

Volunteer Looe Island Wardens' Recruitment Pack



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Photo: Paul Lightfoot

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Introduction

From Callum Deveney, Director of Nature Recovery

Thank you for your interest in Cornwall Wildlife Trust. There has never been a more exciting time to join us.

Cornwall Wildlife Trust is working towards a wilder future for Cornwall, one that requires ambitious action across land and sea – strengthening our network of nature reserves, supporting farmers and fishers to expand nature-friendly practices elsewhere, influencing those in power whose decisions impact our environment, and inspiring people right across Cornwall to take action for nature's recovery.

Looe Island is one of our Destination nature reserves. It is carefully managed by residential wardens who permanently live on the island. During the summer months members of the public can visit the island on organised boat day trips and stay in our ecofriendly Smuggler's Cottage or the Island bell tent. In 2026 we will also be offering unique tours and experiences for visitors to be part of.

This exciting opportunity is for a joint application from two people who may be related, friends or a couple. Or from an individual who is willing to share accommodation in our basically renovated Island House, with separate bedrooms.

If this sounds like you and you are interested in helping to inspire others about Cornwall's wildlife and wild places and to help us to protect this special nature reserve then we'd love to hear from you!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Callum'.

Callum Deveney, Director of Nature Recovery
Cornwall Wildlife Trust



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About the role

We are looking for two people who are enthusiastic, adaptable, and motivated by the opportunity to live and work somewhere truly special. This role will suit individuals (this can be a joint application) who are curious about the natural world, enjoy working with people, and are happy to get stuck in with a range of practical tasks. The ideal applicants will be:

- Passionate about wildlife, conservation, and protecting special places
- Friendly, confident, and comfortable engaging with visitors of all ages and backgrounds
- Calm, approachable, and able to represent Cornwall Wildlife Trust positively
- Practical and hands-on, with a willingness to learn new skills
- Physically capable of outdoor work in all weathers
- Organised, responsible, and able to manage tasks independently
- Resilient and adaptable, able to cope with simple living conditions and island life
- Considerate, trustworthy, and able to live and work closely with others
- Enjoy meeting and engaging with the public when they are guests the Island
- Be an ambassador to CWT when out in the wider community

This role is not about having prior experience, but about having the right attitude, commitment, and enthusiasm. We are particularly keen to hear from people looking to gain experience, build confidence, and develop skills that will support future careers in conservation, education, tourism, or the outdoor sector.



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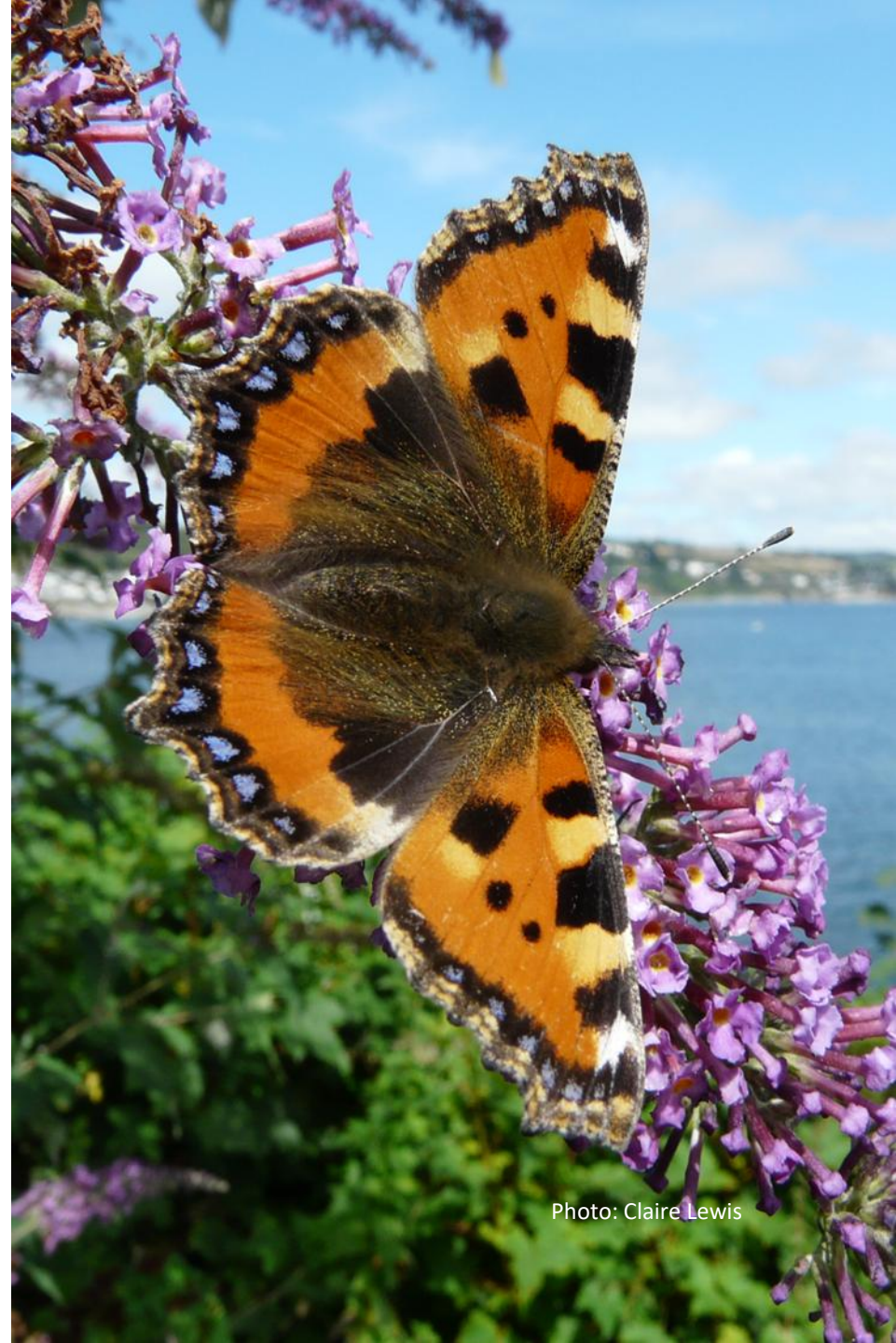


