LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS COUNTRYSIDE TRUST







Volunteer Handbook

Version 3.1
Date: Sep 2026.

Welcome to Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust

Dear volunteer,

Welcome to the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust - we're so pleased to have you as part of our team.

You have joined a fantastic group of people and we hope that you really enjoy volunteering with us.

Your time and energy are truly appreciated. When you have settled into your role, we would also love to hear your ideas, and how we can continue to support you so please let us know.

Whether you are planting trees, supporting our weekly walks and strength & balance sessions, or helping us with ecological surveys - we are forever in awe of our volunteers' enthusiasm, passion and commitment. Together, we're improving the lives and the environment in this fabulous area.



Thank you for choosing to volunteer with us.

Allistair Whyte, Chief Executive

Welcome to Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust is the official charity of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. Established in 2012, we are a small team of experienced staff, vitally supported by volunteers, delivering benefits to natural landscapes and people. Our work focusses on improving the natural environment, connecting communities and delivering health and wellbeing activities.



You can read more about our **2023 - 2030 strategy** here!

Our vision is for our landscapes and communities to be connected and thriving.

This handbook

This handbook is written to provide all our volunteers, regardless of their role, with the information they need about Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust, our work, people, policies and procedures. We hope this gives you good foundation for volunteering. This handbook will inevitably not contain absolutely everything – staff will provide you with further information throughout your time volunteering with us.

Image: Volunteers - Nature restoration and practical conservation work - Wild Strathfillan



Our work

Walk in the Park
Led principally by volunteers, Walk in the Park is our flagship, award winning programme of weekly health walks. The walks support the physical, mental and social wellbeing of participants. Walk in the Park delivers walks in 6 locations across the National Park, and summer evening walk programmes in two of those locations.

Strength and Balance
We also deliver volunteer-led Strength and Balance sessions in 7 locations. Our sessions support participants to grow their confidence and mobility which promotes physical, mental and social wellbeing across the lifespan.

In Step with Nature
Through our In Step with Nature project, currently affiliated with Walk in the Park, we encourage groups and individuals to notice and connect with nature in small but significant ways.

Wild Strathfillan
The Wild Strathfillan initiative aims to benefit the landscape and people of Strathfillan by working in partnership to deliver nature restoration in a mixed land-use setting, as well as supporting sustainable rural communities and economies. Wild Strathfillan is in the north of the National Park, home to the communities of Crianlarich, Tyndrum, Inverarnan, and in the neighbouring strath, Killin.

The Great Trossachs Forest
The Great Trossachs Forest is a 200-year partnership project that aims to restore heavily grazed hillsides and plantation forestry to a rich and diverse mosaic of habitats full of wildlife. The Great Trossachs Forest is a National Nature Reserve spanning from Callander to the shores of Loch Lomond.

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Landscape Connections
We are partnering with the National Park Authority and RSPB on this new initiative that is connecting three landscape areas in the National Park (including Wild Strathfillan and the Great Trossachs Forest) to restore the woodland mosaic on a large scale. Through this, we are leading work to ensure local communities can be involved in and benefit from this project.

Lomond Plant Nursery
We have a native plant nursery which is helping to supply nature restoration projects in the National Park. Located at the RSPB's Loch Lomond Reserve between the villages of Gartocharn and Drymen, the nursery is growing local provenance trees and rare plants, and provides a hub for nature engagement, learning opportunities and community.



Image: Board & Staff 2025 away day, Loch Lomond

Our people

We are a small team. Through your time volunteering with us you will have the chance to meet some of our team and partners. We are also supported by a brilliant Board of Trustees – who are all volunteers.

