

Youth and Volunteer Conservation Lead

Accountable to: Head of Education and Experience
Responsible for: Young people, youth groups, apprentices and volunteers
Hours: 32 hours/week, Tuesday-Friday 8.30am-4.30pm

Role Summary:

With a focus on young people, adults and conservation management, this role is both diverse and dynamic as it crosses over many of our delivery projects onsite. As an adaptable individual who has a passion and love for nature at your core, you will be responsible for planning and delivering not just practical projects onsite, but also for engaging our community with a love for our planet and natural landscape.

Background:

As England's first community-owned farm, Fordhall has always been a dynamic and innovative organisation. We are forward thinking, environmentally conscious and with over 8,000 community shareholders, we are definitely community-focussed. Whilst the organic farmland is leased to a tenant farmer (Ben Hollins), as a community body and landlord, we utilise the same land for the benefit of our community. Working collaboratively and holistically is at our core.

In 2025 Fordhall Farm won the Gold Fork Award for Sustainability and a critical part of this was the holistic approach we have to farm management, and the opportunities we offer our local community.

We believe that by restoring connections between hearts, minds and the soil, we will encourage and create meaningful change which helps to build health and resilience within people and planet. We run many projects at Fordhall that support our mission and this role sits at the core of many of these. These include a youth project working with vulnerable young people, volunteer opportunities, community events, free community access to the farm through managed farm trails, and a care farm, which supports adults with learning disabilities.

This is a wide-reaching role, whose purpose is to ensure our conservation work onsite is completed to a high standard whilst nurturing people on the journey with us.

For more background on how Fordhall became community-owned, or for additional information on the many projects we run at Fordhall, please see www.fordhallfarm.com

Objective of the role

1. To lead, plan and evolve our conservation volunteer and apprentice programme. Through the delivery of conservation and site maintenance activities Thursdays, Fridays and on periodic Volunteer weekends. You will inspire and enthuse those you work with, whilst adding value to the site through the work completed. By the nature of the experiences you offer, you will engage hearts and minds, encouraging those involved to progress through the Fordhall engagement journey.
2. To support young, vulnerable people at risk from being excluded from school through our Youth Project, to re-engage with education and support them into the workplace/further education by inspiring them and building their self-belief using the natural environment at Fordhall Farm.

3. To support the delivery of our educational and events programme for school-aged children, helping to create memorable, enjoyable and informative experiences within nature. You will support planned activities, evaluate their success and support our reputation as a base for high quality residential, day visits and events.

Key results expected:

Site Conservation

- Take a lead on the site Conservation Plan, working with tenant farmer and the General Manager to develop and deliver plans which support both nature and the farm enterprise to thrive as a partnership.
- Plan, deliver and complete conservation tasks onsite whilst leading and training volunteers, young people, youth groups or corporate team groups as appropriate.
- To provide opportunities for visiting members of the public to engage with nature and wildlife onsite, encouraging them to better understand its importance through fun and engaging activities led by you and others within the team, such as organising a periodic Bioblitz
- To ensure all conservation-based interpretation panels are accurate and reflect the work and values integrated into activities onsite.
- To survey impact of your work using ecological markers such as water testing, soil testing and worm surveys.
- Maintain safe access and clear direction for families/visitors to our farm trails.
- To support and help maintain site maintenance for the Fordhall Community Land Initiatives work and delivery spaces.

Volunteers

- To develop, expand and nurture a regular group of engaged weekday volunteers on Farm Fridays.
- To plan, organise and deliver 6 Volunteer Weekends per year ensuring an enjoyable, valuable and productive experience that supports our organisational values through conservation and practical onsite tasks.
- Lead volunteers to support at least four annual weekend farm events including and not exclusive to Spring event, Supporters BBQ, Halloween, AGM.
- Volunteers feel supported and encouraged in their journey, especially those referred through social prescribing or NEETs.
- Evidenced transition of NEETs into further education or employment.
- Evidenced transition of volunteers moving along the Fordhall journey as they become more engaged with the site and our values.

Youth Project

- Young people you work with each achieve 4 or more AQA certificates per academic year
- Improved confidence, self-belief and independence, which leads to progression within school or post education
- Improved practical skills and independence
- To instill an understanding of health, cooking and good food
- Create an appreciation for nature and all living things through fun and engaging activities.

- Support young people to reengage with school and home by providing a safe, inclusive environment that young people can discuss issues affecting them free from judgement and reproach.
- To ensure all young people are working in a safe manner and in a safe working environment.
- Other targets as set by our funders or schools we work with.

Youth Groups and corporate groups

- Develop understanding and engagement with conservation principles and approaches through the delivery of focused yet fun and engaging, practical sessions
- Apprentices are supported to achieve their Level 2 qualification.
- Young people not in employment, education or training (NEETs) gain experience for their CV, improve their self-confidence and develop their love for nature and outdoors, all of which supports them into their journey of employment.
- High quality reputation and positive feedback from our school educational sessions is maintained.
- Income generated from corporate/teambuilding groups, with positive feedback and repeat bookings.

Further information: www.fordhallfarm.com

To read more on our alternative curriculum provision through our Youth Project [click here](#)

To read more on our volunteer offer [click here](#)

To read more on Fordhall and our values [click here](#)

Contractual notes:

Pay: starting £13.35/hour

Holidays: 5.6 weeks per year

Sick Pay: Sickness pay is in place and is activated following six months' continual service.

