



## **Friends of Elan Links**

**A volunteering strategy which ensures good practise**









## Contents





Introduction.....	3
Understanding Volunteering.....	4
Current Volunteering Activity .....	6
New Volunteering Opportunities .....	9
Volunteer Management .....	11
Volunteer Targets Table .....	13
Evaluation Strategies.....	19
Appendix: .....	21

## Introduction




The Elan Links: People, Nature & Water Landscape Partnership Scheme is a Heritage Lottery funded Landscape Partnership with an ambitious strategic vision - to generate a step-change increase in beneficial outcomes for people, communities and heritage and will deliver 26 projects under 12 strategic objectives over 6 years. The partnership is currently made up of 17 different organisations, the majority being voluntary sector organisations and one a public sector organisation. The partnership is managed by a Partnership Board comprising of the following key partners:

-  Elan Valley Trust (lead partner)
-  Dwr Cymru Welsh Water
-  Community Arts Rhayader and District (CARAD)
-  Tir Coed
-  Rhayader 2000
-  Natural Resources Wales

Other partners are represented on the partnership's four stakeholder subgroups:

-  Access & Recreation
-  Natural Heritage
-  Built & Ancient Heritage
-  Events and Interpretation

As well as these subgroups there are three additional strategic subgroups which connect with activities across the entire project:

-  Volunteering & Training
-  Interpretation & Cultural Heritage
-  Legacy

The majority of our partnership organisations are voluntary organisations and rely on volunteers. This volunteering policy for the Elan Links partnership recognises the importance of our volunteers and is a blueprint of how we will engage, work with and treat our volunteers. Both immediate and long-term needs of the project must be considered with regard to volunteering and training. Each project will benefit from volunteers working to achieve the outcomes and contributing to the development of the projects. In order to succeed long term, the project will need to be wholly endorsed and supported by the local community and the project partners, and volunteers will be key in both learning and participation for each project.

This volunteering policy underpins all volunteering activity across the partnership and its 27 projects with a core element being delivered through the Friends of Elan project, a project under strategic objective 8 which is to increase the number and range of people experiencing Elan as visitors, volunteers and learners. This volunteering policy maps out the different volunteering opportunities within the project, and how this will be managed over the duration of the scheme. It will illustrate how the volunteers will receive training, either by partners or commissioned by external trainers. It intends to ensure that the people who volunteer in the area will receive extra skills, improve their social networks, improve their employment possibilities, and gain confidence within their communities.