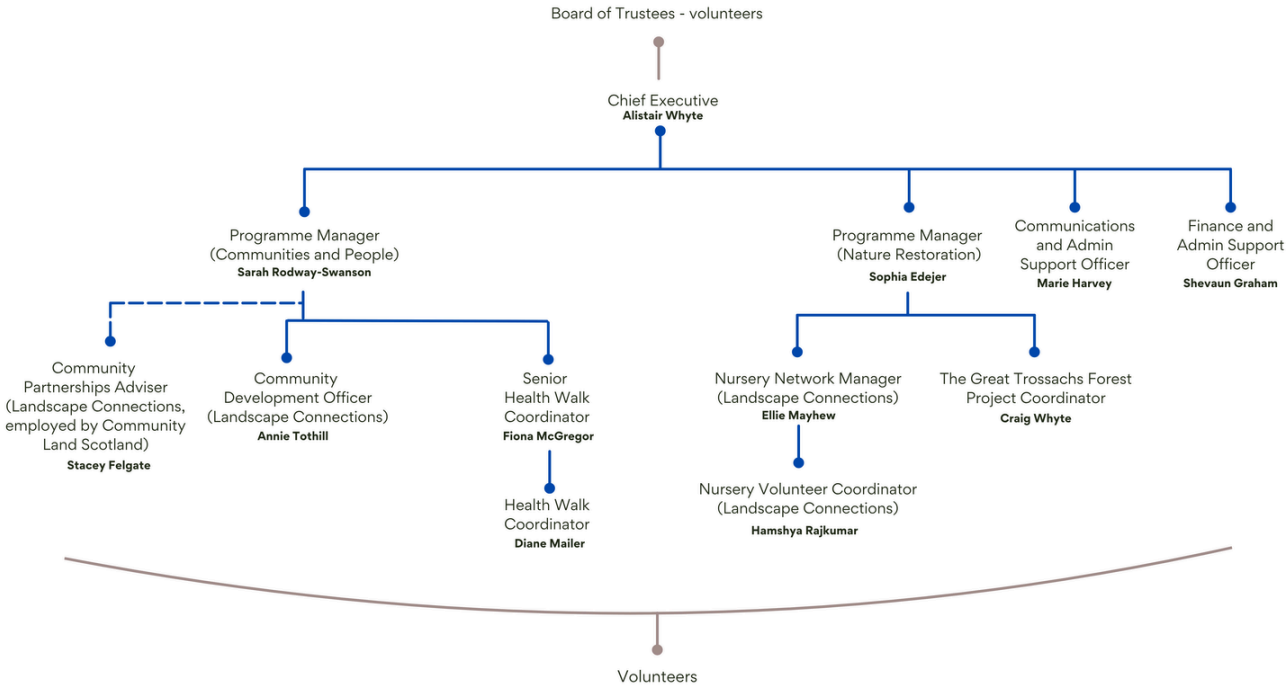


Image: Countryside Trust - Organogram 2026

Alistair Whyte – Chief Executive
Alistair is responsible for leading all the charity's operational, financial and project delivery as well as developing sustainable and strategic plans.

Sarah Rodway-Swanson - Programme Manager (Communities and People)
Sarah oversees all operations, development and project delivery of our community engagement and health & wellbeing related work.

Sophia Edejar - Programme Manager (Nature Restoration)
Sophia oversees all our operations, development and project delivery of our nature restoration work.

Our people (continued)

Fiona McGregor – Senior Health Walk Coordinator
Fiona leads project delivery of Walk in the Park, our Strength and Balance sessions and In Step with Nature. Fiona recruits, coordinates and supports over 70 volunteers, and will usually be the first person you speak to about volunteering for these projects.

Diane Mailer – Health Walk Coordinator
Diane supports project delivery and all our volunteers for Walk in the Park, our Strength and Balance sessions and In Step with Nature.

Ellie Mayhew – Nursery Manager
Ellie leads on the daily operations and plant propagation at our Lomond Nursery. She also works with a wider network of nurseries and partners as part of the Landscape Connections project.

Hamshya Rajkumar – Nursery Volunteer Coordinator
Hamshya coordinates our Lomond Nursery volunteer programme, planning and running events and providing ongoing support to our nursery volunteers.

Annie Tothill - Community Development Officer (Landscape Connections)
Annie is building relationships with communities to understand how Landscape Connections can support local capacity building, community development and connect people with nature.

Stacey Felgate - Community Partnerships Advisor (Landscape Connections)
Stacey is employed by Community Land Scotland but is based with us day-to-day. She is supporting the Landscape Connections partners to make sure local communities have a voice in how the initiative develops and that they benefit from the projects.

Craig Whyte - The Great Trossachs Forest Project Coordinator
Craig coordinates the project and partnership for The Great Trossachs Forest.

Marie Harvey - Communications and Admin Support Officer
Marie is responsible for our Trust's communications and administrative support, including issuing our newsletters which are a great opportunity to celebrate the work our volunteers support.

Shevaun Graham - Finance and Admin Support Officer
Shevaun is responsible for financial and administrative support for the Trust, including processing volunteering data and volunteer expense claims.

Meet and learn more about our Board volunteers and our team here.

Image: Staff team building - Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve

Our volunteers

We recognise volunteers as a significant and valued resource for the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust. Volunteers make a vital contribution to our work. With many of our volunteers themselves being residents of the communities we work with them, they help us build long-lasting and trusted relationships with communities across the National Park. We could not deliver our projects and have impact at the same scale without volunteers – whether that's by supporting us to reach more people who can benefit from our walking, wheeling and cycling activities offering expertise on our Board, helping us plant lots of seeds and trees, or many other ways!

"We could not deliver our projects and have impact at the same scale without volunteers"

Why volunteer?

As well as giving something to our charity, volunteering can be a chance for you to grow, connect and thrive too. Volunteering can offer you:

- An opportunity to try something new – volunteering can be a lot of fun!
- A chance to develop new skills and experience.
- Connection with your community, and an opportunity to meet like-minded people (and maybe some new friends!).
- Contribute to a cause you believe in, and to improve things for people and nature.
- A way to grow your confidence.
- A chance to improve your physical and mental health and wellbeing – our roles can support you to be more active, in a way that works for you.