Pension: The FCLI has a pension policy in place. Details of this will be sent to you with your payroll.

Hours and weekend work:

Contracted minimum 32 hours/week Tuesday – Friday, 8.30am-4.30pm

Weekend work will be paid in addition to your weekly hours, however, where capacity allows, we can offer one of these days as time off in lieu, with one weekend day paid. This will be dependant upon capacity within the organisation at the time.

Your regular week will be split as below. This may vary as school and corporate bookings come in:

- Tuesday – Admin and planning day
- Wednesday – Alternative curriculum delivery on our youth project ages 11+
- Thursday – Conservation delivery with apprentices (up to two), and further young people (age 13+) and their youth leader.
- Friday – Farm Friday volunteers, with up to three NEETs and up to 10 regular local volunteers.

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Key tasks

Youth Provision and events

- Assess the needs of young people each day, continually amending your approach and using strategies to match their needs.
- Adhere to site risk assessments for activities, including the completion of daily dynamic risk assessments and regular use of the risk operational management and safety procedures.
- Act as an advocate and mentor for young people and volunteers, developing their confidence, own interests and passions.
- Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding, health & safety and relevant Shropshire council, school policies or other linked organisational policies.
- Work with parents and referral organisations (e.g. schools and children's homes) providing daily personal profiles to ensure progress of individuals is accurately recorded and shared.
- Regularly and accurately record the progress and contribution of young people and volunteers to support Fordhall's strategic aims.
- Plan and deliver youth/family events during school holidays
- Support the team with the delivery of school educational visits, this may include delivery yourself or covering others on the team so that they may assist with delivery.

Conservation Planning and delivery

- Plan and delivery conservation activities onsite, including managing external contractors, seeking quotes, collecting suppliers and making orders within agreed budgets.
- To manage an annual budget allocated to you for conservation tasks, volunteer support and farm trail maintenance, sourcing items within the organisations sourcing and environmental policy.
- Create new budgets/proposals for larger projects and present to management for consideration.
- Support young people to complete their Conservation Worker Level 2 Apprenticeship
- To plan, organise and manage regular volunteer weekends/days (16 days per year), and to plan and deliver weekly Farm Fridays for groups of adults supporting side wide maintenance tasks, conservation work and other practical support to projects onsite.
- To liaise with the organisations social prescribing link worker or other appropriate organisation, to accurately record attendance and well-being of those referred through a social prescribing or NEET route
- To review volunteer input and job roles appropriately, actively looking for opportunities for volunteers to develop their roles and skills, making the most of the strengths that each individual brings.
- Ensuring regular record keeping of volunteers onsite, volunteer hours, and personal information is accurately recorded and appropriately stored.
- To ensure all risk assessments are update and adhered to, inductions are completed, risk operational management procedures are followed, and that all tools are maintained and all safety precautions are followed.
- To prepare, set up and support the development and implementation of several seasonal farm trails per year.
- To proactively develop the over-arching Fordhall volunteer experience.
- To develop and contribute ideas which enhance the Fordhall experience for visitors, open up new areas of the farm, or better engage our current visitors.

Other

- As an organisation with a wide delivery package, we require our staff to be adaptable and to support other teams when requested. This could mean you are asked to cover sessions on the care farm, support school or residential delivery or something else. We reserve the right to amend your role at times to support this. Where overtime is accrued this will be paid in addition to your standard hours if days in lieu cannot be offered.
- Evaluation is a key aspect of Fordhall's work. This ensures we are continually learning and improving. It is also vital to ensure we are demonstrating the impact of the work that we do. We expect you to be actively involved with this process, as well as instrumental in assisting us in gathering data to best demonstrate our impact to our members and community.
- To be aware of the organisations Employee Policies. Most importantly, and not limited to, you need to ensure you regularly remind yourself of the organisations policies on Health and Safety, Mental Health and Well-Being, Environmental Impact, Community Engagement, and Data Protection.
- As a key member of our team, you will participate in team meetings and regular reviews and catch-ups with your supervisor, including an annual Staff and Board Planning Day, usually held on a Monday.
- To undertake training courses as needed.
- Continually increase your knowledge of rural issues, farm life and the important links between food, health and sustainability, so that this can be reflected in your role.
- To work in a way that is aligned with the organisations values (attached to your contract) and furthers the Strategic Aims and annual strategy of the Fordhall Community Land Initiative.
- To fulfil any other role that the organisation sees fit or is required to enable it to achieve its aims and objectives for the benefit of the community.
- To work with the organisation to develop your role around your strengths and attributes, ensuring your job description and the work we request of you best reflects what you can offer.

Requirements

- Relevant conservation/environmental qualification or extensive experience of conservation work.
- Strong background in youth work or leading groups of various abilities and ages, especially groups with challenging behaviours.
- Skilled use of tools and related experience of Health and Safety legislation and Risk Assessments.
- Excellent communication skills with the ability to engage effectively with young people.
- Ability to create a positive learning environment that encourages personal growth.
- Strong ability to adapt to changing situations and a muck-in attitude that supports all members of the team.
- Strong organisational and project management skills with the capacity to manage multiple tasks simultaneously.
- A genuine passion for working with communities and sharing your love of nature and how we can work together to protect it and reduce our environmental impact.
- Comfortable use of word and excel spreadsheets.
- Alignment to Fordhall Values in the way you work and the approach you take to the role.