

Witney Woodland Volunteers - Health and Safety Guidelines

Witney Woodland Volunteers (WWV) insures its members and members of the public who may be affected by our activities. We are obliged to make you aware of the basic requirements before your first activity and are required to communicate our risk management policies and provide a safe working environment. To meet our legal Duty of Care we:

- Develop and refine safe working practices.
- Provide safe equipment to those members who do not provide their own.
- Survey the worksite prior to any activity taking place and then provide a briefing for the volunteers.
- Inform volunteers how to avoid hazards and reduce accidents to themselves and those around them.
- Record volunteers attending, activity undertaken and monitor H+S obligations (including the recording of incidents).

General Guidelines

1. Volunteers join and work with WWV at their own risk and are expected to take care of themselves and those around them.
2. If you have a mobile phone, keep it with you if possible.
3. Strong waterproof footwear, arm and leg coverings, hat and gloves should be worn. It's good to have layers (including a waterproof layer).
4. We work in public places. Wherever possible, signal the approach of pedestrians, cyclists and dogs and make sure that other volunteers are aware of those around them.
5. Use tools in a safe and appropriate way, and within your own visual space. Be aware that others may be close behind you.
6. Never overwork yourself. Take frequent breaks, and do not allow yourself to get too hot or cold. Always work within your own capability and be aware of manual handling techniques and your personal limits to avoid back strain.
7. Take care when handling litter objects. Use litter pickers wherever possible, and inform the activity leader of anything sharp, dangerous or suspicious.
8. Always use a litter picker and a 'Sharps Container' for the removal and disposal of needles, razor blades or other similar dangerous items. If unsure leave alone and seek advice.
9. Wherever possible ensure that care is taken when lifting heavy objects and do so in line with manual handling guidance
10. If you have any safety concerns, or sustain or witness any injury, report it to the activity leader.

The Activity Leader's role is to be aware of those present on the day and to carry contact numbers for each person in the event of a notifiable accident. The Activity Leader will organize, brief volunteers and manages the tasks to ensure that risks are minimised and hazards avoided. Therefore please:

- Listen to and act on the Activity Leader's briefing and safety instructions (which may include being asked not to take part in an activity).
- If you are unsure how to go about a task or use tools or equipment, seek advice from the Leader before attempting the task.
- Inform the Leader of any medical condition that may affect or be affected by the work, e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, injuries.
- Seek help from the First Aid appointee if you have an accident or injury, or see another Member if unable to seek help for yourselves.
- Advise the Leader if you witness the improper use of tools and equipment.

Potential Disease / Virus Risks

- Tetanus can be contracted through a wound. Ensure that you are up to date with your tetanus immunisation, and keep any broken skin covered.
- Weil's Disease can be contracted through water in rivers, ponds and ditches. Always ensure that you wash your hands thoroughly after working and keep cuts covered.
- Lyme Disease can be contracted from ticks. Try to keep skin covered, especially around ankles. Long sleeves, and gaiters (or trousers tucked into thick socks), are recommended.
- Blandford fly is becoming more of a problem. Precautions same as for ticks.

The Coronavirus (COVID – 19) pandemic has become of great concern since 2020 and in order to limit exposure from this virus, or any other subsequent dangerous virus, a variety of precautions are required depending on the severity of the pandemic at the time. This may include one or more of any of the following control measures:

 Cancelling all WWV activities - limit the location of activities to less public sites - work in small groups - social distancing - use of gloves and possibly face masks – the use and maintenance of own tools rather than WWV supplied tools - cleaning of WWV tools where necessary with antibacterial wash – the availability of antibacterial hand wash and the acceptance of first aid handling in an accident situation if required.

First Aid

The activity leader has access to First Aid kits and there is, normally, a qualified First Aider in attendance.

Risk Assessment

The activity leader will address specific health and safety issues, if any, on the day.

Please remember that Health and Safety is important to each and every one of us and we all have a responsibility to look after the welfare of others as well as ourselves.