Here's what some of our volunteers have shared about their own volunteering experiences with us:

"I have been a volunteer walk leader for 6 years, on a personal note, as an unpaid carer the walks provide me with some downtime, help with my mental health, aid me to enjoy learning about nature and share that knowledge, to record the walks by taking pictures. It also helps prevent the feeling of being socially isolated."
- ***Walk in the Park volunteer walk leader***



"The project also offers its volunteers and, for some things the participants too, opportunities for development and learning, such as CPR, outdoor first aid, learning about nature and about other local projects.."
- ***Walk in the Park volunteer walk leader***



Image: Walk Leader Training, Drymen

Your volunteer journey

You may apply for a specific role, join our team of volunteers who support us with a range of tasks and activities as they arise through the year, or you might have got in touch with a particular skill you'd like to share.

Application form ⇄ Conversation about the role

We'd love to have a short conversation with you before or after you've filled in our volunteer application form. This is an informal chat with the most appropriate member of staff or Board member and offers an opportunity for you and us to check the volunteering is right for you, answer any questions you might have, and discover if there's anything we can do to support you on your volunteering journey.

→ Preparing to start (e.g. training)

You will be supported to feel prepared to start to your role. All volunteers will be given a basic introduction to the Trust. Depending on the opportunity you've applied for and what works best for you, this introduction and preparation may be offered to you in different ways.

For some opportunities, you will also be required to undertake additional training before you start volunteering. Training requirements will have been detailed in the role description of the opportunity you applied for. You will also be given task specific training, support and guidance as required through the course of volunteering with us.

→ Volunteering

Now you can start volunteering! There will be a named member of the team or Board who will be your main point of contact throughout your time with us -they will organise your volunteering days, according to the requirements of the opportunity you've applied for.

→ Ongoing support and development

We want all our volunteers to feel supported, and that they have the chance to develop their skills and knowledge through their time with us. When we can, we'll offer you various ongoing training and development opportunities.

→ Stopping volunteering

We'd love if all our volunteers could stay with us forever, but we know that circumstances, motivations and priorities change. You are, of course, free to stop volunteering at any time – please just let us know. We love to hear what you're moving on to and would appreciate any feedback you can give us.





Volunteer rights and responsibilities

We want all our volunteers to feel welcome, satisfied, stimulated and supported. To make sure this happens, there are some things volunteers have the right to expect from us and some things we expect volunteers to take responsibility for.

Volunteer rights

- To be given an induction to Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust, your role and our policies and procedures.
- To have a clear understanding of what you are being asked to do.
- To be given training as necessary.
- To be free from discrimination.
- To be treated with dignity, respect and kindness.
- To have reasonable adjustments and support in place to allow you to volunteer to the best of your ability.
- To receive reimbursement of reasonable travel and other out-of-pocket expenses.
- To receive appropriate support and supervision.
- To have your effort and dedication recognised.
- To have opportunities to provide and receive feedback and for open two-way communication.
- To have feedback heard and have complaints addressed and resolved.
- To have your health, safety and welfare promoted when volunteering and to be covered by relevant insurances.
- To be provided with any equipment needed to undertake the tasks assigned to you as a volunteer.
- To be able to discontinue volunteering without needing to provide justification.

Volunteer rights and responsibilities

Volunteer responsibilities

- To read information given to you.
- To uphold all relevant policies and procedures, including safeguarding and equal opportunities.
- To complete your role to the best of your ability.
- To undertake necessary training before starting volunteering as required.
- To treat staff, other volunteers and members of the public you interact with through the course of volunteering with dignity, respect and kindness.
- To be honest and reliable, giving appropriate notice to a staff or Board member if you are unable to complete a task.
- To take reasonable care of your own health and safety.
- To follow directions provided to you by supervising staff, lead volunteers or partners.
- To take on board any feedback offered to you.
- Maintain and uphold the good name and reputation of our charity, whilst accepting that the ultimate responsibility for the affairs of the charity rests with our Director and Board of Trustees.
- To look after and return any equipment loaned to you.
- Work within the law – for instance, when handling donations or medical information.





Image (L to R): Volunteers at the Tyndrum shelterbelt; CPR training for Walk Leaders; Tree planting at community woodlands

Our policies and procedures

Our policies and procedures help to ensure that everyone is kept safe and protected and can thrive, when working or volunteering with us. Below, we provide a summary of these. They will be covered in more detail, and copies made available to you, as part of your induction.

Equality, diversity and inclusion.

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for both staff and volunteers. We believe no one should be treated less favourably than anyone else because of their gender, marital status, sexual orientation, social class, race, ethnic origin, religious belief, or disability. We actively support diversity and inclusion and ensure that all our volunteers are valued and treated with dignity and respect.

