



# Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

## **Volunteer Role: Aqueduct Cottage Custodian**

Aqueduct Cottage will be managed by volunteer custodians whose role is to ensure that visitors have as enjoyable a time as possible. No previous experience is necessary, just a bit of local knowledge and enthusiasm about the Derwent area.

### **What are we looking for?**

Ensure that all visitors feel welcome and have the relevant information to enjoy their visit.

Be able to share interesting facts and information about the cottage and location.

Encourage visitors to give donations and support Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

Open and close the facility. (Key holder responsibilities)

Help raise the profile of the cottage, Lea Wood nature reserve, and increase visitor numbers.

Able to communicate effectively to a wide range of people and have a friendly and approachable manner.

Be reliable and punctual.

Trustworthy.

Knowledge of local history.



## **What is a Cottage Custodian?**

You will be the face of the Aqueduct Cottage & Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, welcoming people to the Cottage, explaining its history, restoration, and place in the landscape. The primary purpose of the Cottage's restoration is as a gateway to the Lea Wood nature reserve, and the custodian will use the facility to raise awareness of this and other DWT sites and campaigns.

## **Why we want you:**

As a charitable organisation this role is hugely important as it increases our capacity to promote DWT, public access to nature, and biodiversity campaigns in general.

## **What will you be doing?**

- Engaging with the public and welcoming them to the Cottage and nature reserve
- Actively promoting membership of Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and its benefits in order to increase the membership base and bring in revenue.
- Report numbers regarding interactions with the public.
- Unlocking/locking up of building where necessary
- Work in accordance with DWT's Health & Safety policies at all times.
- Develop knowledge of the Cottage & nature reserve and communicating this to the public.

## **About Derbyshire Wildlife Trust & Aqueduct Cottage**

For 60 years, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT) has been actively recording, protecting, and promoting nature conservation in the county. It is part of the national federation, the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts (RSWT). DWT manages over 50 nature reserves, and promotes biodiversity conservation & sustainable land management practices to other landowners. The Trust also recognises the value of nature to people, and runs education and engagement programmes across the county.



## **About Lea Wood & Aqueduct Cottage**

Lea Wood was acquired by the local community, and gifted by the Lea Wood Trust to DWT in 2012. The nature reserve is one of the best examples of a typical Derwent valley side oak woodland. The woodland's long term health was at risk due to extensive areas of rhododendron, and controlling this was the Trust's main priority: reducing the plant's dominance from 13% to less than 1% over a five year period. This historic woodland contains a range of archaeology, tied to the history of the wider UNESCO Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site (DVMWHS). Much of this evidence is hidden, whilst Aqueduct Cottage is the most obvious.

## **About Aqueduct Cottage.**

The origin of the Cottage, to oversee the adjacent Nightingale Canal spur, lost its purpose with the mid-C19th decline of the canal system in favour of rail and road transport. By 2012, Aqueduct Cottage had been abandoned for around 35 years. The last resident having been present in 1970; the property then being rented to a local rambling club: The Wayfarers. Falling into ruin, the remains were quickly consumed by the adjacent woodland. Derbyshire Wildlife Trust undertook work to reduce the bulk of the woody growth which threatened the structure, and also commissioned work to secure the remaining structure, preventing its complete loss. In 2019, work began in earnest to rebuild the Cottage and repurpose it as part of the wider Lea Wood Gateway project.

## **About the Derwent Valley Living Landscape.**

Derbyshire Wildlife Trust has a vision for the Valley. A valley of interconnected new and existing woods, a landscape of increased tree coverage, sequestering carbon as a commitment to global net zero ambitions. A landscape which slows the flow of increasingly frequent sudden rain storms which currently flood the Derwent downstream, washing away valuable soils that disrupt aquatic – and ultimately marine ecosystems. A sustainable landscape which supports regenerative farming, farm business diversification, and reintroduced fauna – such as red squirrel & pine marten.



## **Practical Considerations**

Aqueduct Cottage is a remote site, located on the edge of the High Peak Junction heritage & visitor cluster. It is reached along the Cromford Canal towpath, around 250metres walk from the nearest parking at the Wharf Shed, around 2km south east of Cromford.

Out-of-pocket travel costs between home and volunteering place will be paid, and other reasonable expenses agreed in advance.

Some elements of the role may require a degree of physical fitness due to stairs.

Training will be available.

### **More details:**

To discuss this role further, contact Lisa Witham at Derbyshire Wildlife Trust on 01773 881188 or email [volunteering@derbyshirewt.co.uk](mailto:volunteering@derbyshirewt.co.uk)

