

VOLUNTEER POLICY

About us

Set up in 1997, Creggan Country Park is a registered charity which provides recreational, training, education and employment opportunities for the local community.

The mission statement of Creggan Country Park is to 'provide an integrated, neutral and innovative facility for all sections of the community, which also enhances the economic, social and environmental aspects of life for the multiply deprived communities in the North West.'

Creggan Country Park has four key priorities:

1. Creating a healthy society by providing access to attractive green spaces and creating new opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation for everyone;
2. Promoting inclusion and cohesion by ensuring access to new jobs and services, targeting disadvantaged communities and delivering projects for disabled groups and care homes;
3. Promoting sustainable development through creation of self-sustaining jobs, the use of renewable energy to include biomass boiler and hydroelectric scheme and introducing energy efficiency measures to include under floor heating, turf roof, start/stop taps and energy efficient lighting; and

4. Protecting, managing and promoting the environment through free environmental education programme, biodiversity strategies, habitat management, renewable energy and planting programmes.

Creggan Country Park's activity centre provides a range of services for visitors including a café, shower facilities, conference room, training room, disabled toilets and car park. Activities on offer include canoeing, inflatable water assault course, kayaking, pier jump, raft building, aqua zorbing, team building, paintball, orienteering, geocaching and free environmental education and volunteer training. We were recently awarded a Wheelyboat, after a six year joint campaign with the Wheelyboat Trust in the South of England. We are hoping that with funding for this project, we can offer pleasure boating, angling and guided nature tours to wheelchair users from across Northern Ireland and Donegal.

We currently have 206 registered volunteers who take part in a range of activities including wildlife events, tree planting, clean ups, path maintenance, invasive species control, raised bed planting, education workshops and environment project in care homes.

Charity registration number: NIC100494

Purpose of our volunteer policy

Our volunteer policy has been created to show our volunteers and potential volunteers that we have spent time and care in planning how volunteers will be welcomed at Creggan Country Park. It also outlines that all volunteers will be treated in a fair and consistent way. It should also help our volunteers understand what support is available to them and what they can expect from us.

Our vision and mission for volunteering

Volunteering is a great way to share your enthusiasm, skills and ideas whilst having fun and meeting like-minded people. By volunteering for Creggan Country Park, you will be making a positive contribution to community development in our area. As a registered charity and with a 100-acre site to manage, volunteers are vital to our work, particularly biodiversity and habitat management projects.

Attracting volunteers and volunteer agreement

We have a range of opportunities for volunteers to get involved in.

To receive your volunteering pack, contact our Environmental Officer:

fionamccann@creggancountrypark.com or call us on 028 71363 133

The volunteer pack contains a short Volunteer Registration Form, description of volunteer roles and information about Creggan Country Park's activities.

To register, simply complete the registration form and return to our Environmental Officer by post or email, whichever is easiest for you.

Alternatively, you can come along in person and enquire about becoming a volunteer. Once we receive a copy of your completed registration form, our Environmental Officer will get in touch with more information on specific opportunities and we can decide together which option best matches your interests and time availability and also our needs. Your help will be greatly appreciated and really will make a difference to our work in the community.

Access NI Checks

Some volunteer roles will require an Access NI check to inform Creggan Country Park of any criminal convictions that a person wishing to volunteer may have. For example, any volunteer position which involves regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to an Access NI check.

Induction and training

We welcome volunteers of all ages, skills and abilities. It does not matter how much you already know, as there will be opportunities to learn, and we have roles to suit every level of expertise. We provide training for all of our volunteer roles so it is a great way to build your CV.

Volunteer roles include:

- Environment worker
- Marketing Officer
- Receptionist
- Outdoor pursuits assistant

Once you register as a volunteer with us, you will then take part in an induction day with our Environmental Officer. This will include:

- Some information about Creggan Country Park, our vision, mission and our future plans;
- Your role as a volunteer;
- Introduction to staff and some other volunteers

- A tour around our facilities and see some of our activities
- A copy of all the relevant policies including this volunteer policy and also our Health and Safety, Expenses, Equality and Diversity and Conflict Management;
- Information about training and ongoing learning opportunities

There will be a trial period of four weeks to give Creggan Country Park and you time to discover if you are suited to each other. A review will be made midway through the trial period and also at the end. This is not an assessment, it is just so that we can be sure that you benefit the most from the volunteering experience and maximise the time you are giving freely.

Support

Our Environmental Officer will offer support to you. They will remain your key contact throughout your volunteering with us. This will include regular meetings with you to discuss how you are getting on, discuss any training needs and deal with issues arising. This will also ensure that Creggan Country Park are doing all we can to make your volunteering experience an enjoyable and meaningful one.

Recognition and reward

We could not do the work we do without our volunteers. To acknowledge this we will always say thank you and show appreciation for a job well done. There will always be a listening ear or shoulder to lean on.

We will hold an annual volunteer celebration event in December to for our volunteers and their families to show our appreciation for all their hard work throughout the year. During these events you will be presented with a certificate and a buffet and live music is provided. You will also get an opportunity to meet other volunteers and supporters of our work and share in our plans for the future. We will take opportunities in our website and Facebook page, annual general meetings, and local and national press to praise the achievements of our volunteers. Each year we will hold a volunteers week where volunteers will get the opportunity to come along to presentations.

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to ensure that there are no barriers to volunteer involvement. All reasonable out of pocket expenses, if required, will be reimbursed including expenses for travel and meals (if working more than 4.5 hours in one session). In order to claim expenses, an Expenses Form must be completed, a valid receipt provided and this should be handed in to our administrator.

Insurance, health and safety, accidents and risk assessment

Creggan Country Park has valid insurance policies so that volunteers are covered by public liability insurance, which you are advised to read. It covers the volunteering activities you will be doing. We will keep reminding you of our Health and Safety Policy and give simple instructions on how to perform each task safely. We have clear procedures for accidents and emergencies and will always have a first aider on field sites.

Resolving problems

We hope that you will have a very enjoyable experience volunteering with us. However if your role as a volunteer does not meet with your expectations or with the commitments we have made to you, we want you to feel comfortable about letting us know. First of all, talk to the person who leads the team where you volunteer and he or she should be able to sort it out with you before it becomes a problem. If you do not feel this will resolve things you can speak to the Environmental Officer.

Confidentiality

We expect all volunteers to adhere to confidentiality guidelines which will be explained to you before you begin volunteering with us and this also includes use of social media and contact with any press.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Creggan Country Park is committed to embracing diversity and promoting equality and inclusion. When representing Creggan Country Park as a volunteer we expect you to support our commitment to promoting equality.

Volunteering whilst on benefit

You can still volunteer with us if you are receiving benefits provided that we follow the legal guidelines. We have information from the Jobs and Benefits Department which we can talk through with you regarding the hours you can do and what you can claim for expenses incurred through volunteering.

COVID-19 POLICY

To protect our volunteers, staff and visitors, we have put strict protocol in place which includes:

- Hand sanitising stations located indoors and outdoors; sanitising stations installed in all toilets and training rooms
- Face mask must be worn when entering the building
- Strict cleaning regime is in place, all equipment, toilets & changing facilities must be sanitised before and after each use
- Please keep your distance from others at all times – 2m rule
- If you are feeling unwell please stay at home

This is the Volunteer Policy of Creggan Country Park. It will be reviewed every 6 months. Date of next review: 16/9/2021

Signed: *Karen Healy*

Position: Environmental Officer

Signed: *Gerry Quinn*

Position: Manager