
OPPORTUNITY: Learning and Participation Volunteer

Background

The Seaton Jurassic Centre aims to engage thousands of people every year with the unique marine, coastal and geological heritage of the East Devon coast and to attract a range of new visitors to the town of Seaton.

The Centre has established Seaton in East Devon as a gateway to the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site through exhibits and activities that:

- Reveal and explain the area's Jurassic and marine heritage in new and exciting ways;
- Attract and engage a greater number and wider range of visitors;
- Inspire and enable more people to take positive action to promote, protect and enhance their natural heritage;
- Involve and develop the skills of the local community.

The Centre is operated by Devon Wildlife Services, a trading subsidiary of the wildlife charity, Devon Wildlife Trust.

Purpose

We hope to provide a valuable experience for the volunteer through this role, as well to maximise the impact of Seaton Jurassic.

Experience shows that engaging and training motivated, reliable, talented and enthusiastic career-oriented volunteers keeps the team fresh and dynamic whilst enabling us to achieve more. Your input will mean we can reliably offer more events and education opportunities, and develop the interpretation to its full potential and so change the hearts and minds of a greater number and variety of people.

Research shows that childhood nature education (both formal and informal) is an important factor for enabling people to enjoy and care about (and therefore for) their heritage and culture. Your support will ensure more local children are able to engage with, enjoy and value their natural surroundings as well as helping the general public to feel positive about Seaton Jurassic and feel more informed and more enthusiastic towards the local natural heritage.

The Role

This is a substantial role in which you will be supporting the Learning and Participation Officer in building mutually beneficial, enduring relationships with our local school communities and providing learning opportunities that can be enjoyed by a broad range of people. This volunteer post is ideal for someone who is looking for a career in environmental education or community engagement and will provide the skills and experience that are essential to be successful in obtaining employment within this highly competitive sector.

The person successful in obtaining this post will become a key member of the Seaton Jurassic team, comprising 4 staff and around 25 regular volunteers, and will receive training in aspects of effective education and events delivery. In addition, during busy times, all members of the Seaton Jurassic team help with greeting visitors, answering enquiries and other general centre tasks.

What the role involves

The Learning and Participation (L&P hereafter) Volunteer will be involved in raising awareness of Seaton's natural heritage through events, education and interpretation.

Initially a support role, as you gain in confidence and ability you will be encouraged to take a more active role in managing children, leading groups and developing activities.

You will be involved with a wide range of tasks that contribute towards raising awareness of Seaton's natural heritage through education and interpretation such as:

- Organising and leading public events.
- Supporting formal educational activities with schools. This could include school talks, working on school grounds development projects, developing resources for schools, leading/assisting with field trips and nature walks, and visits to Seaton Jurassic.
- Supporting informal education e.g. events such as running an activity at the Natural Seaton Festival.
- Engaging with and developing informal education activities.
- Increasing our community involvement, particularly with our identified target audiences.
- Assisting with volunteer briefings, meetings and training sessions.
- Giving talks and demonstrations.
- Promoting the work of the centre and supporting the work of our partners.

It is important to note that this role is likely to involve working outdoors in all weather conditions.

The tasks vary depending on the type of event. Typical tasks include:

- Engaging and enthusing children and families, encouraging them to take an interest in their natural heritage and helping with any enquiries.
- Setting up the site (signage, gazebos, displays etc) and packing away at the end of the day.
- Meeting, greeting and directing members of the public.
- Dealing with visitor requests and enquiries (often by simply directing them to a member of staff).
- Leading or bringing up the rear on guided walks.
- Helping plan and deliver activities (often aimed at families).
- Wearing costumes or accompanying people in the costumes.
- Helping with event evaluation.
- Following the event risk assessment

There will usually be a full event briefing provided for individual events, detailing who is doing what and some background to the event/site.

In addition, you may be asked if you would like to help with events run by the wider partnership, ranging from large events with high staff involvement, small informal events, or simply being a presence at someone else's event in the area.

What will someone gain out of this role

There will be a large element of hands-on practice alongside experienced staff. The L&P Volunteer will receive training in a range of education skills and will be supported in the application of these skills to real projects.

The L&P Volunteer will gain a better understanding of the school curriculum and how it can be used to deliver wildlife objectives. They will learn about the importance of real engagement with school communities for empowerment and shared decision making, by working in partnership with teachers and with volunteers. They will develop an understanding of the principles of outreach education and experience the practical application of this in order to inspire and enable people to value and protect their local natural heritage into the future. Although there is a focus on schools visiting Seaton Jurassic Centre and centre based events there will be opportunities for fieldwork and wildlife walks.

