

## Natural Enterprise Volunteer Information and Policy 2024

Thank you for enquiring about volunteering with Natural Enterprise. Volunteers play a very important role in our work. With their help, we are able to achieve so much more.

Please read the following information before you complete and return the Volunteer Registration Form.



Natural Enterprise is an Isle of Wight charity (No 1083233) supporting and developing links between the local economy and the natural environment. We operate the Island Rivers Partnership and our local countryside project - Gift to Nature.

Contact details: Shide Meadows Centre, Shide Road, Newport, Isle of Wight PO30 1HR

Tel: 01983 296244

For more information, visit: [www.naturalenterprise.co.uk](http://www.naturalenterprise.co.uk)



The Island Rivers Partnership works to safeguard and improve Isle of Wight water courses. Volunteer opportunities include River Club, who carry out Himalayan balsam removal and winter scrub clearance. (Partner organisations have additional volunteer opportunities.)

Contact: Carol Flux - Project Manager, Island Rivers

Email: [carol.flux@naturalenterprise.co.uk](mailto:carol.flux@naturalenterprise.co.uk)

For more information, visit: [www.islandrivers.org.uk](http://www.islandrivers.org.uk)



Gift to Nature is the Island's local countryside management project. We manage over 30 sites, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), country parks and many other important wildlife habitats.

Contact: Rachael Ardley – Engagement Officer, Gift to Nature

Email: [rachael.ardley@naturalenterprise.co.uk](mailto:rachael.ardley@naturalenterprise.co.uk)

For more information, visit: [www.gifttonature.org.uk](http://www.gifttonature.org.uk)

## **Gift to Nature Volunteer Opportunities**

No previous experience is necessary as full training and/or instruction will be given, but useful attributes/skills might include:

- Enjoying meeting new, like-minded people,
- An appreciation of nature,
- Willingness and a desire to work as part of a team,
- Nature /wildlife/gardening knowledge and skills,
- Being keen to learn more about the countryside.

### Gift to Nature - Site Care and Development

Volunteers play an important role in assisting with site improvements and maintenance of over 800 acres of stunning countryside throughout the Isle of Wight. The volunteers work alongside a countryside ranger to undertake practical habitat management. This work includes site inspections, litter picking, scrub bashing, conservation work, footpath maintenance, construction etc. The work takes place year-round and in all weathers. It's a great opportunity for getting out and being close to nature and good exercise too!

Contact: Danny Horne – Senior Ranger, Gift to Nature

Email: [danny.horne@naturalenterprise.co.uk](mailto:danny.horne@naturalenterprise.co.uk)

### Gift to Nature - Event Support

Gift to Nature hosts a range of events and activities on our sites and in our local communities. Volunteers can help support these fun events by chatting to the public, taking photos and sharing their love of the natural world.

Contact: Rachael Ardley - Engagement Officer, Gift to Nature

Email: [rachael.ardley@naturalenterprise.co.uk](mailto:rachael.ardley@naturalenterprise.co.uk)

## **Volunteers' Code of Conduct**

*To create a healthy and happy work environment, we expect volunteers to:*

- Treat one another with respect and consideration
- Work with honesty and integrity
- Work co-operatively with other team members
- Follow skills training and safety procedures to the best of your ability
- Ask for help or additional training as required
- Immediately report any workplace incident of discrimination, bullying or harassment
- Natural Enterprise is a non-smoking organisation

## Volunteer Guidelines

### Support for you

Whichever role(s) you are interested in, you will be given all necessary training and guidance. There will be plenty of “on the job” instruction from the task leader and more experienced members of the group. Working on sites, you will be provided with all necessary tools and protective clothing as well as advice and safety guidance. In the shop, full training is given, health & safety measures are followed, and novice gardeners can learn from more experienced volunteers in the shop garden.

### Health and Safety

We are committed to following recommended and/or legislated health and safety measures during site work and in our shop and garden. During site work, task leaders are equipped with a first aid kit and have a first aid qualification. At the shop there is a first aid kit. Please report any accidents, allergic reactions, or observed safety hazards to the task leader. Your safety and wellbeing are important to us.

If volunteering in the countryside or gardening at the shop, it is recommended you have current protection against Tetanus. We advise you familiarise yourself with the possible risk of Lyme disease or Weils’s disease – please see the attached information sheet. If you are unsure of potential risks to your health, please seek medical advice from your doctor.

### Using tools and work equipment

We provide instruction to enable you to use all tools safely and you will not be expected to use tools that you are not confident with. Please ask the task leader for instruction as required. If you find that a tool is damaged or defective, please inform the task manager.

