



Kent

HIGH WEALD

protect / explore / enjoy

Volunteer Handbook

Kent High Weald
Partnership





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Welcome

Hello and a warm welcome from all of us at Kent High Weald Partnership. Thank you for choosing to volunteer – your time and energy make a real difference for local wildlife and our communities. Whether you come most weeks or drop in when you can, you'll be part of a friendly, practical team caring for woodlands, meadows and water habitats. We'll give clear briefings, the right tools and a safe, supportive space to learn at your pace. Tell us what you enjoy, any access needs and ideas – you'll help shape what we do together.

The KHWP team



Vikki – Partnership Officer, **Harry** – Woodland Officer, **Saul** – Education Officer, **Cally** – Partnership Manager, **Kelly** – Partnership Officer, **Bex** – Partnership Officer and **Scott** – Woodland Officer

The background of the page is a watercolor illustration of a forest. It features several trees with green and yellow foliage, and some plants with long, pointed leaves in the foreground. The overall style is soft and artistic.

About KHWP

Founded in 1991, Kent High Weald Partnership is a not-for-profit that connects people with nature through conservation, outdoor learning and volunteering. We manage local greenspaces and wildlife habitats, run Forest School, social-prescribing and community-health projects, and support volunteers to care for nature across Tunbridge Wells and the High Weald.

Our Mission

Kent High Weald Partnership aims to connect people and nature through conservation, education, and wellbeing. Through our work we want to support the development of resilient communities and ecosystems that mean people and wildlife can thrive together.

Our Values

Initiative & Flexibility

We are resourceful, dynamic and adaptable

Inclusive & Accessible

We aim to include everyone and promote access for all

Compassion & Respect

We care about people and nature, and respect for our natural environment

Connection & Partnership

Everything is connected and we must work in collaboration to achieve our mission



Our Aims

The current aims of the Kent High Weald Partnership are to:



Recognise and promote the value of volunteering, improve accessibility to volunteering opportunities and increase the number of people taking part in volunteering across all communities.



Enhance, protect and restore wildlife & biodiversity through conservation tasks and other activities that raise awareness and encourage understanding of the local environment, High Weald National Landscape and wider area and responsibility for the natural world.



Develop opportunities for learning and experiences that inspire and engage all parts of the community.



Encourage and support people to improve their physical and mental wellbeing through access to the outdoors, nature-based activities and interventions that enhance lives and nature.



Contribute, with meaningful outcomes, to the strategic objectives of our key partners: Kent County Council; Tunbridge Wells Borough Council; and the High Weald National Landscape Partnership.



Develop community partnerships and networks that improve our ability to deliver our aims using a collaborative approach.



Review the way we work to build resilience and create a sustainable model.



Volunteer spring walk 2025

[Click to read our annual report on our website detailing what we've achieved in the past year.](#)

Volunteering with KHWP

What you can expect from us

- Clear briefings, tool talks and safety support every session; PPE and tools provided
- A friendly welcome and briefing before you get stuck in
- Inclusive, respectful spaces where everyone is treated with dignity
- Training and guidance relevant to tasks; chances to learn at your pace
- Two-way communication: we listen and act on feedback; simple routes to raise concerns
- We keep things simple. If you're ever unsure, ask the task leader – we'd rather pause and check than worry about mistakes
- Data care: we handle your information lawfully and keep it secure (see GDPR summary)
- Tea, coffee & biscuits are provided

Work programme

The monthly work programme is released at the end of every month – detailing the following months' tasks, including location and meeting point.

Cancellations

Cancellations (e.g. high winds, heat): check your emails the day before and morning of.

