

PRESS RELEASE

Volunteering opportunities open at Pensthorpe Natural Park

One of Norfolk's largest attractions is offering members of the public with an interest in wildlife and gardening an opportunity to develop their knowledge.

Pensthorpe Natural Park, near Fakenham, is opening up new volunteering opportunities in aviculture, horticulture, practical conservation and visitor interaction.

Volunteering opportunities offer a chance to enhance physical and mental wellbeing, learn new skills, improve social interaction, meet new people, develop CVs and open doors to further employment.

Duties include working with the wardens and gardeners to develop the presentation of the 700-acre reserve, running wildlife demonstrations for visitors and supporting the Pensthorpe Conservation Trust in protecting threatened species such as Turtle Doves, Red Squirrels and Corncrakes.

The voluntary roles can be performed on a fixed day each week or developed more flexibly to fit around the other commitments of each volunteer.

Deb Jordan, owner of Pensthorpe Natural Park, comments: "Volunteers are a vital and valuable part of our workforce. Our volunteers bring a raft of complementary and contrasting skills and experience which help our teams develop new ideas and grow.

"They have the power to inspire and excite our visitors about the natural world, often thanks to their own passion for nature and areas of special interest. We advocate any activity which opens dialogue between experts, enthusiasts and families in the hope that we can pass on the wonder of the outdoors.

"We welcome volunteers of all ages and backgrounds, and with different areas of experience and training. As well as helping you to develop new skills these opportunities will be well suited to those already studying for career paths in Horticulture, Arboriculture, Countryside Management and Conservation."

Allan Archer, from Wymondham, is a volunteer at Pensthorpe and credits voluntary work with enhancing his knowledge of wildlife and conservation, and improving his mental wellbeing: "Volunteering has absolutely transformed me and it's something I wished I'd done years ago! It's so rewarding – I can't emphasise enough how important it's been in changing my life.

"There is no greater feeling than seeing others get enthused about nature. Working somewhere like Pensthorpe, with plenty of biodiversity, means that wildlife sets the agenda for the day – what could be more thrilling than that?"

Volunteers are provided with training, an induction and a familiarisation trip along with regular catch-up meetings. Volunteering opportunities are also available for community and corporate groups.

For more detailed information about the roles on offer or to apply to become a volunteer at Pensthorpe Natural Park please contact Marie French on marie.french@pensthorpe.com. Descriptions for all the roles available can be found at pensthorpe.com.

Alternatively, anyone curious about volunteering at Pensthorpe can join a taster day on Friday 16 November 2018 from 9.30am until 4pm. There will be a chance to work with the Reserve Manager and wardens on scrub management in the Park's wetland and grassland habitats. The event is free to attend and lunch is provided. Spaces are limited so pre-booking is essential. To book or for more information call 01328 851465.

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Editors Notes

Pensthorpe Natural Park is on the A1067, one mile from Fakenham and just over 20 miles from the city of Norwich. Open all year (closed Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day):-

1st January – 28th February, 10am – 4pm

1st March – 24th July, 10am – 5pm

25th July – 5th September, 10am – 6pm

6th September – 31st December, 10am – 5pm

Entry prices: Adults £11.95, Seniors £10.95, Children £10.95, Under 3's free. Annual Members are free. Parking is free.

Online booking discount of £1 per person applies to tickets booked in advance.

**For more information, images or press passes please contact Rachael Shakespeare
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