## Understanding Volunteering

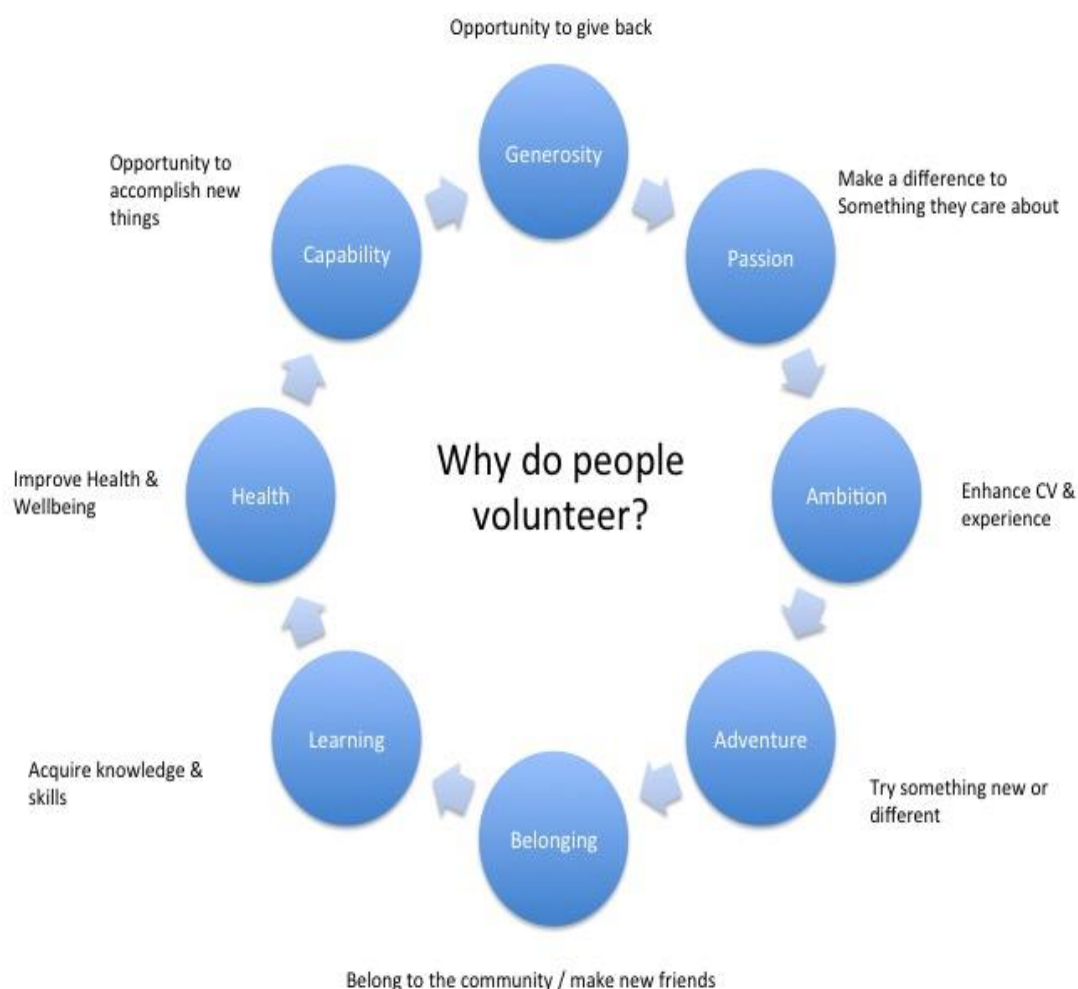
### What is a volunteer

A range of definitions of volunteering exist in the UK. HLF uses the definition published in the 2008 Volunteering Compact Code of Practice: ‘

Volunteering is... an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives.’

### Reasons why people volunteer

People volunteer for a number of different reasons and it is important to have an understanding of this before developing a volunteering policy. An inclusive volunteering policy will include opportunities for all types of volunteers.



As well as volunteering for different reasons, volunteers will vary greatly in the time commitments they are able to give – some will wish to regularly volunteer, some might only be interested in certain projects or a certain type of volunteering activity. Some volunteers will only volunteer once or twice so micro volunteering opportunities are also important. It is also important to think about the progression of

volunteers and expanding their knowledge, skills and training where appropriate so that the volunteering remains a rewarding experience.

### Why encourage volunteering

As stated by Heritage Lottery Fund: “Volunteering is a vibrant expression of active citizenship. It is a powerful force for social change, both for those who fulfil their potential through volunteering and for the wider community. Volunteers can offer support, expertise and innovation to any organisation, enhancing impact and adding value.”

A robust volunteering policy ensuring a wide range of volunteering opportunities is vital to ensuring that Elan Links can achieve its aims and objectives as well as

- 🏠 enable more tasks to be completed;
- 🏠 create opportunities for people to learn about Elan’s diverse heritage and have an enjoyable experience;
- 🏠 provide access to new skills, opportunities and experiences;
- 🏠 have a positive impact upon volunteers’ confidence, wellbeing and/or physical and mental health;
- 🏠 contribute to sustainability of the Elan Links area and its unique heritage by increasing community understanding and ownership; this can provide powerful ambassadors for Elan into the future;
- 🏠 We shouldn’t forget the value of volunteers and their contribution, some of which is a valuable match in-kind contribution to this Landscape Partnership.

## Current Volunteering Activity

### Current Volunteering

Elan Links: People Nature & Water Landscape Partnership is made up of several third sector organisations who rely volunteer trustees. These organisations also have many volunteers participating in their current projects, outside of the partnership. The policy will ensure that extra burden isn't placed on these current volunteers. The current volunteering opportunities at each partnership organisation is detailed below.

#### Elan Valley Trust

Elan Valley Trust (EVT) the lead partner for the landscape partnership, is run by a group of six volunteer trustees. These trustees volunteer their expertise to meet the Trust's objective to promote conservation, appropriate public access and disseminate information about the estate. Some of these trustees also volunteer their time to the Elan Links: People, Nature & Water Landscape Partnership project. Elan Valley Trust also has a group of fifteen volunteers who support the yearly events programme..

#### Dwr Cymru Welsh Water

Dwr Cymru Welsh Water is a not-for-profit water company that have a visitor centre in the Elan Valley. The company do have a few regular volunteers who support with specific activities but in recent years due to increased demands placed on the rangers the Friends of Elan volunteering group hasn't been operational. Due to this there is a current lack of accessible volunteering opportunities in the outdoors / natural environment at Elan,

#### Community Arts Rhayader And District

Community Arts Rhayader And District (CARAD) run a Museum and Gallery and jointly manage the Tourist Information Centre (TIC) in the market town of Rhayader a short distance from Elan. CARAD is governed by a group of dedicated volunteer trustees and the organisation relies heavily on volunteers to undertake its core functions including running the shop, and TIC at the Museum and Gallery. CARAD currently have 60 volunteers on their books, with a core of around 25 regularly volunteering for them. These numbers can increase greatly when additional activities such as festivals and events are organised. The core demographic of their regular volunteers are older, retired professional people, many being women, and is at risk of reduction due to an increase in the retirement age.