What we ask of you

- Be safe: follow briefings and use PPE; tell us if something feels unsafe. Repeated failure to wear PPE such as gloves or hard hats, or follow tool-use guidance may result in dismissal.
- Do what you're comfortable with – you can say no to any task
- Be respectful and kind to staff, volunteers and the public; zero tolerance for harassment or discrimination
- If you encounter conflict with a member of the public: stay calm and polite; don't argue or escalate; step back and refer to the task leader. If threatened or unsafe, call 999
- Data & photos: ask permission before taking identifiable photos of people; don't share contact details without consent; photo use needs consent
- Represent KHWP positively in person and online
- Use KHWP equipment only as authorised
- Look after equipment and sites; return any kit you borrow before you leave
- Attendance is flexible: come when you can; no need to notify us if you can't make it. You're welcome whether you join weekly or a few times a year
- Substances: no alcohol or drugs on tasks; tell the task leader if medication may affect safety

What to bring & wear

Sturdy footwear e.g. boots

Clothes you don't mind getting dirty

Waterproof jacket (just in case)

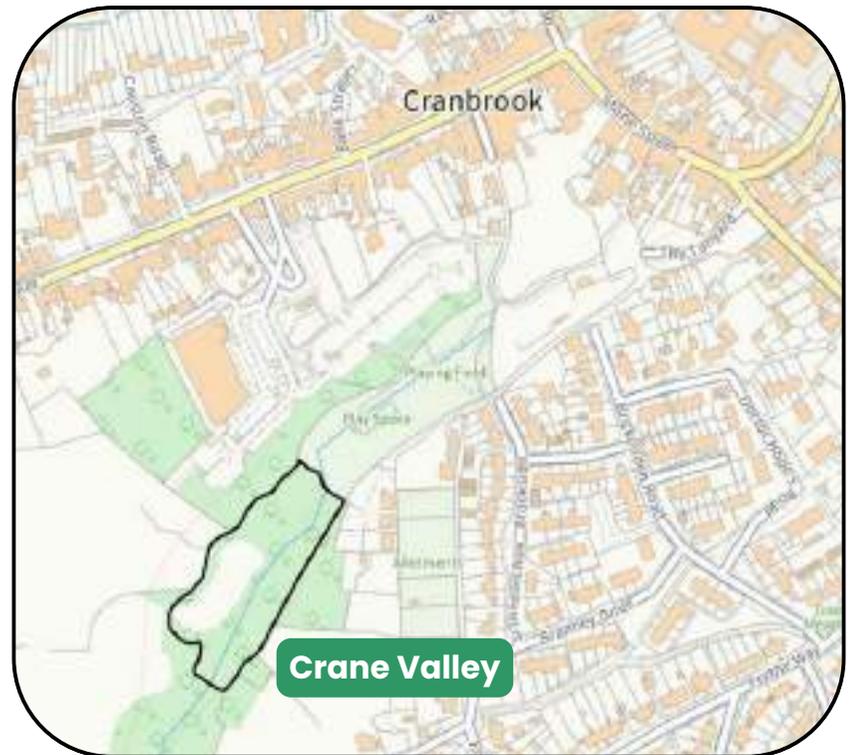
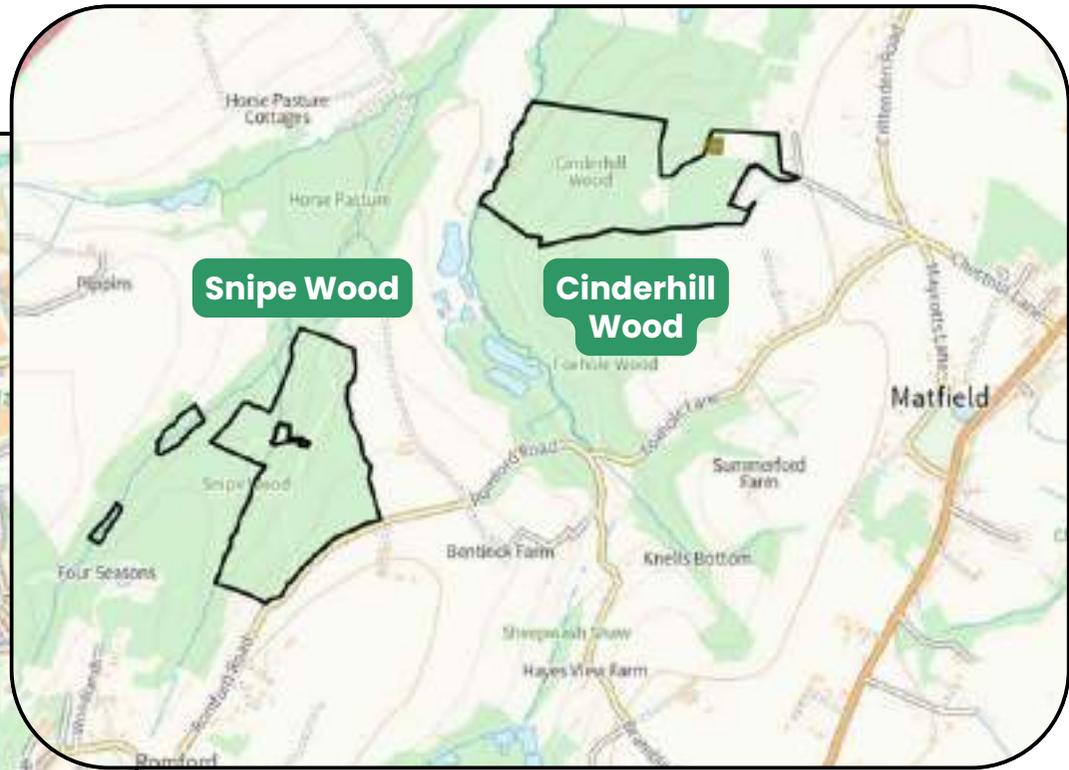
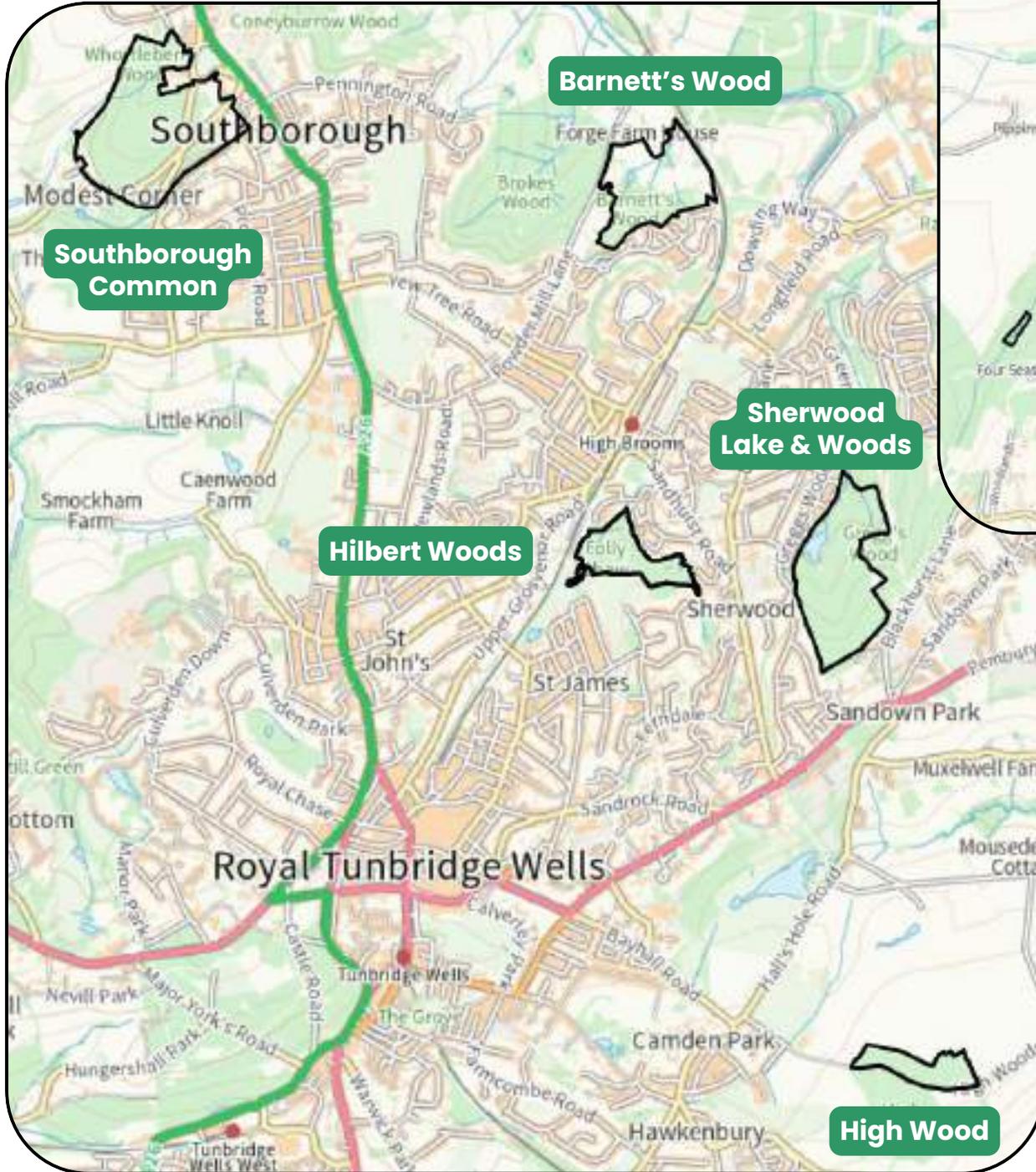
Drinking water & packed lunch

