

# Volunteer Forum Meeting: Minutes

Wed 22<sup>nd</sup> Nov, 1-3pm, Haverhub

**Present:** Gordon Lewis, Helen Clarke, Jon King, Granville Watson, Roy Partington, Tetiana Bondarenko (part), Granville Watson, Ellie Sherwin, Rebecca Evans (RE), Sally Boyton (SB)

**Apologies:** Jan Millward, Dave Fisher, Madeleine Bland, Hywel Mansell

1. Welcome & Apologies
2. Follow up from previous meeting.

Rebecca updated members on issues from previous meeting:

Update	Action
An <b>organisational chart</b> to outline staff roles remains in progress	Chart to be circulated when available.
<b>Footpath monitoring</b> A facility to log and circulate footpath monitoring issues on walking routes is still to be resolved. Currently, new findings are reported to Ant Richards (Head of Access). Roy and Jon suggested that the Pathways team could potentially attend to ad hoc maintenance issues on an 'on call' basis if the warden team are open to working together. This would also help fill the gaps when Pathways sessions aren't running due to annual leave.	RE to explore possibilities with the warden team.
<b>Independent volunteering</b> Rebecca has explored opportunities for more independent volunteering tasks to take place. There will be chance to support with balsam pulling on the extended INNS project and potentially an option for more wildlife monitoring to support the 'Connecting the Coast' project next season. The latter requiring more in depth ecology knowledge.	RE/SB to update volunteers as and when opportunities arise.
<b>Uniform</b> will be supplied by Tees R Us moving forward. The cost of long sleeved shirts is a minimal difference to short sleeve. It is likely that volunteers will be given the choice from next season onwards. Sun hats were also provided	RE to clarify long sleeve availability once new supplier is on board.

where appropriate in response to those who expressed a need during the hotter months.	
<b>Training</b> Autism Awareness training with Karen Chandler (formerly CEO of Pembrokeshire People First) has been organised for delivery on Fri 1 <sup>st</sup> Dec at Llanion in response to member requests. Spaces are still available.	RE to explore options for a repeated session or an alternative method of training for Spring 2024 (to cater for those unable to attend in December)
Resources from the tree ID training course were circulated in July as requested.	Advanced tree training to be explored.
<b>Dry venue</b> for wet weather activities – this has been discussed on a wider scale by the Property & Assets management committee. St Brides cottages are currently uninhabitable. The Withybush depo is currently being cleared and has potential to be used for Pathways activities.	Dry venue access to be confirmed.
<b>A celebration for Activities &amp; Events</b> in 2023 will be hosted on 4 <sup>th</sup> Dec at Llanion. Volunteers will have the chance to meet new employee Sarah and to feedback on how the 2023 season has run.	RE to forward invitation to members who haven't received the details.
4G not spot map	There is currently no map of the park or Castlemartin Range that defines locations with and without mobile signal.
<b>Dogs on public walks</b> – the preferred policy for accepting dogs is in discussion. 'Dog friendly' events are currently being considered and enabling event leaders to decide on the rules for their specific events.	Individual events to clarify dog rules clearly within their description until a decision is made.  A reminder about the Countryside Code will be circulated in the Spring 2024 volunteering update.

### 3. Issues and updates from volunteers

<b>Issue / update</b>	<b>Action</b>
<b>Volunteer celebration</b> – Roy and Jon shared that the Pathways participants that attended the volunteer celebration felt disappointed with the minimal activities available at St Brides. Although several activities were outlined on the boards on the day, they would have preferred something more structured with an itinerary of guided fun activities that would entertain them as a group. They felt the start time of 1pm was too late as	Volunteering team to plan activities in advance of the 2024 celebration event, taking on board the feedback received and working in conjunction with volunteer managers.

