

EARTHHEART UK

VOLUNTEER INFORMATION HANDBOOK



"The Nature we live in, lives within us"

Jewels Wingfield

The Vision

Jewels Wingfield held a vision since her teens when she left home and became a land based traveller that one day she would be the guardian of a piece of land; a place where people could gather together and experience the power of nature as our teacher, as an opener of our human hearts and encourage a remembering of our sacred interconnectedness. A place to experience community, slow down enough to be able to hear the heart beat of the earth and the wisdom it brings, to commune in the wildness, sit with the stillness and BE in its awe-inspiring relentless beauty. A place to bring consciousness to our fragile human hearts through our immersion into the natural. To discover such a connection in ourselves, is to honour all life as sacred. And to exist from this balanced place within, is to live our lives in the service of Love for the collective evolution of all humanity. EarthHeart UK is a living experiment of this vision.

About EarthHeart

EarthHeart UK is an inspiring project working passionately towards transforming our relationship between humans, spirit and the natural world. Located in the Forest of Dean, the beautiful 4-acre site sits within the 200,000 acre ancient wild forest. We are rooted in an Earth based spirituality, which is inspired by the indigenous traditions of these lands and others. We are a unique venue; one created in alignment with the Natural world and built in harmony with sacred geometry (our Temple floor has been laid to the four directions with the Flower of Life at the centre).

EarthHeart holds a powerful and transformational energy; bringing the physical and non-physical worlds together. The whole site is lovingly tended to by a small residential community and a larger transitional one in the summer months, made up entirely of volunteers who feel inspired by the vision.

*"I believe in God, only I spell it N A T U R E" -
Frank Lloyd Wright*



EarthHeart UK Site Facilities:

The Land – 4 acres of open space with a small spring fed lake. Access to the 200,00 acre wild forest (including a lake you can swim in located ten minutes walk.

The mandala food garden – We have a beautiful veg growing garden build on the four directions in line with permaculture principles.

Eco Campsite – includes compost toilets and showers.

The Shire – Accommodation for volunteers and living area

The barn and Yard – kitchen showers, Tool Shed, decking for work area, indoor workshop.

Main House - 6 bedrooms/4 bathrooms (sleeps x 16) Kitchen and dining room and Living room. A meditation garden & outdoor dining patio

ForestLodge temple space – a dedicated purpose built meeting room

FireLodge – A space for overflow accommodation and second meeting room/session room/massage space

EarthLodge – A traditional Celtic roundhouse dwelling for sacred ceremony and fire story telling.





EarthHeart Volunteering Program:

In essence EarthHeart is a place of outstanding natural beauty, of peace and tranquillity away from the business of towns and cities. It supports people to grow and learn. To help you find your gifts, support you in bringing them to the world, doing meaningful work and receiving guidance and mentoring from Mark and Jewels as elders. Because we are in the middle of a forest away from the business of life it is suitable for people looking to get away from the rat race, from a hectic life and seek some peace and quiet. Time for inner reflection and healing if needs be. It offers this in the held context of nature and the beautiful surrounding forest. At times we choose to have just one volunteer here at a time and at other times we may have 2 or more (in the busy times) it is everyone's individual choice as to how much social contact you like and there is no pressure to socialise if you want to come here for a retreat rather than a community.

The work is a mix of outdoor land based tending, indoor work including house care and DIY if you have the relevant skills. Being here does require a willingness to engage with whatever needs to be done at the time, whether outdoors or inclement weather, skilled or unskilled.

Once you are at home here and know your way around we create projects that mean you can take ownership and have your own creative input. So you feel a sense of achievement, learn new skills and get creative.

EarthHeart is an independent project and is not a charity. The funds to manifest the project were created solely from Jewels

Wingfield's 20 years of work and dedication to the vision working across the UK and Europe.

The project costs on average £70,000 a year to run and this revenue is created solely through the work that Jewels and Mark facilitate. In this regard EarthHeart is very much a co-creation of good will, generosity and dedication for all who become a part of the project.

EarthHeart relies partly on the generosity of volunteers to keep it alive and running. Both Mark and Jewels work 7 days a week most weeks in service to the vision. It is for people who want to experiment and explore how human beings can live more consciously and lightly on the planet.

Residential Volunteering

As an EarthHeart Volunteer you will be involved in:

- Land and nature maintenance
- Site/grounds maintenance
- Infrastructure projects
- Housekeeping/workshop venue set up
- Kitchen/cooking
- Supporting Mark and Jewels at especially busy times

The Exchange

Volunteering is offered on an exchange basis of gratitude of 26 hours per week. Work times are Monday to Thursday or some weekends instead of weekdays if a course is running. In exchange we provide you with:

- EarthHeart - to make your home while you are here; the grounds, the communal spaces such as the Forest temple, the volunteer space etc. There is also a wild and ancient forest to play in and connect with. Peace and quiet and masses of amazing nature, healing and rejuvenating.
- Meaningful work – we offer a supportive environment and creative context within which to engage in meaningful work,

which for many people now feels like a higher priority in life than earning lots of money, personal mentoring and support on a weekly and regular basis.

- Food and nourishment - We aim to feed you with a feeling of abundance, nurture and well-being. We hold a loose principle of vegan meals but are also happy to have organic dairy products available if you are vegetarian. Organic local meat can be eaten within reason with consideration and respect for those who do not wish to. *Please note: We cannot cater for special/restricted diets outside of these perimeters.*

- The food growing garden at EarthHeart
As a volunteer staying with us you are also welcome to use the food growing garden space to experiment with growing food for yourselves. This is done outside volunteer hours and we can supply you with the materials for this if you wish, e.g. seeds, composts, tools, a greenhouse pots and so on.....