#### Rhayader 2000

Rhayader 2000 is a voluntary sector community development organisation that represents a cross section of the local community. They aim to strengthen the economy of the town and the surrounding area, strengthen and maintain the natural and man-made environment, encourage the development of skills and opportunities, both personal and professional and make best use of human and material resources within Rhayader. Rhayader 2000 is governed by volunteer trustees and its activities are managed entirely by those volunteer trustees.


## Tir Coed

Tir Coed is a woodland charity that engages harder to reach people with woodlands and the wider natural environment by delivering bespoke volunteering and training opportunities that enable skills development and accreditation for the participants involved. Their model is very successful and demonstrates clearly that investing in this type of provision can change a person's life. This model is currently being established at Elan through the Elan Links Landscape Partnership with a pilot taking place during this development year.

There are also a number of interest based volunteering groups which currently use Elan including Ramblers, cyclists, Rhayader by Nature. Annual events and shows in and around Elan also rely heavily on volunteers. Their focus and interest is quite specific and currently their activities happen and are managed independently.

Rhayader and District Community Support are based in the town and they offer a range of volunteering opportunities. They work with local organisations to recruit, train, place and support volunteers within the community. There are range of volunteering opportunities that are available through Rhayader and District Community Support such as volunteering with St John's ambulance, helping at local events and offering a helping hand at lunch clubs.

A number of organisations currently provide volunteering roles for:

-  Front of house
-  Tourist Information Centre
-  Gallery
-  Events volunteering
-  Event planning
-  Community projects
-  Office based work
-  Charity shops
-  Arts and Culture
-  Youth and children's clubs
-  Athletic events
-  Community car drivers
-  Supporting the elderly in various ways.

## Barriers to involving people

It is as important to understand the barriers as well as perceived barriers to volunteering in the area and the Elan Links: People, Nature & Water Landscape Partnership as it is to understand the current volunteering opportunities which are available. The Elan Links project area is located in a very rural and sparsely populated area with very poor transport service. This is the biggest barrier and a significant challenge for the Elan Links Partnership to address. Other barriers include the lack of communication and promotion to attract volunteers and the lack of organisational capacity to manage volunteers on a regular basis and offer good quality volunteering opportunities particularly within some partner organisations.







## Local Good Practice

Elan Links: People, Nature & Water Landscape Partnership intend to address each of the barriers identified above by the different organisations and the local community. This volunteering policy will focus on ensuring that a best practise model of working with volunteers within some of our partner organisations is developed and implemented across the Elan Links partnership and is established through the Friends of Elan project ensuring there are accessible volunteering opportunities across a wide range of different activities and interests. This will meet the requirements of the current volunteer demographic and provide new opportunities for those currently under represented so that the workforce and volunteers accurately reflect the demographics of the area.

## Strategic Training and Development of Needs of Partners

Engagement with the local community for both volunteering and participation is essential in moving the project forward. There are a number of projects within the partnership that need community engagement and have included volunteering activities as an output. There is a need to foster learning and engagement in a meaningful way to ensure that the partnership leaves a legacy which can be built on for the future. Each project has identified training and volunteering opportunities they will provide to volunteers.

The project will require a variety of skills and experience for the successful delivery of the partnership. The partners of Elan Links Landscape Partnership and the members of the Management Board bring forward a wealth of experience from a broad range of backgrounds through the development of its partners, management and groups including:

-  Project management
-  Understanding of the natural environment, water catchment and land management
-  Training and volunteering
-  The arts & cultural heritage
-  Events, activities & marketing
-  Business & fundraising

People need to be involved in a significant way for all of the Elan Links Partnership Projects so that the community can see how their needs are being taken into consideration during the development of these projects. In order to ensure that this happens, and people's views are always part of each project's development and implementation, we will ensure an ongoing framework of engagement and consultation.



## New Volunteering Opportunities

Elan Links: People, Nature & Water Landscape Partnership area is a very rural, sparsely populated area in Mid Wales but has an extensive and diverse potential audience. The Landscape Partnership aims to introduce Elan to a wider audience and in particular the residents of Birmingham who have a unique connection to the area through the water heritage. It is also important to the partnership that volunteering and training opportunities strengthen the link between the Elan Valley and surrounding areas such as Rhayader in order to enable the partnership to offer a wider range of volunteering and training opportunities for their volunteers. Where possible and if mutually beneficial, combining volunteers will enable organisations to network and collaborate with one another and will increase their combined capacity to manage volunteers whilst giving volunteers a wider range of activities and experiences.

