

# VOLUNTEERING HANDBOOK

Your guide to volunteering with  
Friends of the Lake District



Dedicated to protecting and enhancing Lake District and  
Cumbrian landscapes.

<https://www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/volunteering>

## About Us

We are an independent charity and the only membership organisation dedicated to protecting and enhancing Cumbria's landscapes. Friends of the Lake District was launched at a public rally in Fitz Park, Keswick in 1934 after growing recognition and awareness that the Lake District was a unique landscape deserving of the highest level of protection. We played a crucial role in the campaign for the Lake District to be designated as a national park and in 1978 we became the official representative of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) in Cumbria.

Our work today involves two core strands

We work to secure a landscape that is:

- Beautiful, diverse, locally distinctive, tranquil and environmentally healthy;
- Conserved and enhanced;
- Accessible and enjoyed by all.

We work to ensure that people:

- Are inspired by the beauty and diversity of the landscape;
- Have an understanding of how the landscape has been shaped;
- Care for and help look after the landscape, both for its own sake and for the benefits it brings to people's lives.



We believe that the Lake District offers some of the most spectacular and precious landscapes in England. We take action to protect and enhance the natural beauty of these landscapes for the benefit of local communities, visitors, wildlife and habitats.

# Welcome

We hope your volunteering experience with us will be a rewarding and enjoyable one, filled with opportunities to meet like-minded people, make new friends, learn new skills and make a real difference to helping protect and enhance the spectacular landscapes of the Lake District and Cumbria.

Volunteers are really important to us here at Friends of the Lake District. Much of our work is only possible because of the help we receive from our volunteers who bring a whole range of different skills and interests to our work. You do not have to be a landscape expert to help; just bring your enthusiasm and we will supply the cake!

Volunteering with Friends of the Lake District is very flexible depending on how much time you are able to commit. We appreciate all contributions, however great or small.

This document is not intended to be a legally binding agreement but simply aims to tell you what you need to know to get started and should answer any questions you may have during your time volunteering with us. However, if you do have any other questions please don't hesitate to ask your staff supervisor or any other member of the team.

Thank you for choosing to give your time, energy and enthusiasm to us.

## Starting Out

All new volunteers' will be asked to fill out a registration form. This doesn't guarantee you will volunteer for any specific role, nor does it commit you to volunteering but it enables us to enter you onto our volunteering database so we can get in touch as well as understand the types of roles that might be of interest to you. All information with which you provide us will remain strictly confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Once you are registered, you will then receive a welcome email, highlighting appropriate volunteering opportunities and inviting you to a volunteers welcome zoom call (plus you'll receive a copy of this handbook). Depending on which roles you are interested in there may be a selection process but this will vary depending on the nature of the role. Each role will also include an induction and an opportunity to discuss the expectations of both parties. You will have a named staff contact throughout your volunteering experience and instructions on how to use any equipment where applicable.

## Expenses

Friends of the Lake District is committed to the principle of reimbursing approved expenses for volunteers and supports the opinion that no volunteer should be left out of pocket as a result of volunteering for our organisation. We encourage the use of public transport where possible and volunteers can be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses such as mileage or bus/train fares to and from the place of volunteer work. Where possible we can also connect individuals to arrange car sharing or enable volunteers to drive our own vehicle to sites. Claims can only be settled on production of a valid receipt and must be authorised, agreed and signed off in advance by the volunteer coordinator or staff supervisor.



## Volunteer Policy

The Friends of the Lake District has a strong commitment to its volunteers and we will do our best to:

- introduce you to how the organisation works and your role in it.
- provide adequate information, training, and assistance for you to be able to meet the requirements and responsibilities of your role.
- provide you with supervisory support.
- treat you with respect.
- respect your skills, dignity and individual needs.
- provide a safe workplace and suitable insurance against injury.
- resolve difficulties in a friendly and informal manner.
- reimburse necessary, out of pocket expenses, including travel costs.
- give references for future applications, on request.
- supply cake whenever practicably possible!

The overall responsibility for volunteers rests with the Volunteer Coordinator, however, the day to day management rests with various members of staff, as appropriate.



## Equal Opportunities

We are committed to the principle of equal opportunities for all and ensuring that staff, job applicants, volunteers and individuals in receipt of our services are treated fairly and equally at all times. We will not discriminate on the basis of any characteristic protected under the Equalities Act or any other characteristic unrelated to someone's ability to carry out the volunteer task. Equally we expect that our staff and volunteers will adhere to these non-discriminatory principles too.

## Health & Safety

Friends of the Lake District is committed to looking after the health, safety and well-being of everyone who works or volunteers with us. Any activities carried out on a voluntary basis are covered by the same health and safety legislative requirements as those carried out by Friends of the Lake District employees and we give the same level of care to our volunteers as we do to our paid staff.

A risk assessment will be completed prior to every Friends of the Lake District event or activity to identify the site hazards and the risks associated with the tasks involved, to suggest ways to minimise those risks and to outline the course of action in the unlikely event of an accident.

You will be given an induction to the organisation when you start, covering health and safety, either in the office if your role is based there or on site if you're doing a conservation role.