Photo: Claire Lewis

Main Responsibilities

As a volunteer, the information below is given for clarity and reflects the expectations within the volunteer role.

- To manage boat trips and the island's visitors
- Setting up, running and supporting our events programme
- Engaging with visitors, promoting CWT membership and selling Island merchandise from the small welcome area
- Help to look after the small flock of sheep and vegetable gardens/greenhouses
- Record/monitor wildlife and any disturbance
- To patrol the island and engage with people who land without permission to improve their awareness of the nature reserve
- Help with maintenance of the island's infrastructure and resources.
- Supporting the residential wardens with other duties needed to ensure the island is carefully managed



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Photo: Claire Lewis

Photo: Scott Marsden

The role in detail

The role is varied, with tasks changing day to day and hour to hour depending on tides, sea conditions, visitor demand and scheduled trips or events. At the start of your stay, you will receive a full induction and have the opportunity to shadow the wardens to learn the range of tasks involved.

A key part of the role involves welcoming and assisting visitors arriving on public boat trips. Depending on tides and demand, visitors may arrive from around 8am, with the last public boats leaving just before dusk. Public trips typically last around two hours, although special events may mean visitors stay longer. Volunteers help prepare for arrivals, welcome guests, manage departures, and ensure facilities are cleaned and hygiene standards maintained. On some days, volunteers, staff or contractors may be on the island all day or overnight, and you may be asked to assist with these visits.

Holiday accommodation provides vital income, so volunteers also help ensure guests are welcomed and that accommodation is clean, prepared and ready for arrivals.

While the island is open to the public, volunteers meet and greet visitors on the main beach or at the jetty, explain what to expect during their visit, collect landing fees, answer questions about wildlife, island life and its management, and provide information about Cornwall Wildlife Trust. You may direct visitors to points of interest, help spot wildlife, and manage the safe boarding and departure of boats.



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The role in detail continued ...

From 2026, new wildlife and heritage experiences will be offered, including bird and seal watching, historical tours and other events. Volunteers may assist with setting up, serving refreshments and supporting delivery. There may also be opportunities to lead occasional private guided walks for holiday guests; training will be provided.

Volunteers are expected at all times to monitor the island's shoreline and engage appropriately with people who have landed without permission.

You will also assist with practical tasks including exterior building works to maintain Island House (pictured) over the summer and, following training, help with wildlife monitoring and recording. This may include photographing and recording seals, undertaking weekly butterfly transects, monitoring wildlife disturbance, and assisting with breeding bird surveys. Volunteers may also develop their own projects, potentially supported by local wildlife groups.