### Volunteer Opportunities

Within the project, there are many different volunteering opportunities. The potential volunteer roles can be divided into several groups:

- 🏡 Natural Heritage
  - 🏡 Conservation
  - 🏡 Different types of land management
  - 🏡 Habitat restoration
  - 🏡 Biodiversity monitoring
- 🏡 Cultural Heritage
  - 🏡 Oral History recorders
  - 🏡 Archiving & research
  - 🏡 Collections management
  - 🏡 Amateur drama and theatre
- 🏡 Built & Ancient Heritage
  - 🏡 Condition survey volunteers
  - 🏡 Events & activities
- 🏡 Events & Activities
  - 🏡 Guided walks and activity leaders
  - 🏡 Event support & marshalling
  - 🏡 Marketing, photography & social media

### Training Opportunities

As part of the development and delivery of the Elan Links: People, Nature & Water Landscape Partnership projects, there will be a number of opportunities to engage volunteers in a range of training opportunities.

A wide variety of skills and experience will be required for the successful delivery of the partnership scheme and its projects. It is possible that some of the training will be provided in-house by the Elan Links partners and some of the training will have to be bought in from an outside organisation.

One of the Elan Links objectives concentrates on engaging with harder to reach individuals and provide training skills and opportunities. Through this project a number of individuals will receive training in aspects such as woodland management, restoration and conservation. This training will be accredited

by Agored Cymru. Elan Links will be taking on a very successful training model that has already been tried and tested by one of the key partners, Tir Coed. From previous training courses, volunteers have gained employment skills, confidence and a sense of achievement and wellbeing.

In addition to the training opportunities that will be delivered through objective 10, there are many other training opportunities within other objectives. Some of the training opportunities include oral history training and MODES Complete collections management database training.

In addition to formal skills, there is a collection of individual skill among volunteers and staff that have not been formally documented or recognised. These skills include community engagement, IT and communication and volunteer recruitment management. However it should be noted that these skills have been self-taught or acquired through experience and it is possible that some of those would welcome the opportunity to develop their skills further or formalise them through further training.

## Volunteer Management

### Volunteer Management Framework

Volunteers need to be well managed in order to ensure that volunteers to make a full contribution to organisations and projects whilst developing their own skills and interests. The roles allocated to volunteers must allow for the volunteers' particular circumstances, needs and potentials so that they feel they are making a contribution and are treated as a unique individual.

With so many opportunities available and a number of partnership organisations involved, it is crucial that a central and coordinated approach is taken to manage the delivery of the Elan Links volunteering opportunities. This must also respect and take into account the volunteering aspects already being undertaken individually by some partner organisations. This approach is detailed below:

#### 1. Updating and maintaining the Elan Links volunteering policy

All partners input into the policy and agree the final draft. The policy is reviewed on a yearly basis to ensure best practise and compliance. All volunteers are made aware of this policy. The responsibility for leading the yearly review and editing of this policy rests with the Tir Coed. This partner has considerable experience ensuring a best practise approach to volunteering. All partners will then take responsibility for ensuring that any changes are implemented within the volunteering activities in projects they lead.

#### 2. Volunteering & Training Subgroup

A subgroup will work across the entire Elan Links landscape partnership and focus on ensuring that the volunteering opportunities across the suit of projects complement each other. All Elan Links staff will sit on this subgroup and report back on the progress being made with the individual volunteering targets set against each project, share best practice and discuss challenges. A yearly calendar of volunteering opportunities will be agreed, developed and advertised to ensure this. The Elan Links Administrative Officer will be responsible for ensuring that volunteering opportunities are centrally coordinated and promoted on a monthly basis.

#### 3. Volunteering & Training Coordinator

The Volunteering & Training Coordinator is a role primarily linked to the Objective 10 suite of projects and their subsequent delivery. However, to ensure continuity and best practise they will also act as the volunteering ambassador across the entire Elan Links scheme. Specifically the Volunteering & Training Coordinator will act as the first point of contact for referral organisations both locally and in Birmingham. The coordinator will the work of the administrative officer who will act as a first point of contact for volunteer queries and ensuring that volunteering opportunities within the Elan Links projects are adequately promoted.

#### 4. Individual Volunteering Targets within the specific projects

Projects with volunteering opportunities and volunteering outputs will be the responsibility of the relevant officers in charge of those projects.

### Recruiting Volunteers

Looking at the partnership's key partners and local organisations we are able to see where their volunteers are coming from and what aspects of volunteering they are interested in. Knowing this will enables us to identify the existing gaps and explore the potential of new volunteers.

The partnership wants to ensure a diverse range of volunteers have the opportunity to get involved with a wide range of volunteering activities. Almost all of our key partners already have a database of volunteers that they call on regularly to support them with different aspects of work. As part of the volunteering and training subgroup we will merge these databases with the consent of the partnership organisations and the individuals on their databases. The Elan Links staff team and the individual partnership organisations will ensure that the wider volunteering opportunities within Elan Links are promoted. Effective outreach to groups that do not currently take part in organised volunteering activities within the local community will be undertaken by the Volunteering & Training Coordinator through the implementation of project 10b – Enabling & Empowering Elan and this will potentially draw in new volunteers.

