



Role Description - Visitor Experience Volunteer

Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest

About Us

Forestry England is a part of the government Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and is tasked with the sustainable management of the Public Forest Estate for timber, recreation and wildlife.

Bedgebury National Pinetum is part of the East England Forest District (EEFD).

Bedgebury National Pinetum is home to a world-leading collection of conifers. It is unique in the UK and of global significance for the purposes of species conservation, scientific advancement and the understanding of conifers.

Bedgebury is also a popular visitor attraction with visitors looking to enjoy the outdoors - whether cycling in the wider forest, searching for the Gruffalo sculptures, spotting wildlife, or finding out more about our internationally important tree collection.

Role Description

Working under the guidance of the Visitor Services team, the primary role of the Visitor Experience volunteer is to provide visitors with the information and services they need to make the most of their day out. This includes:

- Providing a friendly welcome to Bedgebury;
- Answering visitor questions and sharing specific information appropriate to their needs on where to go and what to do;
- Helping visitors to understand the work that Forestry England does; and specifically the importance of Bedgebury and the National Pinetum. This will include a basic introduction to the botanic collection and the key role it plays in conservation locally, nationally, and internationally;
- Ensuring the area around the visitor centre is clean and tidy by assisting with tasks such as litter picking;
- Supporting the business management of our forest centres and surrounds by encouraging visitors to make repeat visits and purchase membership;
- Provide a link between Forestry England staff and the visitors to the visitor centre.

This is a fantastic opportunity to promote Bedgebury National Pinetum, to learn about the tree collection, to pass on your learned knowledge to our visitors and to help keep Bedgebury looking its best.

Visitor Experience Volunteer

When?

Shifts are available at weekends during school term-time and daily throughout school holidays to cover our busiest visitor periods.

Two shifts are available during these times: 9.30am to 12.30pm or 1pm to 4pm

What is involved?

Visitor Experience volunteers are based at Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest Visitor centre. There will be a combination of outdoor and indoor tasks during each shift. Most of the volunteering will be provided in and around the Visitor centre and car park, although there may be times when it is required elsewhere on site. Sometimes you will be at the information desk in the Information point, at other times you will be outdoors. Our aim is to offer volunteer shifts at weekends and during school holidays or other busy periods.

The primary duty of all welcome volunteers is to provide exemplary customer care to our visitors. Some tasks may include:

- Welcome visitors to the site with a smile and friendly greeting;
- Sharing your knowledge of the pinetum, its history, wildlife value, conservation goals and what is looking good today!
- Ensure onsite posters and notices are clear and visible;
- Answer customer enquiries and provide information to visitors about Bedgebury and Forestry England, where the trails start/end, how to pay for parking, any additional activities;
- Promote and sell Forestry England Memberships (local and national) and Forestry England resources/campaigns;
- Communicate clearly with staff as car park starts filling or when overflow parking is required;
- Notify staff of issues with parking machines as soon as they occur;
- Patrol and litter pick visitor centre and surrounds, check toilets, report issues to on duty staff;
- Support staff during emergency procedures e.g. lost persons, first aid, site closures, forestry works;
- Undertake a walking tour of the pinetum and providing a friendly presence on site.

We'd like you to

- Enjoy working outside;
- Have a friendly personality and be willing to answer public queries;
- Be reliable, patient and keen to share your enthusiasm;
- Use an on-site radio for communication;
- Be willing to follow guidelines set including health and safety and emergency procedures;
- Attend relevant training courses and be willing to learn from specialist partners and staff;

Visitor Experience Volunteer

- Commit to 1-2 shifts a month as a minimum.

We will provide

- A volunteer registration prior to taking up the role (not applicable to existing volunteers);
- A volunteer induction or information meeting;
- Full training and support;
- Volunteer uniform;
- A daily briefing from the visitor services team at the start of each volunteering session;
- Appropriate tools and PPE if needed e.g. litter picker, high vis, hand sanitiser, medical gloves etc;
- An on-site radio for use during your volunteering shift for communication with the visitor services team;
- Free parking on your volunteer day;
- A free cup of tea or coffee from the café on your volunteer day;
- A volunteer's membership for free admission to Bedgebury throughout the year after 35 hours of regular volunteering (reviewed annually);
- A volunteers' newsletter;
- An invitation to annual events such as the 'Thank you' BBQ and other volunteer events.

Who to contact?

If you are interested in volunteering for this role, please contact penny.veck@forestryengland.uk

For more information about volunteering at different Forestry England sites please visit our website www.forestryengland.uk/volunteering