<p>they had to leave at 3pm. St Brides is also a long way to drive from Haverfordwest and Carew was suggested as an alternative venue for 2024.</p> <p>The photo boards, apple pressing and tree ID cuttings were enjoyed, including the cake.</p> <p>All agreed that a more structured itinerary would be better received by all which could include activities such as a castle tour, a walk around the grounds and herb garden, fungi ID, craft, etc.</p> <p>Rebecca and Sal explained that Carew (and showcasing the work the Carew volunteers have completed) was considered as an idea initially, yet Carew didn't support the need to entertain people into the evening. The Carew volunteer team also didn't feel comfortable being 'showcased' so St Brides was later decided as the most suitable venue.</p> <p>They extended thanks to the Pathways group and forum members for the constructive feedback and shared it was challenging to provide a 'one fits all' solution to satisfy volunteers across the board in one day.</p> <p>Sal and Rebecca also shared feedback from various volunteers who would like to see a more formal celebration with presentations/updates from specific volunteer groups about activities completed. It was discussed whether this could be hosted on the same day as fun activities or as a separate event.</p>	<p>Feedback from members present about enjoying more formal presentations was inconclusive, yet it was agreed that this should be considered for 2024.</p>
<p><b>Pathways Project</b> – Jon shared details of recent activities. Participants are continuing to enjoy the sessions (despite some recent wet and muddy conditions) and are keen to be involved in as many opportunities as they can.</p>	
<p><b>North Wardens</b> – Granville shared a summary of work delivered in the North. Andrew has transitioned to the Walkability project with Jon filling his place. Participants are busy and enjoying the activities.</p>	
<p><b>Carew Castle</b> – Helen shared a summary of work delivered at the castle and an update about the Chair of Friends of the National Park walking the Pembrokeshire Coast Path with members. Rebecca suggested that the</p>	

<p>success of the Carew volunteer group is a good example to share with Castell Henllys to support future development in this area.</p>	
<p><b>Activities &amp; Events/Walkability</b>  Gordon shared a summary of activities delivered. Walkability attendance is going very well and participants are now more balanced, gender wise. A couple of walks were cancelled due to low numbers and perhaps timing. Gordon stressed the ongoing importance of email reminders for those who have booked onto a walk, to ensure they will attend (and avoid empty places that could have been filled by others).  Gordon informed the group about a member of the public repositioning a fallen stone at a scheduled monument, which triggered response from Tomos Jones and Dyfed Police to ensure an appropriate form of repair was followed.</p>	
<p>Ellie was pleased to share that Solva wellbeing walks have been reignited thanks to referrals from St Davids surgery. Work re. bees/butterflies has now finished for the season and she will be involved in heritage monitoring over the winter period.  Ellie also enquired about follow up activity from the Lost Words poetry boxes and how this was going to be recorded/showcased online.</p>	<p>RE to check planned Lost Words activity with Comms team.</p>

#### 4. Updates from PCNPA

##### **Park presentations**

Rebecca shared that a presentation had recently been delivered to PCNPA staff with another scheduled to PCNPA Committee on 6/12/23. Maisie has been capturing testimonials from Pathways participants to share as part of this update.

##### **Funding**

Various funding bids are in progress to support volunteering including support for further Pathways /Conservation activity. Funding via the Recharge in Nature scheme for a new e-minibus with wheelchair access has been successful which will be used across the Park and bus use available from Mar 2024.

##### **Better Impact**

160 volunteers are now registered on the new system with Sal and Rebecca making gradual progress to assist the remaining volunteers to join. The process of logging

volunteer hours has not yet been formalised – when ready, Rebecca will work with line managers to categorise the volunteering activities appropriately and roll out the new procedure to volunteers (this will also include time to check and respond to some of the fine details noted by Jon whilst testing the software capabilities).

### **‘All Parks’ Volunteering Day**

Volunteer Officers from the 15 National Parks are planning an ‘All Parks’ volunteering day to highlight and celebrate the diversity of volunteering work on a national basis. Forum members were asked to consider specific activities that could be showcased (with sample activity for potential new volunteers to participate in) as part of the Pembrokeshire Coast day. Hosting during Volunteers Week (start June 2024) is being considered (or an alternative date will be confirmed).

### **Volunteer Training**

Autism awareness training is being delivered 1/12/23.

Basic first aid training and manual handling provision is being explored for 2024.

### **Volunteer Talks**

Some volunteers have shown interest in the potential for fellow volunteers to proactively share knowledge and skills via talks. This is a nice way to encourage social interaction throughout the year, especially during colder months. The volunteering team will organise a trial event and circulate invitations accordingly.

## **5. AOB**

Gordon enquired about Medi’s replacement in the Comms team. Recruitment is in progress for this role.

Jon was unable to attend the recent Archaeology Day and enquired how to access information re. site findings. The presentations from the day have been recorded and links to watch these will be circulated via a Volunteer Update when available.

Ellie proposed that a future event be held at Oriel Y Parc to link with the Lost Words Exhibition. To be considered in future planning.