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# Volunteers Handbook

*An introduction*



[www.bumblebeeconservation.org](http://www.bumblebeeconservation.org)

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Saving the sound of summer

# Welcome



**We wish to thank you for choosing to volunteer with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust. Our volunteers play a huge role in our organisation and we are very pleased to welcome you to the team!**

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## Introduction

This handbook has been produced to provide our volunteers with information and guidance for use during their time volunteering with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT).

Policies and procedures are subject to regular review; volunteers will be notified of any changes and it is important that these are read through thoroughly to ensure that all volunteers follow the same protocols. Volunteers are encouraged to regularly refer to the handbook and, if they have any queries, to raise this with their contact at the Trust.

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sound of  
summer

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## The Bumblebee Conservation Trust

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The Bumblebee Conservation Trust is a UK based national charity and was established in 2006 because of serious concerns about the 'plight of the bumblebee'. In the last 80 years, our bumblebee populations have crashed. Two species have become nationally extinct and several others have declined dramatically.

We have a vision for a different future in which our communities and countryside are rich in bumblebees and colourful wild flowers, supporting a diversity of wildlife and habitats for everyone to enjoy.

We are working toward three main aims:

- Support the conservation of all bumblebees, rare or abundant.
- Raise awareness and increase understanding about bumblebees and the social, economic, environmental and cultural benefits which they and other pollinators provide.
- Ensure the Trust is sustainable, fit for purpose, and able to respond quickly to challenges and change.

## Who we are and what we do

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### Trustees

The Trust is supported and guided by our Board of Directors, our Trustees - a group of committed unpaid volunteers who are experts in their own disciplines. Together they provide a balance of environmental, financial, business and organisation skills to ensure that the Trust works effectively towards its charitable aims.

The Board has overall responsibility for governance of the organisation and meets four times a year to set organisational policy and oversee our work. The Board report each year, in a Trustees Annual Report and Accounts and in person at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).



Board members are elected annually at the AGM from the membership of the Trust. Our Board is made up of volunteers, who bring a range of skills, knowledge and experience to the organisation. In legal terms, each member of the Board is a charity trustee and also a company director. The Board elects a Chair who oversees the meetings and takes a lead role in representing the Board and wider organisation.

### **Chief Executive Officer**

The CEO provides leadership and directs the operation and development of the organisation and the realisation of our vision and strategic aims as set by the Trustees. The CEO leads on the current strategic plan, to ensure objectives and milestones are achieved. The CEO acts as an ambassador at all times and builds the Bumblebee Conservation Trust's reputation with funders, supporters, businesses, other NGOs and potential partners.

### **Conservation and Science**

Our Conservation and Science team members are delivering on the ground conservation work, working with landowners and land managers and other organisations to secure, create and monitor habitat for our rarest bumblebee species. Our Science team members are involved with running the national bumblebee recording scheme (BeeWalk) and using this data to inform our conservation activities, advising and influencing policy relating to bumblebees and disseminating the latest bumblebee research findings.

### **Finance and Operations**

A wide ranging team providing essential services to ensure the organisation can function successfully, dealing with membership, budgets, enquires, volunteers and essential administrative support across the organisation.

### **Fundraising and Development**

The team focuses on project development to increase our conservation activities on the ground, identify and apply for funding opportunities and communicate our messages internally and externally.



## Our income

We receive income from a variety of sources, including membership, donations, and grants from charitable trusts. All our governing documents, annual reports and accounts can be accessed via our website: [www.bumblebeeconservation.org/how-we-are-run](http://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/how-we-are-run)

## Our work

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Please see our website for the most up to date information on our work, including our policies and current projects, including:

- What we do
- Current projects
- Policies
- General updates
- Monthly blogs & guest blogs

To view the above, click on the following links:

[www.bumblebeeconservation.org/what-we-do/](http://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/what-we-do/)  
[www.bumblebeeconservation.org/our-projects/](http://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/our-projects/)  
[www.bumblebeeconservation.org/our-policies/](http://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/our-policies/)  
[www.bumblebeeconservation.org/blog-2/](http://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/blog-2/)

All volunteers receive the general volunteer enewsletter and also have the opportunity to sign up for the Bombus Review enewsletter, which provides an overview of the most up to date scientific research on bumblebees. Please email [volunteering@bumblebeeconservation.org](mailto:volunteering@bumblebeeconservation.org) if you would like to subscribe.

