

Wood Meadow Trust – volunteering support in the Selby District

Volunteering support

Passionate about educating adults and children about nature, Community First Yorkshire has helped this small local organisation to build a huge team of volunteers.

What was the challenge?

The Wood Meadow Trust plants a unique combination of trees and flower meadows. With only two paid staff members on the project, the Trust relies heavily on its volunteers. In 2018, 81 volunteers contributed 1,178 hours. Recruiting and retaining volunteers was crucial to the Trust's success but the organisation had never asked its volunteers officially about what it was like helping on the project.

Emma Daniels, Project Coordinator, explains: *"We already had a volunteer programme, but we'd never asked our volunteers for feedback to see if it was okay and what we could improve on. We wanted suggestions for how we could increase the take up of volunteering opportunities."*

With volunteers critical to the project's success, Emma contacted Community First Yorkshire for help.

How did Community First Yorkshire help?

Lizzie, from Community First Yorkshire, visited the site to meet the group's organisers and walked through the meadow to get a feel for the organisation and its environment. She talked through the volunteering programme with Emma and reviewed all of the policies the Wood Meadow Trust had created.

Emma explained, *"Lizzie came up with a list of advice and suggestions she thought might be useful for us. We have implemented every single one of them!"*

With Community First Yorkshire's support, the Wood Meadow Trust rewrote its volunteer policy and now describes it as 'much better'.



Lizzie from Community First Yorkshire said: *"When volunteers play such a vital role in your organisation, it's important to get it right. The Wood Meadow Trust really embraced our suggestions and it's a pleasure to see the amazing volunteer programme they now have."*



Do you need help with...

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- Turning your ideas of becoming a new community organisation into a reality?
- Benefitting from greater security as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)?
- Thinking about reviewing your organisation and planning ahead?
- Understanding trustee's legal roles and responsibilities?
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Our advisers can help. Call us today
01904 704177 communitysupport@communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk



About the organisation

The Wood Meadow Trust (formerly Haggles Wood) is a registered charity set up in 2013 to create wood meadows covering about 25 acres. There are two paid staff members on the project. The Esmee Fairburn Trust funds one post, for 15 hours per week and a second post of Volunteer Coordinator has one day a week funded through North Yorkshire County Council's Stronger Communities. The charity has a large bank of volunteers.

What does the future look like?



Emma concludes, "Community First Yorkshire provided really useful information and has helped us to understand how to recruit more volunteers and the need to foster relationships with them. That's something we hadn't done before.

We have a huge group of volunteers now. The advice and help from Community First Yorkshire have helped us get here."

With Community First Yorkshire's support, there are clear policies and a streamlined and effective system for a small staff team who have limited hours to spend on the project.

Lizzie also advised on other changes. "We've introduced a new system to encourage more visitors to complete our evaluation form, which has really helped us gain a better idea of what they want. The feedback has really helped us when making funding applications as funders always want to see evidence of feedback," Emma explains.

The trust also produced a new flyer about volunteering and the team now go out and give talks to local groups to recruit volunteers.

How we can help you

As a registered charity, we understand your needs. Our local advisers work across North Yorkshire and will come to you to ensure you get access to the best quality advice and guidance including: funding advice, helping you set up as a community organisation, governance and trustees, finance support, marketing advice, and exploring ways to further develop your organisation.

If you know a community group, charity or social enterprise that needs some support to be even more successful, contact one of our friendly advisors on 01904 704177 or communitysupport@communityfirstyorkshire.org.uk

Community Support North Yorkshire is funded by North Yorkshire County Council and NHS North Yorkshire.