

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



COUNTRYSIDE RANGER

POST TITLE:	Countryside Ranger
DEPARTMENT:	Estates
HOURS:	37 hours per week including, when necessary, some evening and weekend working.
PURPOSE OF JOB:	To carry out practical conservation work, in order to maintain and manage the Town Council's nature reserves, ancient woodlands, and important green spaces.
PLACE OF WORK:	Workshop/tools – Victoria Pleasure Ground Day to day work – onsite in Uckfield
REPORTS TO:	Estates Manager

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Uckfield Town Council owns a large asset portfolio, which includes two nature reserves (Hempstead Meadows and West Park), three ancient woodlands (Boothland, Nightingale and Bridge Farm) a pond, and associated meadow/wetland areas.

The Countryside Ranger will be required to manage the practical conservation of these areas to preserve the biodiversity and natural environment whilst having regard for the safety of our residents, walkers, and adjacent properties.

Conservation and monitoring of key sites

- Day to day management of the local nature reserves, through contractor supervision, volunteers and lone working;
- Practical delivery of the Town Council's management plans for the two local nature reserves (Hempstead Meadows and West Park) which includes a wide range of habitat management initiatives, tree planting, wetland support, footpath and fence maintenance, animal grazing if found useful, support for protected species and the control of invasive species;
- Lead the delivery of these plans using both in-house support, volunteers, external contractors, and associations with expertise in the relevant fields;

- Commission ecological surveys, to understand more thoroughly the protected species and habitats present in these sites;
- Contribute to the review of site-specific management plans and biodiversity action plans for the Town Council's green assets;

Management of trees and woodlands

- Day to day management of the Town Council's wooded areas and ancient woodlands;
- Undertake basic tree inspections in response to enquiries;
- Manage a programme of tree surveying to understand trees affected by ash dieback and associated diseases;
- Work with the Forestry Commission liaison officer to identify opportunities to draw down grant funding, and specialist guidance on tree works;
- Consider and deliver a programme of annual tree planting in line with the Town Council's Tree Policy and Climate Change Action Plan, *'in that for every tree felled, a new tree is planted.'*

Practical skills

- Undertake practical site management such as:-
 - Use of chainsaw, strimmer, brush-cutter, tractor and trailer driving, chipper and other associated equipment;
 - Installation of benches, gates, fencing, notice boards, pond maintenance, car park construction etc;
 - Undertake wildlife surveys, monitoring, recording etc;
 - Practical clearance and maintenance including scrub clearance, invasive species control and ensuring all sites are maintained and presented to the highest standards and litter free at all times;
- Work with the Town Council office and associated interest groups to design and prepare interpretation media e.g. leaflets and interpretation boards;
- Undertake risk assessments and health and safety surveys of the sites and be prepared to respond to urgent matters or emergencies;
- Prepare reports for Environment & Leisure Committee to update members on scheduled work, or revisions to the nature reserve or woodland management plans;

Fundraising

- Assist the Estates Manager with the identification and preparation of grant funding applications to support the delivery of site-specific management plans, and biodiversity action plans;

Community involvement in projects

- Set up and support volunteer's/supporter's groups including organising volunteering opportunities, training volunteers and preparing the necessary risk assessments;

- Host high-quality informal events and activities such as preparing and delivering presentations to local interest groups and give guided tours to local groups or schools;

Other duties

- Ensure equipment is maintained and stored clean and correctly;
- Attend training courses associated with the work and role as required by the Council;
- Liaise with adjacent landowners or residents, to manage boundary matters, encroachments and deal with public concerns;
- Under the health and safety guidelines issued by the Council, ensure the safety and well-being of all who visit or work in the facilities provided by the Council.

The job activities quoted above are examples of the work involved. They do not purport to be a comprehensive list of all aspects of the principal duties.

PERSON SPECIFICATION – COUNTRYSIDE RANGER

Key skills and abilities

The postholder will have: -

- Full driving licence;
- Qualifications in the use of site-based equipment such as chainsaws, brush cutters, tractors, pesticides etc;
- First Aid at Work qualification (the Town Council can provide refresher training);
- Project management experience;
- Ability to prioritise a high volume of work and wide range of tasks;
- Interpersonal, oral, written and communications skills;
- Ability to work with and motivate volunteers;
- Experience of environmental recording and monitoring;
- IT skills, and knowledge of Microsoft Office Outlook, Word and Excel;

Knowledge

The postholder is expected to have:-

- Knowledge of ecology and its application in conservation land management including landscape ecology;
- Knowledge of Health and Safety legislation and its applications to the job;
- Understanding of the law in relation to protected species, conservation management and woodland management;
- Understanding of land management;

Experience

The postholder is expected to have extensive experience of conservation, environmental and/or woodland management, preferably to Level 3:-

- Level 3 in conservation/countryside management/arboriculture;
- The recruitment, organisation and supervision of volunteers;
- Practical experience in safely using chainsaws and brushcutters;
- Experience in planning and delivering practical conservation work;
- Understanding of woodland and meadow management techniques;
- Implementing nature reserve management plans for a variety of habitats;
- The management and supervision of contractors;
- Liaison with landowners, the general public and other organisations;

Personal attributes

The postholder will have the following attributes:-

- Good attention to detail;
- Ability to work independently or as part of a team;
- Ability to use their own initiative and to be imaginative and resourceful;