Volunteering opportunities will be promoted through:

- ✚ Promotion and wide circulation of the Friends of Elan volunteering policy and volunteering day calendar to partner organisations and others
- ✚ Through the interaction of the volunteering & training subgroup
- ✚ Advertisement on notice boards in Elan Valley and Rhayader and other nearby towns;
- ✚ Established links to developed volunteering organisations such as the Arches and PAVO;
- ✚ Advertisement on social media and short videos
- ✚ Local Advertisements;
- ✚ Encourage newspaper and website coverage locally;

When required volunteers will be recruited and selected by creating fair and ethical recruitment procedures, with tailored job specifications and advertisements. Interview checklists and questions will be created before interviews to allow referees to select volunteers on an impartial basis whilst finding people most suitable for each role. Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the partnership or referred to the nearest Volunteer Centre.

## Training

Volunteers will need to receive basic training and the delivery of training will happen through the following mechanisms:

- ✚ Use of internal resources to plan and deliver training courses for both staff and volunteers;
- ✚ Specific courses being developed;
- ✚ Use of external trainers to deliver courses where the required in-house skills are not available;
- ✚ Placement on external training courses for any enhancement skills that is not deliverable through other means.

Responsibility for the delivery of training rest with staff member responsible for the particular volunteering opportunity as detailed in the tables below. In order to ensure that training is effective and long-reaching over the length of the project, a range of skills will be delivered to both project partners and volunteers.

## Volunteer Targets Table

Projects in Elan Links: People, Nature & Water	Description of works	Volunteer targets	Volunteers managed by	Links to other organisations
<b>Objective 1: Restore and enhance habitats as identified by the landscape character action plan</b>				
1a – Healthy bogs	Collect photographic evidence and biodiversity monitoring to record changes in habitat	5 collecting days, 1 per year over 5 years	Natural Heritage Officer	EVT, RSPB, NRW, Aberystwyth University
1b – Dry Heath Management	Collect photographic evidence and biodiversity monitoring to record changes habitat	25 people involved in 5 learning and volunteering days for land managers and others	Natural Heritage Officer	EVT, NRW, Tir Coed, DCWW Maybe some cross over with project 10a
1c – Improving our woodlands	Collect photographic evidence and biodiversity monitoring to record changes habitat	25 people involved in 5 learning and volunteering days for land managers and others	Natural Heritage Officer	EVT, DCWW, RSPB, Woodland Trust, Tir Coed, NRW Maybe some cross over with project 10a
<b>Objective 2: Target habitat management for key species as identified by the landscape character action plan</b>				
2a – Elan Rare Birds	Volunteers will monitor the changes to the condition of the habitat over the 5 years		Natural Heritage Officer	Elan Valley Trust, Natural Resources Wales
2b – Elan Rare Species	Biodiversity monitoring	60 people trained in biodiversity monitoring 500 people participating in 50 demonstration and volunteering days	Natural Heritage Officer	EVT , NRW, RSPB, PONT, Rhayader by Nature, Friends of Elan (DCWW)

Projects in Elan Links: People, Nature & Water	Description of works	Volunteer targets	Volunteers managed by	Links to other organisations
<b>Objective 3: Improve the sustainability of high nature value traditional farming systems</b>				
3a – Elan Hay Meadows	Biodiversity monitoring	25 people participating in 5 demonstrating & volunteering days	Natural Heritage Officer	EVT, NRW, PONT, Elan Valley Tenants Association
3b – Elan Rhos Hay	Biodiversity monitoring	25 people participating in 4 demonstrating & volunteering days 5 farmers participating in 3 demonstration & volunteering days	Natural Heritage Officer	EVT, Elan Valley Tenants Association, Cwmduddwr Commoners Association, NRW
3c – Elan Ram Scheme	Characteristics of rams recorded	10 people per day 20 days per year 100 days over 5 years	Natural Heritage Officer	EVT, Elan Valley Tenants Association, Cwmduddwr Commoners Association
3d – Elan Cattle Grazing	Biodiversity monitoring		Natural Heritage Officer	EVT, Elan Valley Tenants Association, Cwmduddwr Commoners Association PONT, NRW
3e – Elan Wethers			Natural Heritage Officer	EVT Elan Valley Tenants Association Food Centre Wales