## Your responsibilities

- By law, everyone is responsible for looking after their own safety and that of their colleagues.
- If you see any unsafe work practices, please speak out to ensure these do not continue and inform your activity leader.
- It is important that you listen to your induction talk, which may include a 'tools talk', and is given at the beginning of any event or activity. Please also clarify any points which you do not understand.
- Before attending any conservation event you will need to book onto the specific event and provide a person we can contact in the event of an accident. Details of relevant medical problems or illnesses should also be recorded at the time of event booking.
- Please inform activity leader of any accidents or near misses.

All volunteers are covered by Friends of the Lake District's public and employer's liability insurance policy whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any work on behalf of the organisation.

If you use your own car for official business of the Friends of the Lake District you will need to inform your insurance company in writing that you are using your vehicle for voluntary work. If you are likely to be driving our work vehicle, you'll need to provide a copy of your driving licence and you will need to undergo a brief training session on use of the vehicle.

If you are in a situation where you need to carry out duties alone, extra caution is necessary. Please make sure that your staff contact knows if you might be lone working and they will discuss with you any additional security measure that may need to be put in place (such as a buddy system).

## Resolving Concerns

We hope you find that volunteering at Friends of the Lake District is a happy and enjoyable experience but should any problems arise we will aim to resolve them as soon as possible. If you have a complaint we'll make every effort to find an acceptable solution with you or, in the case of a problem being with another volunteer, working through informal discussion with the person involved. If you feel your complaint is still unresolved you should arrange to see our Volunteer Coordinator to discuss the matter further. If you still feel unsatisfied with the outcome, you can arrange to discuss the issue with our Chief Executive Officer. If the situation is still not resolved, then your case can be presented to the Trustees whose decision will be final. If you are a Trustee, your grievance should be discussed with the Chair of Trustees and the Chief Executive Officer.



## Working with Children and Vulnerable Adults

Volunteers will not be given any responsibility for, or left without supervision while working with, young and vulnerable people. If, during your volunteering role, you are likely to be in a position of responsibility when working with children, young people (under the age of 18) or with vulnerable adults an 'enhanced disclosure check' will need to be undertaken through the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS).

## Confidentiality

During your work, you may deal with confidential information about staff, members, supporters, contacts, other volunteers or other people or organisations with whom we deal. If you become party to confidential information you must not disclose it to anyone.

Confidential information includes (but is not limited to) financial information, commercial information, technical information, sales and marketing information, information of a personal nature relating to any of the above groups.

## Data Protection

We are committed to ensuring that your privacy and personal details are protected. We adhere to Data Protection Legislation and require all staff and volunteers to act in accordance with our policy. We will never sell or rent your personal information to other organisations. If we run an event in partnership with another organisation we may need to share your details with that organisation but if that is the case, we will ensure that it is made clear to you what will happen to your data when you register for the event.

During your time volunteering with us we may collect information from you which, in addition to your contact details, may include your emergency contact details and information about relevant medical conditions.

We may also take photographs or film of volunteers in our legitimate interest of publicity and as a record of our work. We will ensure that you are aware of our intention to do so and you will have the opportunity to opt out of photographs which may include you being used in publicity.

Please let us know if any of your details change so that we can keep our records up to date.

Full details of our Privacy Policy, including your rights for the control of your data, are available on our website: <https://www.friendsofthelakedistrict.org.uk/privacy-policy>



# Representing Friends of the Lake District

Please remember that as a volunteer you may be in a position where you are either formally or informally representing Friends of the Lake District to the public. For any role where you are formally representing the charity full training will be given but if you would like more information or guidance about the charity or our work so that you feel more confident about representing us please contact the Volunteer Coordinator. Remember that you should always refer to a member of staff if you are being asked about sensitive policy issues.

## Volunteer Responsibilities

Different volunteer roles carry different responsibilities, which are outlined in your role description. You should ensure that you discuss these with your staff contact when you begin your role. In addition, we request all volunteers to:

- Follow the organisation's procedures, standards and policies including: health and safety, data protection, equal opportunities and confidentiality in relation to staff, volunteers and users, and record-keeping requirements where necessary.
- Treat with respect, members of staff, other volunteers, office visitors and any other people you may come into contact with during your time volunteering with Friends of the Lake District.
- Meet any agreed time commitments and try to give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made if these commitments cannot be fulfilled.
- Raise any concerns, issues or problems with your staff contact.
- Not to act in a way, during your volunteering role, that will be in conflict with the aims and objectives of Friends of the Lake District.

## Finally...thanks

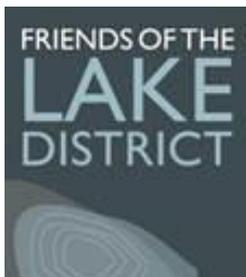
Thank you – for taking the time to read through this guide which we hope provides the information you'll need for a safe and enjoyable experience volunteering with us. If you do have any further questions, don't hesitate to ask the Volunteer Coordinator, your staff supervisor or any other member of the Friends of the Lake District team who will always be happy to help.

But mostly, thank you for becoming part of the Friends' team of Trustees, staff, volunteers and members who give their enthusiasm, commitment, time, subscriptions and donations in the hope and belief that we can all work together for the beauty of the Lake District and Cumbria today, tomorrow and for the future.

### Contact details:

Helen Howe – Volunteer Coordinator

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**Friends of the Lake District**

***The only membership organisation dedicated to protecting and enhancing Lake District and Cumbrian landscapes***

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