Mobile phone



Sherwood Lake & Woods

KHWP Managed Sites



Safety & wellbeing

Our approach

We use risk assessments, dynamic risk checks on the day, tool talks, and appropriate PPE.

Please tell us about any injuries, near-misses or hazards so we can learn and improve.

Personal safety basics

- Wear PPE as briefed; no lone use of power tools unless authorised
- Lift with care; ask for help with heavy or awkward loads
- Keep tool blades sheathed when moving; maintain safe working distances
- Wash/sanitise hands before eating; check for ticks after sessions
- Stop if you feel unwell, in pain, or unsure – speak to your task leader
- Stay hydrated; take extra breaks in hot weather and rest in shade. In cold weather wear warm layers, keep dry, and take warm-up breaks
- Hygiene: cover cuts/broken skin; avoid contact with water if you have open wounds

Tools, kit & PPE

We provide tools and PPE. Please don't bring your own tools. Tell us about defects or damage immediately. Only trained volunteers may use powered equipment.

You are welcome to bring your own gloves if you prefer. We don't provide footwear.

Accidents & incidents

- In an emergency: call 999, then inform the task leader
- First aid: all KHWP staff are first aid trained with first aid kits on-hand during tasks
- AED (defibrillator): carried in the KHWP vehicle with the first-aid supplies
- Report: all accidents, injuries and near-misses to the task leader the same day



Policies

Safeguarding

KHWP follows KCC safeguarding policies for children and for adults with care and support needs. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. If you're worried about someone's safety, act immediately.

Good practice for volunteers (children & adults)

To keep everyone safe and protect yourself, please follow these basics:

No unsupervised 1-to-1 with under-18s. Avoid being alone with a child; stay within sight or hearing of others.

Maintain professional boundaries. No private messaging with under-18s; keep communications appropriate and through KHWP channels.

Physical contact: only what's necessary for safety, and explain what you're doing.

Photos/videos: get consent before taking identifiable photos; follow KHWP's data and photo rules.

How to report a concern - children

- Contact Social Services
 - Email social.services@kent.gov.uk
 - Phone: 03000 41 41 41

How to report a concern - adults with care and support needs

- Contact KCC Adult Social Services
 - Email: social.services@kent.gov.uk
 - Phone: 03000 41 61 61

The Kent Code

As KHWP falls under Kent County Council, volunteers are expected to uphold The Kent Code standards of conduct.