Projects in Elan Links: People, Nature & Water	Description of works	Volunteer targets	Volunteers managed by	Links to other organisations
<b>Objective 4: Ensure that key built heritage and ancient heritage sites are protected to safeguard and maintain their condition into the future</b>				
4a – Safeguarding Elan’s historic environment	Volunteers will be trained in basic heritage surveying skills	5 volunteers per year will be trained in surveying heritage 25 over the 5 years trained in surveying heritage	Project Manager & Appointed Heritage Contractor	
<b>Objective 5: Access and sustainable use for built heritage sites within Elan</b>				
5a – Increasing access to Elan’s Archaeological and Built heritage	Volunteers used to support events	Site open day per year to mirror Interpretation Plan themes.	Elan Links Project Officer	DCWW, EVT, CARAD, RCAHMW & CADW
5b – Resident Engineers house	Volunteers used to support a series of open days.	Site open day per year to mirror Interpretation Plan themes.	Elan Links Project Officer	CARAD, ACW. DCWW
5c – Cwm Clyd Farmstead	Volunteers used to support a series of open days	Site open day per year to mirror Interpretation Plan themes.	Elan Links Project Officer	CARAD, EVT
6a – Elan Links – People to Collections	Volunteers will be trained to gather and assess historical information record oral histories and formally trained. They will be actively involved in managing collections and working with the digital team to devise an online exhibition and using online collections	10 people actively gathering stories 20 people trained in Oral History by year 4 18 people formally trained in the use of MODES Complete 25 people involved in collections management 10 people working with digital team to devise online exhibition 10 people using Elan Links online collections	Archivist and Interpretation Officer though CARAD	CARAD, Elan Valley Trust, DCWW, Tir Coed
<b>Objective 7: Develop engaging and innovative ways of narrating Elan’s heritage to a wide audience of people</b>				
7a – Interpreting Elan	Volunteers will be working on the construction, design and	No specific volunteer target set	CARAD	DCWW, EVT, CARAD, Rhayader

Projects in Elan Links: People, Nature & Water	Description of works	Volunteer targets	Volunteers managed by	Links to other organisations
	installation of exhibitions. They will be doing this as support to the members of staff			2000, RCAHMW
7b – Elan interactive	Volunteers will support staff members to develop new routes around the estate to use on the interactive app	No specific volunteer target set	CARAD	DCWW, EVT, CARAD, Rhayader 2000, RCAHMW
7c – Artist Residencies		50 creative young people (10 – 30) better connected to creative opportunities  25 young people (11 – 25 years) involved in the above exhibitions and events	CARAD	DCWW, EVT ACW Ikon Gallery, CARAD, Trinity Saint David & others
<b>Objective 8: Increase the number and range of people experiencing Elan as visitors, volunteers and learners</b>				
8 – Friends of Elan	The wider volunteering contribution which people make across the Elan Links partnership in the subgroups etc	Volunteers to be acknowledged for their contributions. Contributions to logged and transport and expenses paid for	Volunteering & Training Coordinator	All partners involved in the scheme
<b>Objective 9: Improve the range of recreational opportunities to enjoy Elan</b>				
9 – Making the most of Elan	Route surveying, way-marking, route checking, hazard reporting, path clearance	To be agreed through the volunteering and training subgroup  Volunteers to be acknowledged for their contributions	Access & Recreation Officer	DCWW, Elan Valley Trust, CARAD, British Horse Society, Tir Coed, Powys County Council, Rhayader 2000, Rhayader Walking Group, Powys Ramblers, NRW, (MBWales.com)



Projects in Elan Links: People, Nature & Water	Description of works	Volunteer targets	Volunteers managed by	Links to other organisations
<b>Objective 10: Engage with more difficult to reach individuals and provide training skills and opportunities which will build confidence, a sense of achievement and a sense of the natural environment</b>				
10a – Investing in Elan	Volunteers will participate in training courses and intensive training courses in sustainable land management and green wood craft and will gain Agored Cymru Accreditation. The training courses will be looking at areas of the natural heritage projects (objective 1 – 3) to see which areas they are able to contribute towards. Volunteers on the training courses will help manage invasive species and other activities that don't need a specialist to do the work	10 x 24 day training course over five year period 100 people attending a 24 day training course 100 people gaining experience and training 80 people gaining Level 1 / 2 Agored Cymru Accreditation 10 2 x 5 day intensive training courses in five year period 80 people attending a 5 day intensive training course and accreditation 340 days in sustainable land management. green wood craft	Volunteering & Training Coordinator	Tir Coed, DCWW, Elan Valley Trust, Partner Client Referral Organisations
Projects in Elan Links: People, Nature & Water	Description of works	Volunteer targets	Volunteers managed by	Links to other organisations
10b – Enabling and Empowering Elan	Volunteers from 10a may become engaged to help deliver 10b	No volunteering target set	Volunteering & Training Coordinator	Tir Coed, DCWW, Elan Valley Trust, Partner Client Referral Organisations
10c – Experience Elan		No volunteering target set	Volunteering & Training Coordinator	Tir Coed, DCWW, Elan Valley Trust, Partner Client Referral Organisations

Projects in Elan Links: People, Nature & Water	Description of works	Volunteer targets	Volunteers managed by	Links to other organisations
<b>Objective 11: Increase the understanding of the importance of sustainable lifestyles for nature and society</b>				
11a – Tap into it	Habitat management work at Elan	Discussions about Severn Trent staff Support your water catchment days – local schools and schools in Birmingham also being discussed.	Elan Links Project Officer	EVT DCWW, CARAD, Severn Trent
<b>Objective 12: Enshrining Elan Legacy at Every Turn</b>				
12 a – c	Not decided yet	No volunteering target set yet	Partnership Manager	All partners