Health and Safety

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust has a responsibility for the health and safety of all staff, volunteers and participants. All volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a safe and responsible manner, and not to act in a way that may put themselves or others at risk.

All our activities are risk assessed, and we review these risk assessments regularly. Volunteers will be given access to the relevant risk assessments and we encourage you to read and be familiar with content of these documents. If you witness, or a part of, an accident, near hit or you discover a new hazard as part of the activities and tasks you're involved with, please notify a relevant member of staff as soon as possible.

Insurance

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust provides insurance to cover you in your voluntary duties. The Trust is not insured against any liability or claim that arises from a volunteer acting outside the confines of their voluntary role. Please ensure you are abiding by the remit laid out in your role description or within the scope of activity detailed by a supervising staff/Board member or lead volunteer and abide by all relevant policies and procedures.





Image (L to R): Audio moths; signing loan agreements; volunteer Walk Leader greeting a participant (Drymen)

Our policies and procedures

Expenses

Volunteers are entitled to claim reasonable travel expenses pre-approved by a staff or Board member, as laid out in our Expenses Policy. You will be given an Expenses Claim Form which should be completed with receipts or details of mileage enclosed. You may be entitled to claim other out-of-pocket expenses incurred by volunteering with us, as agreed and approved by the relevant staff or Board member. Expenses are paid by bank transfer.

Equipment loans

Some volunteers may book equipment to support the tasks they're undertaking (for example, trail cameras). Volunteers are expected to keep equipment in good, useable condition. If you loan equipment, you will be asked to sign a loan agreement.

Cash handling

Some volunteers may collect cash donations on our behalf. Sealed collection tins will be used at all times, and kept secured in a locked cupboard when not in use. If you will be handling cash as a volunteer, further guidelines will be provided to you.

Safeguarding

Our staff and volunteers may work with vulnerable adults. If a volunteer or staff member is in regular or one-to-one contact, a Disclosure Scotland check (PVG) is required. In all other cases, staff and volunteers should be accompanied or be part of a group. If you are ever worried that someone is being mistreated or abused, you should share your concerns with a staff or Board member. Your concerns will be treated confidentially, and with utmost sensitivity. Alistair Whyte, Chief Executive, is the Trust's Designated Safeguarding Lead.





Image (L to R): Volunteer Walk Leader with participant ; Walk Leader receiving recognition; volunteer Health Walk Leader away day (Brig o'Turk)

Our policies and procedures

Confidentiality

Some volunteers may become aware of sensitive information, including medical information, about the people we support through our activities. Volunteers should never share sensitive information casually in conversation or with anyone outside of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust. We ask volunteers to use their discretion as to whether this information is relevant to be disclosed to a member of staff or the Board on a need-to-know basis, with the participants permission.

Volunteers are also required to follow data protection legislation, as laid out in our GDPR Policy.

Feedback

As laid out in the volunteer rights and responsibilities above, we want to encourage productive two-way feedback. We encourage you to informally discuss any matter you wish to raise, including how we could improve your volunteer experience, with a relevant member of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust staff or Board. We also endeavour to provide you with feedback that helps you develop and thrive as a volunteer.

Recognition

There are various ways that we recognise the contribution volunteers make, including certificates for hours completed and hosting volunteer days for our volunteers to come together. We can also offer a reference for future volunteering, employment or education opportunities you apply for. We will be happy to provide a volunteering reference:

- For volunteers who have regularly (e.g. at weekly/fortnightly sessions) volunteered for 6+ months and completed their role to satisfaction

- Or who have contributed 20+ hours to ad hoc activities.



Images: Countryside Trust team cross over the 2025 'Glasgow Kiltwalk' finish line

Our policies and procedures

Raising concerns

If you have concerns or feel dissatisfied with any matter relating to volunteering with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust, you deserve to have an effective means by which such a concern can be aired and, where appropriate, resolved. If you feel able, you should first raise the matter with the named member of staff team or Board who is your main point of contact. If you do not feel the concern is sufficiently addressed, you can then escalate to a Programme Manager or the Trust Director as appropriate. If you still believe the concern has not been sufficiently addressed, you may contact the Chair of the Board.

Useful information

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust is the official charity of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park. We work closely with, are supported by, but are separate from the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority.



We are supported by a range of charitable trusts, grants and funds every year that allow us to continue delivering our projects.

We fundraise through funding applications, and by collection donations and through fundraising events like the **Glasgow Kiltwalk**.

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Countryside Trust – we're really excited to have you join us.



A place for your Notes:

Get in touch, we'd love to hear from you!

Online: www.trustinthepark.org

Email: info@trustinthepark.org

Call: 07701 256296 (Monday to Friday)

Postal enquiries to:

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