

Advice for Group Leaders of Potential Volunteers

Do you have a group of people (aged over 14) who would like to volunteer to work in the wood at a time other than on our regular work sessions (usually held on the first Sunday of the month, plus the last Sundays of September – March)?

We can sometimes set up special ad hoc weekday or Saturday sessions (given a reasonable amount of notice).

The work is often quite basic woodland management eg cutting down bracken and nettles or removing brambles, gorse and laurel. There would be some associated work for those who cannot safely use tools. This would be removing the cut stems etc to form piles to decompose in designated areas of the woods.

FSW can provide tools (secateurs, loppers and hand saws) and oversight for about 6-10 people at a session – more would require an extra supervisor per 10 and there would not be sufficient tools probably available for everyone to use them at the same time. We ask that volunteers bring suitable outdoor work wear and stout footwear. We have a small stock of safety helmets, safety goggles and thick gloves to lend, Covid permitting, to any volunteers who do not have their own.

Would this be of interest to your group and able to be safely done by them?

A different type of job that FSW are currently considering is the digging of drainage channels across some of our paths to try to reduce the muddy areas which make them almost impassable in winter at some points. This project would entail digging narrow channels across the paths at strategic points (probably about 7"- 10" deep and about 6" wide) ready to lay a drainage tube in it on a bed of gravel to carry the water away to the side of the path. This is at a very early stage of our planning schedule, but if you have people who could help with this digging, please let us know. The paths are mainly compacted earth and stones and of course, being in a wood, have roots etc to deal with so it is a bit more than 'gardening' - and we have no power tools to help - just shovels and picks! Knowing your volunteers might be able to offer some help (even if not immediately as we are not ready yet!) could assist us in deciding whether to carry on with the idea or not.

FSW assumes your organisation/ business has suitable insurance for the activities you take your clients/employees/volunteers to. We have a 'safe working' protocol which we would expect every volunteer to adhere to as guided by the FSW on site supervisor at the session. Of course, we also have the usual public liability insurance required by the Croydon Council to allow us and our volunteers to work in a public place.

We have no kitchen facilities on site, so workers are asked to bring their own drinks and snacks if they need them. The sessions are usually for no longer than about three hours. We work in most weathers – but not rain or snow if too heavy or if it is very windy to avoid any injuries from falling branches etc.

There are toilets on site for which we hold the key. There are no disabled toilets.

The work area is up to about 10 minutes' walk up a gentle grassy hill from the car park entrance, which is off Old Farleigh Road - post code CR2 8QF for your satnav. The nearest London red bus 433 stops are at Dove Close and an hourly service from Caterham and Godstone stops near the gate in Old Farleigh Road. The 64 bus stops about 15-minute walk away near Sainsbury's in Selsdon centre.

Do please contact us if you need more information or would like to book some work time in the wood with us.

It's a lovely place to come to enjoy for some general green therapy and mindfulness anyway! Our free guided walks programme is open to all - see our website for dates.