Follow us on:



# Volunteer Agreement



**The Bumblebee Conservation Trust recognises and fully appreciates that as a Volunteer, you are giving your time freely, to support our activities. We have a responsibility to you as a Volunteer of the Trust. It is important for our Volunteers to understand what you can expect from the Trust and what we will expect of you.**

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## **You can expect the Trust:**

- To provide you with a main point of contact so you know who to get in touch with for queries and general support.
- To provide you with induction information, including how the organisation works and the relevant forms you will need to complete.
- To provide a clear role profile explaining what you will be doing and why.
- To provide you with appropriate resources and support for your activities.
- To reimburse your expenses where discussed with your main point of contact and pre-approved.
- To provide adequate insurance for volunteers whilst undertaking voluntary work on behalf of the Trust.
- To apply our equal opportunities policy so volunteering is open to all.
- To keep you informed of possible changes to volunteering activities.
- To update you on how your activities are making a difference.



## **As a volunteer of the Trust, we expect you:**

- To be reliable and responsible.
- To meet the commitments as detailed in the role profile, other than in exceptional circumstances, and provide reasonable notice so that alternative arrangement can be made.
- To develop and maintain good relationships with other volunteers, staff and members.
- To adhere to all the Trusts policies, decisions and procedures, as detailed in the Volunteering Policy and Volunteering Handbook.
- To inform your main point of contact of activities you are undertaking (other than BeeWalk).
- To complete and return recording forms as required such as risk assessments and activity recording forms.
- Be mindful of your role as an ambassador of the Trust in your local community.

**Note: this agreement is in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment.**



# Policies & Procedures



**The Bumblebee Conservation Trust understands the importance of providing information on the Trust's policies and procedures. These are to ensure everyone understands their role as a volunteer, how to volunteer safely, access resources and how to keep us up to date with your activities.**

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## **Role profile**

All volunteer positions have a role profile which describes the details of the role's responsibilities and requirements and to ensure you are clear about the activities you are undertaking. If you have not seen a copy of your role profile, or would like to discuss the role further, please contact [volunteering@bumblebeeconservation.org](mailto:volunteering@bumblebeeconservation.org).



## Expenses

If you are requested by a member of staff to attend events on behalf of the Trust, you may claim reasonable expenses for pre-agreed travel and materials. All expenses must be agreed in advance with your point of contact, as we have limited budgets.

If you wish to claim expenses for events organised by yourself, please discuss with your point of contact in advance of arranging the event.

For any expenses claimed for materials/public transport, please attach the relevant receipts.

Unfortunately, we cannot reimburse BeeWalk volunteers for travel expenses to and from their recording sites.

**Expenses claim form** - All expenses must be submitted on a Volunteer Expenses Claim Form to your point of contact. For mileage claims, please provide the postcodes for the start and final destination and note if it was a return journey. Please submit expenses within a month of undertaking the activity.

## Health and safety

By law, everyone is responsible for looking after their own safety and that of their colleagues at all times; including volunteers. You must read or listen to and follow any health and safety guidance you are given and you must ask for clarification of anything that you are unsure about.

You must provide us with details of any medical conditions relevant to your role and provide emergency contact details as requested on the volunteer registration form. You should also let us know if these details change. If you observe anything that you think might be unsafe or you are involved in or see an accident or near miss you must report it to us.

We try to avoid asking people to volunteer alone wherever possible. However, certain tasks can be difficult to do otherwise, such as BeeWalk. If you are volunteering alone, always let at least one other person know when and where you are going out and when you will return (let them know when you have returned) and take a mobile phone with you for emergencies.



## Insurance

All registered volunteers (having completed and returned a volunteer registration form) are insured by the Trust for their volunteering, as long as they are undertaking activities agreed by the Trust, have followed our policies and procedures and any instructions or guidance we have given. This includes completing a Risk Assessment if you are holding an event/activity on behalf of the Trust, which members of the general public will be attending. Personal equipment and belongings are not insured.