## Evaluation Strategies

### Measuring Success

The success of Elan Links: People, Nature & Water will be closely monitored in order to evaluate its success and that targets have been met as outlined in the development stage. There are a number of indicators that will be monitored which are:

- 🏠 The number of people involved in volunteer events;
- 🏠 Demographic information of volunteers;
- 🏠 Number of staff/volunteers attending training courses;
- 🏠 Feedback from volunteers and staff;
- 🏠 Projects implemented measured against predicted HLF project outcomes.

Alongside these indicators qualitative information about the participants and the quality of events and training provided can be captured through evaluation surveys. These will provide the partnership with information about the participants, to ensure that target groups and hard-to-reach communities are able to access events, identify what was done well, what could be improved, and to gather suggestions for future programmes.

The training and volunteer plan should be reviewed annually to identify any new training needs that may develop over the course of the project and a way of ensuring that the current needs are being met.

### Targets

There is an aim and target for the training of staff and volunteers to ensure that skills and resources needed to sustain projects and activities are in place. The aim is to guarantee the longevity of the project after five years and this must be realised through a strong framework and co-ordination of volunteer activity across the Elan project area.

The partnership is dedicated to the following;

- 🏠 Recruiting volunteers from across the local community and providing them with the skills and training they need to enable them to have a sense of pride and ownership in the project and enable lasting success;
- 🏠 Integrating community engagement in project roles and volunteering with the support of the coordinator across the projects;
- 🏠 Providing whole-project support and opportunities for volunteers and staff to work together and share skill sets;
- 🏠 Taking part in whole-partnership training in equality and diversity, health & safety, disability awareness and equal opportunities, community engagement, working with young people, recruiting and managing volunteers, and communication with the public;
- 🏠 Working with local organisations and volunteering groups in close and equal partnership;
- 🏠 Meeting and sharing information to resolve common issues together.

### Review




Throughout the five year duration of the project there must be continuous communications among the project partners and their volunteers to ensure that the heritage, learning and participation aims of the

HLF are consistently being met, and that the projects will remain sustainable in the long term, embedded with the local community in terms of participation and ownership.

Measures of review to ensure the success of the project could include an annual review by all the project partners with recommendations and changes for the following years. Priorities should be refined and changed based on performance, as well as continuing creativity and support for new initiatives and ideas for each of the projects. Target audiences should be attracted at all stages of the project, bringing in new audiences or communities through each year.

### Disseminating results

Elan Links: People, Nature & Water will benefit and succeed through best practice training and skills, ensuring the lasting success of the project through to the future. The partnership will aim to share best practice by:

-  Communicating with partners;
-  Sharing feedback on activities with volunteers, staff, similar sites and local projects;
-  Keeping the local community informed through media, meetings and attendance at local community events and shows.

## Appendix:

# Elan Links: People, Nature & Water Volunteering Policy

### Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in Elan Links: People, Nature & Water. It is of relevance to all within the partnership, including volunteers, staff, members, partners and those elected or appointed positions of responsibility. This policy is endorsed by Elan Links Management Board and will be reviewed annually, to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of the partnership and its volunteers.

### Commitment

Elan Links: People, Nature & Water acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. The partnership values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

The partnership recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

### Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who are, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

### Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by Elan Links: People, Nature & Water and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise the partnership cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the partnership expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the partnership.

## **Volunteer Co-ordination**

All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff or volunteer to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out task effectively. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact to receive support and supervision.

## **Recruitment and Selection**

Elan Links: People, Nature & Water is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups including children. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the partnership in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the organisation or referred to the nearest Volunteer Centre.

All volunteers will be asked to produce two references and will be invited to attend and informal interviews. If the volunteer will be carrying out activities with vulnerable groups (children and/or adults) there may be other safer recruitment procedures carried out including asking a volunteer to undergo and enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check. More detailed information will be made available specific to legislative requirements and to the particular volunteer position.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, which will be subsequently reviewed every year. The task description will be prepared in conjunction with the lead officer for each objective for which the volunteering relates to.

New volunteers will be properly inducted into the organisation by the lead officer for each objective. All volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

## **Training and Development**

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the partnership's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, safeguarding vulnerable groups and opportunities.

The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the partnership in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks.

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.

Training in the supervision of volunteers will be promoted for all those who have direct responsibility for volunteers.

## **Support, Supervision and Recognition**

Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated support tutor.

A process will be developed in order to give formal recognition of the contribution of the partnership's volunteers such as internal certificates and for those completing accredited training courses, they will receive accreditation from Agored Cymru.

