

Essex County Council Lead Volunteer Deer Manager Information Pack

Parties and Roles

Essex County Council

The Essex County Council (ECC) woodland estate extends to 281 Ha and is spread across the County of Essex. The entire estate is certified under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) scheme.

The Council has 3 key objectives:

- No further loss of ancient woodland
- Improving woodland biodiversity
- Increasing people's understanding and enjoyment of woodland

The key features of the Council's approach to deer management are:

- Where there is evidence that deer are having a detrimental impact on a site and the wider habitat then the Council will undertake management action.
- This action could comprise of one or more of a range of options including humane culling
- The Council does not permit the hunting of animals for sport in its woods. The generation of income from venison will not be a factor in considering the need for deer control.
- The Council will co-operate with local Deer Management Groups and participate where appropriate.
- The Council encourages its managers to develop local prescriptions which take account of local circumstances.

Deer Initiative (DI)

By agreement with ECC, DI will facilitate the selection of volunteer deer managers on ECC properties.

The role of ECC and DI is to:

- Inform volunteer deer managers of opportunities from ECC properties that they may access for the purpose of deer management
- Inform volunteers of the conditions/restrictions for carrying out deer management generally, and on a site by site basis, as imposed by ECC
- Check that volunteers possess the attitudes, skills and certification required by ECC for the purpose of deer management
- Ensure, as far as is reasonably possible that Health and Safety, including Risk Assessments have been adequately considered on a site by site basis and that volunteers have been involved in the risk assessment process
- In conjunction with the forestry consultant act in a support role and as the point of contact for Volunteers
- In conjunction with forestry consultant collate cull returns, impact assessments and other data and report these to ECC

Volunteer Deer Managers (VDMs)

There are two types of volunteer. *Lead Voluntary Deer Managers (LVDMs)* who apply for and sign a Deer

Management Agreement with ECC and who are responsible (where appropriate) for one or more *Assistant Volunteer Deer Managers (AVDMs)*, acting under LDVM supervision.

- VDMs will manage deer on nominated ECC sites as unremunerated ECC volunteers. All venison from culling activities will become the responsibility and property of the LVDM and/or the AVDMs.
- Cull targets will be set according to site by site agreements and monitored by ECC. If necessary, additional stalking resources may be allocated to assist volunteers to achieve the cull.
- VDMs must act under the conditions/restrictions of their Agreement with ECC but are otherwise wholly responsible for their activities while carrying out deer management.

Volunteer Deer Manager Policy

The ECC Volunteer Deer Manager Policy is included in this pack. It is the applicant's responsibility to read and fully understand the terms of the policy before applying, and to act on them if successful.

The certification, skills, and experience required

To be considered for selection you must hold the following:

- Deer Stalking Certificate 2 (DSC2) or equivalent UK qualification e.g. NVQ/SVQ level 2 units C49 and C50 in Game and Wildlife Management or St Hubert Lantra Deer Stalking Qualification. This should also include the Large Game Meat Handling certificate, either taken as a stand-alone qualification or as part of the DSC1.
- A UK Firearms Certificate so conditioned as to allow culling of deer on the relevant sites, and listing a possessed, sound moderated firearm and ammunition of a calibre/type which is legal for all deer species in England and Wales.
- Public Liability Insurance to the minimum value of £10 Million such as can be obtained from BASC or the BDS.
- Emergency First Aid plus Forestry Certificate (EFAW+F). If you do not hold the appropriate Certificate you must acquire it before you, as an individual, can commence culling on WT sites.

Throughout the life of your Agreement it is your responsibility to ensure that certification is kept up to date. Currency of certificates will be checked on at least an annual basis.

In your application, evidence of suitable experience, good references, realistic travel distances and enough time available to manage deer on the site, are regarded as advantages.

How to apply

An application form is included in this pack. The closing date for applications is Monday 20th May 2019.

Before any application is submitted, you should consider carefully all the information in this pack, together with any research you have carried out yourself on the sites for which you would like to be considered. The application form is the first step in a three-stage process which additionally includes Interview and Skills affirmation. Allocation of specific woodlands to a LVDM cannot be confirmed until all three steps are complete.

Please note that the Deer Initiative nor ECC do not undertake to explain why an LVDM application is unsuccessful or cannot be considered further.