## Risk assessments

Risk assessments must be completed by volunteers for all activities organised by yourself, carried out in the name of the Trust, which members of the general public will attend. You can download a Volunteer Risk Assessment Template from the online volunteer pack, which you must read through, complete and return to your point of contact, for any activities you run on behalf of the Trust. This is to ensure that the event and those attending, are covered by our insurance, if anything goes wrong.

Some events organised by other organisations which you may be attending (such as talks for a local club, country fairs etc) may not require you to complete a risk assessment, if the event is covered by their insurance. Please check with the event organisers.

## Incident reporting

Any incidents that occur during a volunteering activity, should be reported to the Trust on the Accident Reporting Form, within one week of the incident occurring.

In cases where a volunteer or event attendee has suffered injury due to explicitly ignoring safety advice given by the Trust, a Trust volunteer, or through unreasonable behaviour, the Trust cannot accept liability.



## Informing the Trust about what you do - before and after events

We ask all volunteers to help us to promote recognition of the amazing contribution they make to the Trust, by keeping us informed about what you do for us. We can often make particular use of recording volunteer hours in applications for funding new work and in helping to evidence what we have achieved as part of current funding that we receive.

It is important you tell us about activities you are planning by emailing your point of contact, so we can help you through the process such as organising risk assessments and promoting the event on our website and providing you with relevant materials.

## Activity recording forms

Please record your activities and hours on the Volunteer Activity Record Sheet and return it to your point of contact at least every six months.

## Materials for events

All our display materials for events can be downloaded from the volunteering pack on the website, which you will have been provided a link to. If you are happy to print materials at your own cost, you can use the materials directly from here. If you would like printed display materials, please get in touch with your point of contact and we will arrange to send these out to you.

## Stock

We offer information factsheets and membership leaflets that can be provided, to give out to the public to raise awareness of the Trust.

We have a range of merchandise that can be requested by volunteers and sold at events and activities on behalf of the Trust.

If you require stock for an event, please get in touch with your point of contact to discuss the volume required.

Complete the **Stock Request Form** and send to your point of contact. Please give at least two weeks notice, as where possible, we endeavour to send all post second class.

**Note: If you are producing your own material, please ensure this is checked and agreed with the Trust before use.**



## Recording stock sales

You are required to record the volume of stock sold, so when you pay monies in, we know what the money is for. This is essential for us to keep track of our stock and help us understand which items sell well and our re-ordering requirements.

To do this, either note down as you sell each item (which works at small events) or count the stock you take to the event, then count the stock after the event and record the numbers sold.

From time to time, we will get in touch with you to check which stock you are holding, to ensure our stock levels are up to date. This is particularly important towards the end of the financial year, to ensure our database is up to date for auditing purposes.

## Paying in money

If you have raised money for the Trust through fundraising activities, sale of merchandise or by recruiting new members, please advise your point of contact and provide details of what the money relates to (ie membership, donations or sales) along with your cheque, or email this information to your point of contact, copying in [volunteering@bumblebeeconservation.org](mailto:volunteering@bumblebeeconservation.org) if undertaking a bank transfer. If the money is raised from sales, please specify which items and how many off each.

To pay monies in you can:

- send us a cheque, made out to Bumblebee Conservation Trust; or
- a direct bank transfer:

Account name: Bumblebee Conservation Trust

Sort Code: 83-91-46

Account No: 00400555

Reference: your name

For our accounts and auditing purposes, its essential we know which monies are from sales, donations and membership and the breakdown of the items sold.



## Representing the Trust

As a volunteer, you are informally representing the Trust to the public when you undertake volunteering activities. Included in the volunteer induction pack, is a FAQ document, which covers some of the most common questions about bumblebees. To find out about the current conservation projects we are working on and our policies on scientific issues, please see our website. You can always refer members of the public or media enquiries to your point of contact if you are asked about difficult or sensitive issues.