In addition to learning about environmental education, we envision that you will have the opportunity to develop the following skills:

- Transferable skills, which can be used in other industries, such as IT, communication, marketing, Health and Safety and teamwork.
- Project management skills, specifically to manage time and resources to effectively plan and deliver the education objectives of the centre.
- Facilitation skills, allowing the volunteer to facilitate meaningful, inclusive meetings to enable effective decision making, develop community capacity for future participation and empower communities to set and fulfill their objectives.
- Ability to plan and manage community events confidently and effectively, from early planning stages through to running the event.
- Managing individuals and groups of people in an inclusive and supportive way. This will include techniques for recruiting and motivating volunteers, communication and management of goals and expectations, supporting teamwork, and understanding safety considerations.

Skills and abilities

The following skills and abilities are required for this role:

Skills & Attributes

- Good communication skills; written and verbal.
- Good interpersonal skills and ability to build relationships with a wide variety of people.
- Ability to work with a range of people from different age groups and backgrounds.
- Adaptable and flexible, with proven qualities as a strong team player, able to work closely with others, and ability to work on one's own initiative .
- Demonstrable ability to communicate to diverse audiences, individuals and groups.
- Good IT skills and familiarity with Microsoft Office applications.
- Ability to absorb and apply new information – open to learning and able to take instruction.
- Able to inspire groups, especially school children.

Knowledge and Motivation

- Knowledge and interest in wildlife and the natural environment.
- A genuine and demonstrable desire to work in nature conservation.
- Enthusiastic and passionate about yourself, your future and this placement.

In addition, it would be useful if the person applying for this role had any of the following experience or qualifications:

- Experience in working with children in an education context.
- Relevant vocational certificates, for example, First Aid.
- Background in organising and/or delivering public awareness events.

Where

The main base will be Seaton Jurassic in Seaton, but this role may involve visiting local schools and the five Natural Seaton Hotspots (Seaton Wetlands, Seaton Harbour, Seaton Hole, the Undercliffs and the Seaton beach).

When and how often

As arranged with the volunteer to take into account their other commitments and our need for help, but an average of 3-5 days across the full 7-day week for 6 -12 months, including bank holidays.

There may be some evening volunteering e.g. for events. Educational activities will take place all year round, but it is likely to be busiest in summer term when we envisage undertaking educational activities 2-5 days per week.

Please note that, although this is a voluntary position, the responsibilities that this position involves means that we would appreciate as much notice as possible if you are unable to attend a particular activity or event so we can arrange cover.

Supervision and training

Your supervisor will be the Learning and Participation Officer.

All volunteers will have an orientation/induction session. You will also receive training in diversity awareness and customer care and in the natural heritage of Seaton. During your introductory period, you will receive 'on the job' training in all aspects of your role.

There will also be a rolling programme of volunteer training available in:

- Health and Safety at Seaton Jurassic
- Safeguarding
- Disability awareness
- Marine environments
- The geology of the Jurassic Coast

We use a system of periodic, informal review with your supervisor to ensure you are properly equipped to achieve the purpose of the role, to identify any other training needs you may have, and to ensure that we are responding to your motivations and needs as much as we are able.

The most significant training you will receive will be from working alongside highly experienced and expert staff and volunteers whose brief is to ensure you gain as much from your experience as you possibly can.

Towards the end of your time with us, the Learning and Participation Officer will invite you to discuss CV and interview techniques to assist you in obtaining a future role in the desired sector.

Expenses and Equipment

Travel expenses

Reasonable travel expenses will be paid as agreed in advance and in line with the Seaton Jurassic expenses policy. We will reimburse travel expenses that were incurred wholly and exclusively for the purpose of volunteering for Seaton Jurassic. When public transport is available, Seaton Jurassic will reimburse tickets up to £10 a day. If the volunteer chooses to use a car instead, Seaton Jurassic will reimburse up to 25 miles at a rate of 20p a mile. Where there is no public transport available and the volunteer has no choice but to drive, Seaton Jurassic will reimburse up to 25 miles in a day at a rate of 40p a mile.

Equipment

You will have access to a shared computer/work station and any equipment needed to carry out the role and to develop and create your own resources will be provided.

We will provide you with appropriate identification for use whilst volunteering – i.e. a t-shirt and name badge.

Please note that no accommodation is available.

FULL TIME VOLUNTEER DESCRIPTION
Last updated: January 2019



How to apply

For an informal chat about the role please contact the Learning and Participation Officer, Zoe Hughes, on 01297 300390.

To apply, you will need to send your CV and covering letter to info@seatonjurassic.org, setting out why you wish to undertake the role and why you think you would be suitable for the position. If you feel it would present you better, please include an additional application in a form of your choosing such as a video/sound recording of no more than five minutes, PowerPoint presentation, website etc.

As this role involves both working with children and representing Seaton Jurassic externally, we must operate a robust recruitment process. It is important to ensure that we have the right volunteer in the role so that we are fulfilling our legal duty to safeguard yourself and the children we work with. As such, this role is subject to two character references and an enhanced DBS check. Although these references should not be family members, we can be flexible regarding who the actual referees are.

Short-listed candidates will be invited for an interview at the Centre.

Closing date: 18th February 2019, 9 a.m.

Interview date: 5th March 2019

Role start date: 1st April 2019