Additional responsibilities include basic daily checks of a small flock of sheep, helping care for vegetable plots and greenhouses (watering and harvesting), and keeping your accommodation and all public spaces clean and tidy.

Island life is inherently unpredictable, so volunteers should be flexible, willing to help with tasks as they arise (including routine or repetitive work), respectful of wildlife and wild places, and comfortable engaging with visitors.



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Photo: Scott Marsden

Likely questions ...

What's in it for you?

You get to volunteer for a fantastic charity; one that really helps local wildlife, people and the environment. This role will give you the opportunity to gain valuable conservation work experience.

It offers the chance to learn what is involved in the daily running and wider management of an island nature reserve. There's opportunity to develop communication skills with members of the public. You will have the chance to learn about the island's main wildlife highlights such as Gulls, Cormorants, Oystercatchers and Seals.

This role enables you to become fully immersed in living offshore and surrounded by wildlife. Island life will teach you to carefully manage resources and to be well organised and self-sufficient.

Above all you will be able to make a genuine contribution to wildlife conservation and awareness raising of this amazing nature reserve with the public.

Do I need any special skills or experience?

No specialist skills are required for most volunteering tasks, and training will be provided where needed (for example, First Aid).

Wildlife identification skills, both marine and terrestrial are helpful, but more important is the ability to recognise when something is unusual and to know how and where to seek advice. Volunteers are asked to keep their own wildlife records and to encourage visitors to submit sightings to the appropriate organisations.

Key attributes include a willingness to help with all tasks, including routine or mundane jobs, respect for wildlife and wild places, and confidence in engaging with members of the public. As a representative of Cornwall Wildlife Trust, you will also need to be reliable and responsible.



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Photo: Scott Marsden

Is there any charge to living and volunteering on the island?

Access to the island is by designated small boat, currently operated by Looe Sea Safari. We cover the cost of your initial and final crossings, along with one return trip per week (weather permitting) for re-provisioning. A daily food allowance will be provided, and reasonable travel expenses to Looe can be discussed.

Accommodation is provided free of charge in Island House, which includes cooking facilities and use of a BBQ. You will need to bring your own personal welfare items. Where available, surplus produce from the island's garden may be available. Training will be provided as appropriate, and any pre-agreed expenses will be reimbursed where necessary.

Where will I be staying?

You will stay in Island House, which has a basic kitchen, lounge, bathroom and two bedrooms, with excellent sea views.

You will need to be well organised and bring sufficient long-life food supplies. Re-provisioning trips to the mainland must be carefully planned and are dependent on tides, sea conditions, weather and boat availability.

Island life requires careful use of resources. There is no mains water and a compost toilet is used, so water and energy conservation are essential. A washing machine is available at Jetty Cottage, but use is limited. High-demand electrical items should not be brought.

WiFi is available at Jetty Cottage; elsewhere you will need to rely on your own 4G.

You are expected to keep the accommodation clean and safe and report any breakages. Bedding is provided, but you may bring your own if preferred. All buildings are non-smoking and pets are not permitted.



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Photo: Scott Marsden

How to apply

This volunteer role offers a truly unique and immersive work experience that is rarely available elsewhere. Living and working on a private island nature reserve provides an exceptional opportunity to gain practical conservation experience, develop public engagement and visitor management skills, and contribute meaningfully to the protection of wildlife and wild places.

While this position is unpaid, it is ideal as a summer placement, interim role, or career-building opportunity for those looking to strengthen their CV and gain first-hand experience within the conservation, environmental education, ecotourism, or outdoor sectors. Previous volunteers have found the skills, confidence, and experience gained invaluable in progressing to paid roles and further opportunities.

For the right people, this role offers not just experience, but the chance to be part of something special, living simply, working closely with nature, and playing an active role in caring for one of Cornwall's most distinctive wildlife sites.

If you are interested in applying, please send a CV and cover letter to recruitment@cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk

The closing date for applications is midnight on **Sunday 15th March 2026**

Initial Interviews will take place on-line on the **24th & 25th March 2026** followed by a face-to-face interview at either our HQ at Allet, or subject to tide times on Looe Island.

The start date for this opportunity will be the 6th May 2026 and will end on the 2 October 2026.

If you would like any additional information or an informal discussion, please call Jon Ross (Island Warden) on 07974 293495



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Photo: Claire Lewis

A seagull with white plumage and black wings stands on a grey rock covered in yellow lichen and small pink flowers. The background shows a blurred view of the sea.

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Photo: Claire Lewis