In short: act with honesty and integrity; treat people with dignity and respect; maintain political neutrality while volunteering; protect confidential information and personal data; declare conflicts of interest; follow guidance on gifts and hospitality; use KCC resources responsibly; and report concerns (whistleblowing) and health & safety issues promptly.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)

KHWP commits to challenging discrimination; creating inclusive, accessible services and workplaces; listening to diverse and under-represented voices; investigating reported discrimination quickly and acting on findings; and completing Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) on new or revised services, policies and projects. Volunteers are expected to uphold these standards at all times.

At KHWP, we welcome everyone, do not tolerate discrimination, harassment or bullying, and will make reasonable adjustments to support access where possible.

Data protection (UK GDPR)

We only collect the minimum personal information needed to run volunteering safely (for example: contact and emergency details, and relevant health information, if you disclose this). We keep it secure, use it only for volunteering, and retain it only as long as necessary.

Your rights: you can ask to see, correct, or delete your data (where applicable), or raise a concern.

Raising concerns (whistleblowing)

If you're worried about wrongdoing, unsafe practice, a breach of The Kent Code or anything that puts people, wildlife or KHWP at risk, please speak up.

You will be listened to and protected from unfair treatment for speaking up in good faith.

1. If there is immediate danger, call 999. When safe, inform the task leader.
2. Note the facts. Record who/what/when/where and keep any evidence.
Don't investigate yourself.
3. Tell someone inside KHWP. Speak to the task leader on the day, or contact KHWP management (see Contact Us for emails)
4. Or report directly to KCC (confidentially or anonymously):
 - a. Whistleblowing hotline: 03000 414 500
 - b. Internal Audit: internal.audit@kent.gov.uk
5. Say if you want to remain anonymous. We'll keep your identity confidential where possible and share details with those who need to know.
6. We / KCC assess and act. Your concern will be reviewed and the next steps decided.
7. You'll get an acknowledgement and proportionate update. KCC normally acknowledges within 10 working days and will explain how the concern will be handled.
8. No retaliation. If you feel you're being treated unfairly for speaking up, tell KHWP management or use KCC's whistleblowing routes immediately.

Insurance

Volunteers are covered by KCC's public liability and (where applicable) personal accident insurance during approved activities, provided guidance is followed. Personal vehicles are not covered.

Volunteer Agreement (not-contractual)

This agreement sets out mutual expectations and does not create an employment relationship.

KHWP will: provide welcoming, safe volunteering with clear guidance, training as needed, supervision, and insurance for approved activities.

Volunteers will: follow guidance and safety measures, treat people and wildlife with respect, protect confidential information, and give reasonable notice if they can't attend planned sessions.

We both agree to raise and resolve problems promptly and respectfully.

Contact us

General enquiries:

cmp@khwp.org.uk

Corporate volunteering:

Harry.Reece@kent.gov.uk

Work experience:

Scott.Hudson@kent.gov.uk

KHWP management:

Cally.Fiddimore@kent.gov.uk

For enquiries concerning specific sites

Calverley Grounds, Crane Valley,
Hilbert Community Allotment

Rebecca.Messenger@kent.gov.uk

Cinderhill Wood, High Wood,
Sherwood Lake & Woods, Snipe
Wood

Harry.Reece@kent.gov.uk

Barnett's Wood, Dunorlan Park,
Hilbert Wood, Southborough
Common, St John's Meadow

Scott.Hudson@kent.gov.uk

Our Office

Kent High Weald Partnership,
Conservation Centre, Old Walled
Garden,
Bedgebury Pinetum,
Bedgebury Road,
Goudhurst,
Cranbrook,
Kent,
TN17 2SJ

Our Website

www.khwp.org.uk

Our Socials



[KHWP Facebook](#)



[KHWP Instagram](#)