

Railway Land Wildlife Trust

Project Officer leading in Wildlife Discovery

Job Description



Job title: Project Officer leading in Wildlife Discovery

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

Responsible to: CEO

Hours: 0.7 FTE, 24.5 hours per week

Pay: £28000 pro rata plus pension contributions at 6%

Contract: Fixed term contract until July 2025, with further extension depending on funding

Other: Travel around the project area (Lewes District) will be necessary. However, this is not an essential car user position and we encourage sustainable travel.

Enhanced DBS check required

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Background to Railway Land Wildlife Trust

The Railway Land Wildlife Trust was formed in 1988 to campaign for the protection of a former railway marshalling yard, and the Railway Land was consequently designated a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) by Lewes District Council in 1995. In 2010 the Linklater Pavilion was constructed by RLWT at the entrance to the nature reserve as a purpose built, fully accessible environmental education centre and hub for local environmental action.

The Railway Land Wildlife Trust's vision is for everyone in our community to connect with the natural world. To this end, our mission is to:

- Provide lifelong environmental learning and engagement for all
- Run the Linklater Pavilion as a focus for local environmental action
- Offer nature based solutions to the climate and ecological crises
- Care for the Railway Land LNR in partnership with the local authority
- Secure a healthy future for the Trust

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 the climate and ecological emergencies. 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

Background to the Project Officer role

We are looking for a passionate, knowledgeable natural world enthusiast with a desire to pass on their knowledge to others and the curiosity to keep learning. While some areas of project delivery are already clearly defined, there is also the potential to shape future delivery and we are looking for a candidate who can develop ideas in a constructive, collaborative way.

The Project Officer will be working across two projects – the NatureLinks Community Action Project which will form the main part of this role (3 days a week), and supporting the Wellbeing in Nature project in the delivery of 8 wildlife discovery sessions per year (equating to 0.5 days a week)

NatureLinks Project

Our NatureLinks project is funded by the National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund and is based around the concept of blue / green infrastructure and the benefits it can bring to communities. The project aims broadly to bring communities together around their green and blue spaces, and to work imaginatively to find simple but tangible actions that can make a measurable difference in increasing biodiversity, strengthening climate resilience, and supporting wellbeing. The project has a strong focus on engaging and empowering young people to have their voices heard and to take action.

The project is about to enter its second year and evaluation from the first year has shown how strongly valued expertise in local ecosystems and wildlife discovery is. This role includes many aspects of project delivery (see Areas of Responsibility below), as well as leading on the elements of the project that focus on enabling participants to deepen their knowledge and understanding of local ecosystems.

You can read more about the project on our website at <https://www.railwaylandproject.org/nature-links>

Wellbeing in Nature

Wellbeing in Nature is RLWT's mental health project that has been running for nearly 5 years. It aims to support people who are struggling with their mental health by deepening their connection with nature and with each other. Participants can self-refer or can be referred by medical professionals including social prescribers. Currently we run two wellbeing walks per week, accompanied by a range of therapeutic activities that participants help to plan.

We also work with other local organisations and social prescribers to provide joined up services and a wide range of activities to suit different people's preferences and needs. Part of this entails running 8 Wellbeing in Nature 'Open Days' a year and, again, evaluation has shown that providing expertise that enables people to deepen their knowledge of local wildlife and ecosystems is invaluable in engaging a broad range people.

You can read more about this project on our website at <https://www.railwaylandproject.org/lewes-mosaic>

Future Aim

RLWT aims in the long term to create a role, dependent on funding, that can bring more expertise in ecology, wildlife discovery, surveying and species identification to all our areas of delivery.

MAIN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

To work with the NatureLinks Project Manager to prioritise and deliver areas of activity within the project, specifically:

- Design, promote and deliver short courses and events, leading on courses and events that focus on exploring local ecology and wildlife and making sessions available both to groups of young people and the general public
- Plan and deliver extra curricula activity at secondary and tertiary schools and colleges that focuses on habitat creation, improvement and monitoring
- Develop, plan, promote and deliver activities that increase access to and understanding of green careers
- Design, promote and deliver monthly Youth Action Group meetings, leading on delivery that focuses on wildlife discovery

To explore the potential for intergenerational work that focuses on learning together, sharing ideas and identifying positive action to support local ecosystems

To identify opportunities for the involvement of participants in the delivery and development of wildlife discovery sessions

To develop relationships with local nature based, environmental organisations, and explore and support their needs in delivering learning and engagement events and activities that focus on blue / green infrastructure and wildlife discovery

To develop volunteer roles that support the delivery of the NatureLinks project, including roles for young people

To recruit, train, support and coordinate volunteers across the project areas

To organise and / or attend events across the district, including an annual celebration and summing up events.

To develop and deliver a communications plan, including developing content, to support awareness raising campaigns

To maintain administrative records and systems necessary for project delivery and reporting

Additionally, as an employee of the Railway Land Wildlife Trust:

- To assist with the day to day running of the Linklater Pavilion as a community hub, for example letting in groups who have hired the building.
- To work with colleagues to identify areas where current and future collaboration between work streams is possible

PERSON SPECIFICATION

This is a broad role that we hope will develop further over time. The successful candidate needs to be strong in many but not necessarily all of the following areas:

Qualifications

Qualified to degree level in a relevant subject, eg ecology, OR with an equivalent level of experience of working in the conservation and / or ecological field

Experience

Experience of planning, promoting and delivering a variety of engaging events exploring local ecosystems with wide audiences

Experience of working with people from a variety of backgrounds and with a variety of needs, and the ability to reflect on this experience and, with support, to work with other groups

Experience of engaging with and supporting young people (11 to 25) from a diverse range of backgrounds AND / OR Experience of working with vulnerable adults

Experience of building and maintaining networks

Experience of recruiting, training and supporting volunteers.

Knowledge

Good species identification and monitoring knowledge and the ability to research species or ecosystems and share findings in an accessible way

Technical knowledge of ecology and the complex challenges posed by the climate and ecological emergencies, and the role of blue / green infrastructure in providing local solutions to environmental pressures

A good understanding of the challenges faced by young people in relation to the climate and ecological emergencies

A good understanding of how engaging with the natural world can support our mental health, and the challenges people might face in accessing nature

Skills and Attributes

Passionate about local wildlife and ecosystems, and keen to share knowledge with others

Good written and verbal communication and the ability to communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders

Adaptable and innovative, reflective and solution focused

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

Good IT and administrative skills:

- Ability to use basic Office programmes
- Familiar with the need to collect and present project monitoring data
- Knowledge of wildlife apps an advantage

If you would like an informal conversation about the role, please contact Helen Meade at helen@railwaylandproject.org to arrange a time.

To apply: Please complete the application form found at <https://www.railwaylandproject.org/jobs>

Closing date for applications: 17th September 2023 (midnight)

Interviews: 26th September and morning of 27th September 2023



Lewes District Council