

Bentley Priory Nature Reserve

Role Description: Volunteer Deputy Warden for Conservation

Harrow's nature reserves are maintained in a semi-natural state with public amenity encouraged where compatible with nature conservation objectives. As landowner, Harrow Council has overall responsibility for the sites.

At Bentley Priory Nature Reserve, a management committee oversees delivery of the site management plan. The plan has been approved by Natural England, the Government's nature conservation agency for England, as most of the site is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Current funding in support of management comes from the Council (e.g. via Section 106 arrangements) and from the Higher Level Stewardship scheme. The site has previously received Heritage Lottery Funding for grassland restoration works.

Volunteer wardens act in the interest of nature conservation. The wardens operate under the umbrella of the Harrow Nature Conservation Forum (HNCF) which provides support, advice and insurance for work carried out at the site.

The roles of the deputy warden(s) include

- Deciding, in collaboration with the Chief Warden and Harrow Council's biodiversity officer, what management activities are needed on the site and then acting as required. Depending on the size and nature of the task this might involve:
 - Acting alone to carry out the work
 - Organizing a volunteer party including assistant wardens and local volunteers
 - Timetabling and then supervising a party from The Conservation Volunteers
 - Timetabling and then supervising work by contractors
- Keeping a record of works undertaken and assess the outcomes
- Playing a key role in supporting in the drafting of new iterations of the site management plan.
- Encouraging the development of the site's volunteers
- Organising groups of expert volunteers to carry out surveys of vegetation, fungi and animal life on the site
- Run or assist with running educational events and walks on the site
- Liaise with the public to enhance their enjoyment and understanding of the site and to encourage responsible behaviour
- Litter picking and keeping paths clear on the site
- Participate in an annual 'beating of the bounds' to check fence condition, encroachments etc.
- Report issues, e.g. with fallen or dangerous trees, fly tipping, extensive littering to the Council as appropriate (It is their responsibility to deal with these as well as large fallen trees or dangerous trees that cannot be dealt with by volunteers.) Litter clearance is the responsibility of the Council and the relevant officer should be told if significant clearance is required. However, wardens will usually pick up items as they walk around their site.

- Maintain close contact with the site's other wardens and volunteers to ensure that all are aware of issues, planned management activities etc
- Attend regular site warden team meetings
- Attend management committee meetings, usually four to five per year.

HNCF has formal meetings three times a year and monthly social meet ups in The Duck in the Pond pub, Kenton Lane (last Tuesday of the month).

It is worth noting that wardens are not responsible for the maintenance of public order on their site. Ongoing vandalism or vagrancy may be reported to the relevant police Safer Neighbourhoods team (101 or Stanmore 020 8721 2996). Except for the immediate effects of ongoing working parties (such as using tools), and dangers immediately generated by the actions of wardens (for example, leaving a half cut tree limb hanging above a path), wardens are also not responsible for the safety of visitors to the sites – this remains the responsibility of the Council and the individual visitors.

Policies and risk assessments for volunteering with HNCF can be found here http://www.harrowncf.org/HNCF_documents.html. Please read these.

Useful contacts:

Chief Volunteer Warden: Peter Peretti tel 077 02 274397 or 020 8954 2918

Harrow Council biodiversity officer: Steve Whitbread <Steve.Whitbread@harrow.gov.uk>

Harrow Nature Conservation Forum: Chair Steve Bolsover
40 Walton Drive, Harrow, HA1 4XA tel. 020 8933 2823 or 07794 837302