## **Expenses**

Elan Links: People, Nature & Water recognises that the reimbursement of expenses incurred in traveling to and from the place of volunteering or in the course of volunteering is important from an equal opportunities point of view. This is necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to voluntary opportunities.

The partnership's volunteers are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of expenditure. What can be reclaimed from the organisation and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.

The organisation has a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which are the same for volunteers and staff and are as approved by HLF.

It is the responsibility of staff members to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

## **Insurance**

The partnership's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.

The partnership does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

## **Confidentiality**

The partnership will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the partnership relating to the volunteer.

## **Settling Differences**

The partnership aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The partnership seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the organisation's guidelines for settling differences.

Each officer is responsible for ensuring the welfare of the volunteers in their specific suite of projects however any serious complaints would be escalated to the Project Manager. The Volunteering and Training coordinator will act in an advisory capacity to fellow colleagues to mitigate escalation. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the partnership to the volunteer while is endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If

an informal resolution proves impossible, the partnership's wider grievance or complaints policies and procedures will be referred to. If a volunteer's behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, they will be asked to change their role, or to leave the partnership.

## Rights and Responsibilities

The partnership recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- 🏠 Know what is (and what is not) expected of them;
- 🏠 Have adequate support in their volunteering;
- 🏠 Receive appreciation;
- 🏠 Volunteer in a safe environment;
- 🏠 Be insured;
- 🏠 Know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong;
- 🏠 Receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses;
- 🏠 Receive appropriate training;
- 🏠 Be free from discrimination;
- 🏠 Be offered the opportunity for personal development.

The partnership expects volunteers to:

- 🏠 Be reliable;
- 🏠 Be honest;
- 🏠 Respect confidentiality;
- 🏠 Make the most of training and support opportunities;
- 🏠 Carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the partnership;
- 🏠 Carry out tasks within agreed guidelines;
- 🏠 Respect the work of the partnership and not bring it into disrepute
- 🏠 Comply with the partnership's policies.



## Volunteer Agreement

This Volunteer Agreement describes the arrangement between Elan Links: People, Nature & Water Landscape Partnership and you, the volunteer. We wish to assure you of our appreciation of your volunteering with us and our commitment to do the best we can to make your experience with us enjoyable and rewarding. The following Volunteer Agreement is created along guidelines provided by Wales Council for Voluntary Action.

### Part 1: The Organisation

Your role as a volunteer is [*state the title of the role*] and starts on [*date*]. The purpose of this role is to [*state how the role benefits the organisation*].

Elan Links: People Nature & Water commits to the following:

#### Induction and training

To provide thorough induction on the work of Elan Links: People Nature & Water, its staff, your volunteering role and the induction and/or training you need to meet the responsibilities of this role. The Volunteer Handbook provides further details of the organisation.

#### Supervision, support and flexibility

- ✦ To explain the standards we expect for our services and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them;
- ✦ To provide a named person who will meet with you regularly to discuss your volunteering and any successes and problems;
- ✦ To do our best to help you develop your volunteering role with us.

## Expenses

To repay these expenses following procedures in the Volunteer handbook:

- ✦ Travel to and from home to [*location of volunteering*] and during your volunteering: see the Volunteer Handbook for details on methods of travel and car mileage allowances.
- ✦ Reimbursement of meal costs to a maximum of £\*\* (with receipts). To be eligible you must work around meal times or for at least [\*\*] hours a day.
- ✦ Specialist clothing where this is required and provided by you.

## Health & Safety

- ✦ To provide adequate training and feedback in support of our health and safety policy, a copy of which is in the Volunteer Handbook.

## Insurance

- ✦ To provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking activities that are approved and authorised by us.

## Equal Opportunities

- ✦ To ensure that all volunteers are dealt with in accordance with our equal opportunities policy, a copy of which is set out in the Volunteer Handbook.

## Handling Problems

- ✦ To try to resolve fairly any problems, grievances and difficulties you may have while you volunteer with us.

- ✦ In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issues in accordance with the procedures set out in the Volunteer Handbook.

## Part 2: the volunteer

The volunteer commits to:

- ✦ To help Elan Links: People, Nature & Water fulfil its mission;
- ✦ To perform the agreed volunteering role to the best of your ability;
- ✦ To follow the organisation's procedures and standards, including health and safety and equal opportunities, in relation to its staff, volunteers and clients;
- ✦ To maintain the confidentiality of information about the organisation and of its clients;
- ✦ To meet time commitments and standards agreed to and give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made when this is not possible;
- ✦ To provide referees as agreed who may be contacted, and to agree to a police check being carried out where necessary.

This agreement is binding in honour only; it is not intended to be a legally binding contract and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. No employment relationship is intended either now or at any time in the future.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (volunteer)

Date: \_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (on behalf of organisation)

Date: \_\_ / \_\_ / \_\_\_\_