

Railway Land Wildlife Trust

Chalk Life Ranger (Lewes and Eastbourne) Job Description



Job title: Chalk Life Ranger – Creating Connections project

Location: Linklater Pavilion, Railway Lane, Lewes BN7 2FG and across the project area of Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough

Responsible to: CEO

Hours: 35 hours per week

Pay: £25667 pro rata plus pension contributions at 6%

Contract: Fixed term contract for four years

Other: Essential car user

Job share applications welcome

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Background to Changing Chalk project

Changing Chalk – Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Changing Chalk is a collaboration of organisations working together for a sustainable future for the South Downs. Led by the National Trust, the partnership connects nature, people and heritage by restoring lost landscapes and habitats, bringing history to life and offering new experiences in the outdoors. Working with the communities of Brighton & Hove, Eastbourne and Lewes we aim to protect and restore the South Downs landscape for people to enjoy, for health and wellbeing, for nature’s recovery and for climate resilience.

The landscape and communities in the Project area are facing multiple threats. The peri-urban landscape is one of the most densely populated coastal regions of Northern Europe and has some of the most economically deprived wards in the UK, with high levels of unemployment and physical and mental ill-health. On the neighbouring South Downs, the internationally significant chalk grassland has been in rapid decline and faces ongoing pressures, with 90% of original habitat being lost in the last 70 years and chalk grassland making up less than 4% of land in the South Downs National Park. At the same time, there is increasing public recognition of the importance of access to nature as a determinant of people’s health and well-being. The Changing Chalk project will bring together nature, people and heritage, over a four-year period, to tackle these threats, grasp the opportunities and celebrate the heritage that the area offers.

The Project will consist of 18 sub-projects, one of which is Creating Connections (Lewes and Eastbourne)

The Creating Connections Project (Lewes and Eastbourne) aims to actively engage and educate communities that neighbour the eastern Downland in understanding and caring for the nature and heritage of the land. The Chalk Life Ranger will establish greater links with marginalised groups and community facing organisations, building trust and providing a range of opportunities for participation.

The main areas of activity within the project are:

Lewes Town: The project will deliver sessions with learning disabled adults from the St Nicholas Centre. Sessions will focus on walking at different sites, taking notice of and recording what is seen in a variety of mediums. The participants will also make visits to Changing Chalk partner sites, such as restored dew ponds, to take fixed point photographs and record change.

Newhaven: By working closely with Sussex Community Development Association's asset based community development project, (Making It Happen), the Chalk Life Ranger will support people experiencing high socio-economic deprivation to access the green spaces near where they live, and ensure that work undertaken as part of Changing Chalk becomes part of broader community development and support in the area.

Eastbourne: Work with young people and school children. This will involve visits to the Eastbourne Downland that will result in creative interpretations that can be accessed by local people. In Y3 this will be an art trail along Jubilee Way, which runs along the escarpment between the western edge of the town and the Downs. In Y4 a short film focusing on the cultural heritage and folklore of the Downs will be produced that can be shared with some of the dementia support groups that run reminiscence projects in Eastbourne, which has a large elderly population, and further afield in the project area.

The project will also deliver work across the area (Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough):

Dog Ambassador scheme. A training programme for dog ambassadors will be developed, learning from the successes and challenges the Heathlands Reunited project run by SDNPA has had. Volunteers (who are dog owners or walkers) will be recruited, trained and supported to share positive messages and information about dog behaviour with other dog owners. Sessions with dog behaviourists will take place for both the volunteers and other dog walkers to support changes in dog management.

Downland Engagement Groups. The Chalk Life Ranger will support 3 'Friends of' groups (2 existing groups and 1 new group). This will involve support in recruiting new volunteers, volunteer training and skills development, practical conservation work and open days.

Background to Railway Land Wildlife Trust

The Railway Land Wildlife Trust aims to inspire environmental sustainability by bringing nature to the heart of Lewes.

We do this through:

Running the Linklater Pavilion as a community-based hub for the understanding of a sustainable environment

Providing inclusive outdoor lifelong learning for the whole community

Supporting the local authority in managing the Railway Land Local Nature Reserve

We run a programme of school visits for primary and secondary pupils, a mental health project, a volunteering programme, inclusive community events such as walks, talks and hands on learning events, holiday clubs and festivals, and projects that promote nature based solutions to climate change. All our work focuses on the benefits of engaging with the natural world and steps we can take to protect and enhance it.

We have a small, friendly staff team and a large cohort of volunteers who support all aspects of our work.

For more information about our work, please visit our website www.railwaylandproject.org

Main areas of responsibility

To develop, deliver and review quarterly work plans to ensure project outputs are met

To deliver outdoor sessions that aim to increase engagement with and understanding of the chalk grassland with learning disabled adults, NEETs, young people and school groups, and other community groups

To support two existing Downland Engagement Groups, and assist in the establishment of one new Group

To plan, deliver and evaluate a 'Dog Ambassador' scheme, using the learning from SDNPA's Heathlands Reunited project.

To recruit volunteers to different areas of the project, provide induction to the project and organise and / or deliver training as needed

To plan, promote and deliver small seasonal events and farm open days

To identify and work with external freelance professionals in the delivery of interpretative outputs such as film and art trail

To work collaboratively with the National Trust Chalk Life Ranger, sharing learning, problem solving and ideas

To work collaboratively with other Changing Chalk partners

To collect monitoring and evaluation data in line with the project evaluation framework

To report as necessary on the project to funders, partners and key stakeholders

To manage and report on the project budget

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications

Educated to degree level in a relevant subject, eg ecology, biology, environmental management OR an equivalent level of experience

Holder of full driving license and with access to a car

Experience

Working on projects with a clear environmental focus, and that engage new audiences with the natural world

Delivering projects with multiple activity streams, outputs and outcomes

Working with people from diverse backgrounds, and with diverse support needs

Delivering practical sessions outdoors, ensuring that all necessary steps have been taken to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers and participants

Recruiting and retaining volunteers, and providing them with induction to a project and training as necessary

Working with volunteers on a range of activities, including where volunteers need to work independently

Working in partnership with statutory bodies, third sector organisations and community groups

Collecting monitoring and evaluation data and using this to write reports for funders and other stakeholders

Managing and reporting on a project budget

Developing and distributing marketing and promotional materials, both hard copy and digital

Identifying and working with external freelance professionals on specific outputs

Knowledge

Knowledge of the ecology and management of chalk grassland

Understanding of the threats that the chalk downland faces, and of the complexity of stakeholder relationships concerned with its management including dog owners, farmers and conservation groups

Understanding of the barriers people face in accessing green spaces

Understanding of asset based approaches to community development

Skills and Attributes

Good written and verbal communication

Adaptable and innovative

Confident self starter, able to work independently as well as part of a small team

Good IT and administrative skills, and ability to use basic Office programmes

Please contact Helen Meade with any queries:

coordinator@railwaylandproject.org

Closing date for applications: Sunday January 30th, midnight

Date for interview: 8th or 9th February