Interviews

Lead Volunteer Deer Manager (LVDM) Applicants succeeding in the first round of the selection process will be invited to attend an interview designed to assess their suitability for the role. The interview panel will include both ECC and DI representatives.

Interview date is Thursday 11th July 2019, and will be held near Newmarket, Suffolk

Skills Affirmation

On the same day as the interview, LVDMs will also undertake a skills affirmation during which:

- applicants will be assessed on their abilities to assess risk and to engage with the public.
- applicants will be assessed on their ability to demonstrate safe firearms handling and marksmanship. Applicants will be under observation from arrival, all actions taken whilst handling a firearm will be included in the assessment. The shooting element of the test may depend on site and species but in general will follow the DMQ DSC1 process, usually with additional actual or simulated high seat shooting. **NOTE: You are expected to arrive with a zeroed, moderated firearm (as per your FAC) using deer legal ammunition. There will be no opportunity to zero rifles on the day. All ammunition types will be inspected for suitability.**

A maximum of three opportunities to meet the required shooting standard will be offered on the day. **Failure to achieve the required standard of shooting or safety will result in the individual not being accepted as a volunteer.**

Prospective AVDMs will also be required undertake the skills affirmation (usually on a separate date from the LDVDMs) and will be required to bring copies of their certificates (Firearms Certificates, DSC awards, Public Liability insurance, First Aid +F) on the day. **Failure to show all relevant certificates may prevent the skills test from taking place and will delay the start of acting as a volunteer.**

The Sites

A list of the sites is included below. You may apply for any number of sites but must be realistic about the commitment required. You will be asked to prioritise site choice. The allocation of a specific site to an individual applicant cannot be guaranteed until the volunteer selection process has been completed.

It is strongly recommended that applicants visit the site before applying. All the sites have full public access.

Applicants must satisfy themselves as to the precise area and nature of the ground involved, access routes and the terms of the agreement. During the volunteer selection process, site knowledge from a visit and the woodland management plan will be considered an advantage. You should not apply for sites that involve unrealistic travel times from your usual base, usually no more than 1hour. The greater the number of days that you would be able to visit a site during the week/season, the better.

Depending on the nature of the site for which the prospective LVDM would like to be considered, additional persons may need to be included on the Agreement as AVDMs.

Additional site information including location and the woodland management plan can be found on the Essex County Council Website for each woodland. Follow the links above for more detailed information and site plans <https://www.essexwoodlandproject.org/woodlands/>

Woodland Estate	Map Grid Ref	Wood Names	Ha
Barnston Hall	TL635182	Garnets Wood	27
Beaumont Wood	TM165260 TM170264	Gravel Wood Broadmeadow Wood (No direct public Access Please arrange access with David Hooton (07970141512))	12
Belhus Country Park	TQ568825		42
Lambourne Hall Estate	TQ475965 TQ475965 TQ485 963 TQ480958	Halfmoon Wood Jubilee Plantation Great Wood Conduit Wood	19
Pyrgo Wood	TQ526934	Foxburrow Wood	5
Weald Country Park	TQ575950		106

Site Allocation

Applicants should be clear as to the site allocation process:

Each site may have more than one applicant. Where this is the case the most suitable applicant will be allocated the site. The other applicants may either be offered an alternative site or, if a suitable site is not available, may not be allocated a site at all. In this latter case the unsuccessful application will be recorded and considered again should a new site become available or a formerly allocated site become free. This provision will last for no more than 3 years and the applicant may have to reconfirm certification details even during that period.

The Deer Initiative cannot undertake to explain why an applicant was unsuccessful at interview or was not allocated the site or their choice.

Following interview and skills affirmation, successful applicants that have been matched with woodlands will be asked to accept the opportunity to become an LVDM by signing an Agreement. The next step will be a site meeting between the new LVDM, WT and DI to carry out a site risk assessment. If the LVDM has elected to use one or more AVDMs, they will have to complete a skills affirmation and present certificates. Once this is completed ID card(s) will be issued and volunteering can begin from the start date of the Agreement.

The closing date for completed application forms is Monday 20th May 2019.

Interviews will be held on Thursday 11th July near Newmarket, Suffolk.