- When volunteering with us please ensure that you wear suitable clothing:
- During hot weather we recommend a hat, using sunscreen, and drinking water.
- Gloves, hard hats, and eye protection will be available for your use as necessary.

## Weil's Disease and Lyme Disease – Information Sheet

### Weil's Disease (Leptospirosis)

Two types of leptospirosis infection can affect workers in the UK: -

1. Weil's disease. This is a serious and sometimes fatal infection that is transmitted to humans by contact with urine from infected rats.
2. The Hardjo form of leptospirosis. This is transmitted from cattle to humans.

### What are the symptoms?

Both diseases start with a flu-like illness with a persistent and severe headache, which can lead to vomiting and muscle pains and ultimately to jaundice, meningitis and kidney failure. In rare cases the diseases can be fatal.

### Who is at risk?

- Anyone who is exposed to rats, rat or cattle urine.
- Farmers are now the main group at risk for both Weil's disease and cattle leptospirosis: the cattle form is a special risk for dairy farmers.
- Other people who have contracted leptospirosis in recent years include vets, meat inspectors, butchers, abattoir and sewer workers.
- Workers in contact with canal and river water are also at risk.

### How might I catch it?

The bacteria can get into your body through cuts and scratches and through the lining of the mouth, throat and eyes after contact with infected urine or contaminated water, such as in sewers, ditches, ponds and slow-flowing rivers. People working in dairy parlours are often in contact with cattle urine. Rat urine may also contaminate animal feed stuffs on farms.

### How can I prevent it?

- Wash cuts and grazes as soon as possible.
- Cover all cuts and broken skin with waterproof plasters before and during work.
- Wear protective clothing.
- Wash your hands before eating or drinking.

### What else should I do?

Report any illness to your doctor. Tell the doctor about your work. Leptospirosis is much less severe if it is treated promptly. If your doctor decides you have leptospirosis tell your employer, in this case Natural Enterprise, who must then report it to the Incident Contact Centre (Tel: 0845 300 9923).

*\* Information taken from Health and Safety Executive documentation - online*

### Lyme Disease (Lyme borreliosis)

The Isle of Wight is not known to be a problem area for Lyme disease, but it doesn't hurt to be aware of the potential to be infected and what to look out for and do if you think you might have it. Lyme disease is a bacterial infection spread to humans when they are bitten by an infected tick. It's estimated there are 2,000 to 3,000 new cases of Lyme disease in

England and Wales each year, although not all cases are confirmed by laboratory testing. Lyme disease can be treated effectively if detected early on. If it's not treated or treatment is delayed, there's a risk of developing long lasting symptoms.

### How you get Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is transmitted by the bite of a tick infected with *Borrelia burgdorferi* bacteria. Ticks don't jump or fly, but can climb on to your clothes or skin if you brush against them. They then bite into the skin and to feed on blood. Being bitten doesn't mean you will be infected as not all ticks carry Lyme-causing bacteria. Generally, you are more likely to become infected if the tick remains attached to your skin for more than 24 hours...but ticks are very small and their bites are not painful so you may not realise you have one attached to your skin. **we recommend to check yourself (or each other) for ticks after walking through high-risk areas such as woodland or long grass.**

### Early symptoms of Lyme disease

- Many people in the early-stage develop a distinctive circular rash at the site of the tick bite, usually 3 to 30 days after being bitten.
- Typically the rash is around 15cm (6 inches) across but can vary.
- Around one in every three people with Lyme disease do not report seeing a rash.
- As well as or instead of a rash people may experience one or more of the following: -
  - Flu like symptoms including tiredness, muscle pain, joint pains, headaches, high temperature, chills and neck stiffness.
  - There may also be paralysis of the facial muscles and nerve pains which may be sharp or prickly.

### Removing ticks.

If you do get bitten by a tick, remove it as soon as possible to reduce any potential risk. The safest way to remove a tick is to use a pair of fine-tipped tweezers, or a tick removal tool: -

- Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible to avoid leaving the head or mouthparts behind in the skin, then pull upwards slowly and firmly.
- If the tick's head or mouthparts break off in the skin and cannot be removed, they should fall out naturally in time as the skin renews itself. Keep an eye on the area though, as it could cause a local infection.
- Once removed, apply antiseptic to the bite area, or wash with soap and water.
- A small red circular patch may appear soon after a tick bite and persist for a few days; this is normal. If the red patch does not disappear within a couple of weeks or begins to spread outwards, it may indicate Lyme disease.

You should see your GP if you feel unwell with any of the symptoms described above after being bitten by a tick, or if you think you may have been bitten. Remember to let your GP know if you've spent time in areas where ticks may live. This includes woodland and grassland.

*\* Information from Public Health, England*