back any small bits of bramble etc that may overhang the route. However, if you feel that there is too much for you to tackle, please report this to the Trails Officer.

General

Please note that if you do not find any problems during your inspection, it is still important to send in a report saying that 'all is well'. This way the Trails Officer knows that that section has been inspected.

If you feel that a situation needs immediate action please support your written report with a telephone call to the Trails Officer.

Signage on the Trails

There are different types of signage used on the Trails and other PROWs depending on the local situation. The following outlines the variety used. It is recommended that you become familiar with the individual signs on your section/s, so that you can tell if there are any repairs needed.

Fingerposts

These can display a variety of information using different techniques. They can be metal, concrete or wooden or a combination of these. The information may be routed (ie engraved into the wood), painted, or both. Fingerposts may display the following information:

Route name, destination and distance, Right of Way status. There may also be branding discs attached to the fingerposts, i.e. Norfolk Trails, Health & Biodiversity walks, circular walks.

Directional Waymarkers

This is a post or similar with an arrow engraved or painted onto it. They can also appear as a waymark disc that is attached to countryside furniture, displaying a directional arrow.

Our Standard is to provide the minimal amount of signage in the countryside whilst still allowing for ease of navigation.

It is a legal requirement that all Public Rights of Way are signed where they join a metalled road.

Rights of Way Information

The following information is designed to provide basic information about the law affecting Public Rights of Way along Norfolk Trails. These notes are selective in their content and only contain the most important relevant points to the Trails. Please note that the following details are given for information only. You are not expected to act as police men or women.

Public Rights of Way;

A public right of way (PROW) by definition is 'a way over which all members of the public have a right to pass and repass'. These paths are subject to laws governing their use as set out in various Highways and Countryside Acts. On the other hand there are paths called 'permissive' paths over which a landowner has permitted public use, but has also made it clear that there is no intention of it being made into a PROW. On permissive paths rights of way law does not generally apply, with the exception of overgrowing or overhanging vegetation. Below is an explanation of who is allowed to use the different status PROWs.

Footpath;

People on foot are the only people who have a right to use footpaths. Pushing prams, pushchairs and wheelchairs is also allowed. Cyclists and horse-riders are not allowed and those who do so are committing trespass against the landowner. This makes it a civil offence and not a criminal one.

Bridleway;

People on foot or on horseback can use bridleways. Cyclists may also use bridleways but they must give way to horses and walkers.

Restricted Byway;

In May 2006, under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, a Road Used as a Public Path (RUPP) is now a Restricted Byway. Where RUPP's had unproven motorised vehicle rights, as Restricted Byways there are no motorised vehicle rights. This means that only walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and horse-drawn carts are allowed access.

UCR;

An Unclassified County Road is a highway that can be in any condition (non-metalled/metalled) that is open to all traffic. These can be narrow enclosed lanes or wide, open roads.

County Road;

This is a classified metalled road that is open to all traffic.

Permissive Paths;

These can be either permissive footpaths or permissive bridleways, where the appropriate traffic restrictions apply.

Stopping on a right of way;

It is legal to stop on a right of way for a legitimate reason, eg. To rest, admire views etc. as long as an obstruction is not being caused.

Illegal uses of Rights of Ways;

The different legal users have been described already. However, for motorised vehicular users on a byway and unclassified county road it must be remembered that all the rules of the highway still apply to these paths. For vehicles to be using such routes legally they should be insured, taxed, have a current MOT, license and the driver must be above the age of 17. Motorcyclists should also be wearing safety helmets in addition to all the above. Drink driving laws also apply.

A motorised vehicle driving on a ROW other than a UCR or highway is a criminal offence. Any vehicle/motorbike seen to be driving dangerously and/or illegally should be reported. It is important to write their registration number down if possible. Please do not directly approach illegal users for your own safety.

Landowners can give permission for other uses of a right of way that is on their land eg. for a vehicle to drive on a footpath. In such cases all the laws of the highways still apply; license, MOT, age etc.

Other Legal Considerations;

The surface and subsurface of a right of way belong to different people. The landowner owns the subsurface and the County Council is responsible for the surface condition of paths.

Legal widths/heights;

A footpath should be 1.0 metres wide across a field.
1.5 metres wide on a field edge.

A bridleway should be 2.0 metres wide across a field.
3.0 metres wide at the field edge.

These are the legal requirements, but use of common sense is required. As long as the width is sufficient for two walkers or riders to pass one another then no action is necessary.

Headroom on a footpath should allow 3.0 metres high.
Headroom on a bridleway should allow 5.0 metres high.

Reporting issues on other PROW in Norfolk

For all other issues not on your section, on or not on Norfolk Trails please report directly to Norfolk County Council customer services where it will be sent to the appropriate team: Tel: 0344 8008020 or use the 'Report it Now' (Public Right of Way problems) on-line form at www.norfolk.gov.uk where you can add lots of details including a grid reference.

Feedback

Feedback is a vital part of our volunteer scheme. We want to find out what's good about being a Norfolk Trails volunteer and also where we could make improvements. Please give the coordinating Norfolk Trails officer any comments you may have about volunteering with us. Your confidentiality will always be respected. If it is not possible to discuss an issue with the coordinating Norfolk Trails officer or if you are not satisfied with an outcome, then the matter can be raised with the Senior Trails Officer.

If you have any concerns, especially about something which may be illegal or contrary to the aims or policies of the Norfolk Trails Team, it is vital that you let us know.

Volunteer days – a reward for your effort and support

From time to time, we will organise events as a way of saying 'thank you' for your help and involvement with our work. These days will also provide the opportunity for you to meet other volunteers. Refer to the volunteer newsletter for upcoming events.

Registration Form

It is important that you read and understand this information pack and then complete the following acknowledgement slip.

The consent slip (below) also needs to be signed so that we can put you in contact with other volunteers in your area.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Telephone..... Mobile.....

Email.....

Next of kin..... Phone number

Section/s to be monitored

.....

Norfolk Trail Volunteer Rangers

Declaration: I/we have read and understood the volunteer information pack

Sign.....

Dated.....

Print.....

.....

Volunteer Ranger Consent Form.

Declaration: I/we the undersigned give my/our consent to the Norfolk Trails Office to forward my/our contact details to other volunteer rangers and to Suffolk County Council as necessary.

Sign.....

Dated.....

Print.....

The Norfolk Trails Office and Norfolk County Council under the Data Protection Act 1998 uphold the privacy and secure storage of all volunteer details.

Please return to norfolktrails@norfolk.gov.uk or
FAO. Adam Hinchliffe, Union House, Gressenhall, Dereham, Norfolk, NR20 4DR



Contact Numbers.

These contact numbers are for other Volunteer Rangers on your section/area. This information is provided so that those who wish, can work together to monitor the section/s on a monthly basis. Please be respectful of other people's time and home life.

NAME	Contact Number/ E-mail:	Section	INSPECTION TIMES.			

Norfolk Trails Staff.

Adam Hinchliffe	Volunteering co-ordinator <i>- All routes</i>	Office: 01362 869401	adam.hinchliffe@norfolk.gov.uk
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Sarah Cureton	Norfolk Trail Officer <i>Angles Way, Wherrymans Way, Boudicca Way</i>	Mobile: 07770 668013	Sarah.cureton@norfolk.gov.uk
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