Formal representation with other organisations, the media or individuals can only take place if authorised by your point of contact. This may require more senior approval and is governed by further procedures and guidelines. If you believe this affects you and you have not done so already, please speak to your point of contact.

## Keeping in touch

The volunteering section of the website holds information relevant to volunteering with the Trust, including downloadable forms such as expenses claim forms, activity recording sheets and stock order forms:

- Volunteer Expenses Claim Form
- Volunteer Risk Assessment Template
- Accident Reporting Form
- Volunteer Activity Record Sheet
- Stock Request Form

Upon joining the Trust, volunteers are provided a point of contact within the team. This will generally be the Volunteer Officer, unless you are directly involved with a specific project, in which case the Project Officer or Local Volunteer Coordinator will be your main point of contact; you will be made aware if this is the case. Your point of contact will provide resources and support to you. It is this point of contact, that the volunteer should keep updated with planned volunteering activities and submit their activity recording forms.



We send newsletters to our volunteers to keep you informed about the latest activities and any changes you are required to know. We are always looking for contributions for this, so please get in touch if you have anything you would like to share.

We also send out emails to local volunteers when we receive requests for attendance at events or to deliver talks to local groups.

## **Confidentiality and data protection**

The Trust holds volunteer details and volunteering records to document the contribution made by volunteers, for insurance purposes, health and safety purposes and reporting purposes. The Trust is registered under Data Protection Legislation and we will not pass on your information to third parties.

If your details change, it is important that you update your point of contact with your new details.

## **Equal opportunities**

The Trust operates an equal opportunities policy in respect of both paid staff and volunteers. All volunteers will be treated equally with respect to opportunities to volunteer, or the type of work allocated to them.

We aim to integrate diversity and equal opportunity into all of our activities. We do not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, disability, age, religion and belief, sexual orientation or other irrelevant distinction and we are committed to working with diversity in a wholly positive way to promote understanding, equality and inclusiveness.

All paid staff and volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of and commitment to this, our equal opportunities policy. They must employ it in their dealings with co-workers and any other individuals that they interact with during the course of their volunteering activities with the Trust.

## **Any issues**

We hope you will not encounter any issues while volunteering with us, but we appreciate they may arise. Volunteers have the right to discuss any concerns they may have with their point of contact at any time.



If a complaint is received about a volunteer, or if a volunteer is found to not be adhering to the Trust's policies and procedures, a volunteer may be asked to leave the Trust in a volunteering capacity. No volunteer will be asked to leave until the volunteer has had an opportunity to discuss the issue and surrounding circumstances with their main point of contact. If an amicable solution cannot be found, the complaint may be referred to managerial level for further consideration.

In extreme cases, if the volunteer's behaviour is deemed to be in conflict with the Trust's policies and procedures, the volunteer may be removed from the Trust's volunteering database.

## Feedback

You know better than most about volunteering with the Trust and your feedback is vital. If at any point you feel your volunteering experience could have been better, please get in touch, we rely on your feedback to improve our volunteering processes. We also occasionally, email feedback questionnaires and would really appreciate your time in completing these.

We are always keen to hear about your experiences and your life as a volunteer with the Trust. If you would like to share your story with us, we would be delighted to hear from you!

## Moving on

We would be sorry to see you leave, but understand there are many reasons and situations that may result in people no longer being able to continue volunteering with us. Please advise your point of contact as soon as possible and the reason you are leaving, positive or negative.

On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers have the right to request a reference, which we would be pleased to discuss.

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## Definitions

'The Trust' means: The Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

'BBC T' means: Bumblebee Conservation Trust.



## Further support

We have a volunteering 'frequently asked questions' document on the website and you're always welcome to contact [volunteering@bumblebeeconservation.org](mailto:volunteering@bumblebeeconservation.org) to discuss anything further.

Thanks again for joining the team!

The Bumblebee Conservation Trust is a registered charity (England & Wales 1115634 / Scotland SC042830). Company registration number 05618710 (England & Wales). Registered Office: Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Parkway House Business Centre, Eastleigh Works, Campbell Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 5AD.

[www.bumblebeeconservation.org](http://www.bumblebeeconservation.org)



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