

Volunteer Update June 2016

Investing in Volunteers Accreditation

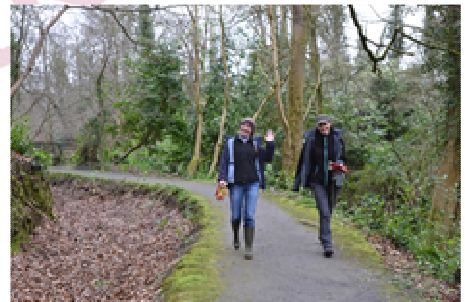
The Volunteer Now panel considered renewal of our 'Investing in Volunteers' accreditation early in May and we are pleased to announce that renewal of our accreditation has been successful. Raquel, our assessor, was impressed with everyone's enthusiasm and the standard of volunteering in the Regional Park.

I would like to extend a big thank you to everyone who took part; to our team for all of their outstanding work, Anne, Nichola and Dan, I would like to thank our Chair Jenny for coming down and supporting us on the day and spending so much time with the volunteers, but most of all I would like to thank our volunteers. Working with you on a daily basis makes our working lives so much richer and I feel we would be so much impoverished without your help, suggestions and of course, craic.

The 'Investing in Volunteers' accreditation is a standard of excellence that few organisations achieve and having this accreditation not only shows that we operate at a high standard, but also means that others look to us and it greatly enhances our reputation.

Volunteer Heritage Guides

I would like to extend a special welcome to our new Heritage Guides. It's great to see new faces and I hope you enjoy your volunteering experience with us. We would like to wish Tiphaine well on her return to France, to study. Tiphaine has been with us as a guide in the cottage and barge for several months.



Volunteer Rangers

Our Volunteer Rangers have been working away on several projects including hedge maintenance, the cottage orchard and a school boat project at Ashgrove Primary School. Whilst we are sad to see two of our Volunteer Rangers go, we are delighted they are now in full time employment in this field. Good luck to Melanie in her post with the National Trust at Castle Ward and Mark in his new post as a Warden at Hillsborough Castle.

Volunteer Wildlife Surveyors

Butterflies - With the summer now underway (did you all enjoy it!) we have several surveys taking place. The butterfly transects are underway and we extend a big thank you to Rose Cremin for providing transect training for our volunteers on 27th May. We received great feedback from everyone and learnt loads of interesting facts. If anyone else is interested in helping out please let us know. We have some transects that have been set up over many years and we are planning new routes.

Bumblebee - We are also establishing some bumblebee transects to feed into the 'All-Ireland Pollinator Plan'. Nichola is working on this at the moment with Dan and if anyone is interested in helping out they should contact Nichola.

Wildfowl - A new wildfowl bird survey is now underway through BTO along the canal and river system.

Invasive plants - We would like to welcome a new volunteer to our wildlife surveyors, Sinéad who is undertaking the task of surveying the area for our three, key invasive plants: Himalayan Balsam (which we all know and love!), Japanese knotweed and the dreaded Giant hogweed.

Bats - All Ireland Daubenton Bat surveying will be kicking off in August. Anne will be sending out details.

Saturday Programme

The Saturday Conservation Volunteer schedule for the next three months is as below – as usual tasks may sometimes change but we'll keep you updated. Anne, Dan and myself will continue to rotate working with the Saturday Volunteer group and Anne will confirm tasks via email well in advance.



Note: We are running our third training event for this year on 9th July.

9 th July 2016	Meadow Grassland Ecology Training	Venue to be confirmed		Andy
23 rd July 2016	Terrace Hill Garden	Minnowburn	Minnowburn Car park	Dan
6 th Aug 2016	Hedgerow Maintenance	Lagan Meadows	Sharman Drive Entrance	Andy
20 th Aug 2016	Vegetation Control	Giant's Ring	Giant's Ring Car Park	Anne
3 rd Sept 2016	Day out	Venue to be confirmed	LVRP Visitor Centre	All
17 th Sept 2016	Vegetation Control	Giant's Ring	Giant's Ring Car Park	Dan



Common Newt

The volunteer task at the wetland site in Sir Thomas and Lady Dixon Park was a somewhat mucky affair and it's testament to the hard work of everyone that the wetland biodiversity is thriving. This was one of many newts that are doing well in the wetland site that were spotted on Saturday 30th April.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback, whether it be about your experiences volunteering or any aspect of the Regional Park. Do bear in mind though, that we may not be able to implement all suggestions. Feedback can be emailed, posted in our suggestion box or communicated to either your Board, volunteer representatives (Jackson Tinto or Frank Jordan) or a staff member.

Tee-shirts

Everyone is looking fantastic in the new tee-shirts! Our new logo looks well and it is a great way of promoting the Park as well as our volunteering opportunities.

For those who haven't had a tee-shirt yet, just a wee reminder that they are available from our office, free to all our volunteers. We have sample sizes in the office (S, M, L, XL and 2LX). Can I just ask that you sign off on the list so that we keep a record of where they have all gone?