- Free time - Outside of your volunteering hours (see below for practicals) you are free to do as you wish here and make the most of all that EarthHeart is.
There is a huge forest and lakes to swim in, local events to get involved in and sometimes there are events on at EarthHeart which you can join (depending on what it is and if appropriate)

- Internet –Unlimited Wi-fi is offered for free as part of the exchange and there is a dedicated line for volunteers. It is accessed in the volunteers area and in all the volunteers caravans.

Time frames for volunteering:

We prioritize offering volunteering placements to people who are interested in a longer term stay, 3 months is the minimum length we suggest, and we prioritize people who are able to stay longer. This is for a number of reasons that has arisen from our lived and learned experience. Mainly because it takes times to get to know your way around and also for mentoring, we can build a relationship.

We also understand that committing to volunteering for a longer period of time can mean that volunteers need to create extra income to subsidize their needs beyond what we provide as part of the exchange.

For this reason we offer a 4 day working week so you have time to also find local work in the area or work on your own schemes and projects. We will always talk with applicants before they commit to find out what their situation is and what their needs might be in this regard.

- Flexibility with your commitment:

We run a flexible volunteering program with the possibility of flexible work hours, this is at the management's discretion and is a possible option once you have been here a few months to see if it works for all concerned. This may mean being more flexible with when your volunteering hours are applied in order to free up more time to work part time outside of EarthHeart for example one day a week. Or if you have your own self-employed business, that you have time to develop this also. We also offer EarthHeart to long-term volunteers as a platform to potentially create their own business, for example running your own courses or workshops using EarthHeart's infrastructure. Or if you have an online business being able to tend to that during the working week.

PRACTICALITIES

The Shire - Accommodation:

Volunteering with us at EarthHeart is very much an outdoor living on the land close to nature experience. As a volunteer you have a dedicated area called The Shire and your own caravans or cabin (if available) discreetly placed under the forest canopy. There is a fully equipped kitchen and a shower block with hot running water.

EarthHeart Ebb & Flow:

Volunteers generally arrive on a Sunday evening and there is a safety net in place that if after one month it really feels that it is not working for either EarthHeart or you then we can review this and maybe you leave or we ask you to leave. This is very unlikely but in place for extreme situation.



Work structure:

Volunteers work 4 days out of 7 and don't work on public holidays.

(Except where there are events running and then we will sometimes need you to work over a weekend or an evening. If so, time off in lieu will be given, taken the following week).

Daily rhythm (Monday - Thursday):

- Morning meeting 8am – Community check-in and tasks for the day.
- Morning work 8.30am-12.30pm
- Lunch 12.30-1.30pm
- Afternoon work 1.30pm-4.30pm

We offer these time frames for volunteering work hours to allow for individual to potentially do their own work or projects with enough hours left in the day for this.

Weekly Happenings:

Morning meeting – 8am-Mondays to Thursday

Each workday we meet up and see how your doing and discuss possible projects for the day.

- Mentoring –Tuesday 7pm-9pm

This is offered as an opportunity to connect with either Mark or Jewels and have some one to one time to receive support for what might be going on in your personal life or ask questions, or just have a listening ear from an elder

Personal domestics

- Your personal living space: You are given your own caravan to make your home while you are here.
- Laundry: Tuesdays -There is a good washing machine located at the main house which you are welcome to use after work with bio-degradable washing powder.
- Meals & Food: We supply you on-goinly with a kitchen full of ingredients to make whatever meals you enjoy.



Holiday Policy:

- The core agreement is 26 hours work a week
 - All public holidays are given as part of your time here.
 - The first month you are with us there are no days off accrued.
 - There after - days off are earned at a rate equivalent to 2 days per calendar month. This is based on a 26 hour week on a 4 day working week pattern.
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- A maximum of 2 week holiday at a time can be taken
 - If taking off 2 week - 6 weeks notice is required
 - If taking off 1 week - 1 months notice is required
 - If taking off 1 day - 3 days notice is require
 - If taking 2-4 days off 1 weeks notice is required

PLEASE NOTE: It may be possible to have less notice but this is at our discretion depending on the needs of EarthHeart. EG an upcoming workshop or more than 1 person taking leave at the same time

- Booking time off: We do our best to accommodate all volunteer requests but it may not always be possible,

and this is the baseline of understanding in your saying yes to being here.

- Sickness: Short periods of illness are inevitable but if they become longer than a couple of days or frequent, we may have to reconsider your placement with us.

EarthHeart UK is not supported or funded by outside help and in this regard we have a limit to what we can support.

- Period policy: At EarthHeart our intention to honour the natural cycles of life and this includes the cycles that happen in a woman's body through her womb and menstrual cycle. For women who are consciously working with their cycle or who are interested in doing so; Earthheart has a period policy which offers flexibility for each woman's time of menstruating if she feels she needs to be gentle with herself at this time. If this is something you work with already and would like to talk to Jewels, please ask.

- Having your friends visit:

We do not permit volunteer's guests to stay during your first month or during the weekly work days.

- Drop in visits: - Having a friend to visit for a few hours is welcome after work or in the evening as long as it does not get out of hand. This does not include feeding them, but of course cups of tea are abundant.

Friends can stay for the weekend with prior notice and when there are no workshops running. They either camp or stay in your caravan with you. Please note you are responsible for taking care of their practical needs.

All guests pay a contribution to help cover the costs of their stay such as: meals and hot drinks plus a contribution towards things like heating, loo roll, utility bills, cleaning, wear and tear and many things involved in the running costs of EarthHeart that may not be visible on the outside.

Contribution for staying:

- £10 – per 24 hour loop
- All guests need to bring their own bedding.
- All guests to respect the rules of Earth Heart and be sensitive to the community life here

Health & Safety:

EarthHeart is a community, a project and an education centre. People come here for transformational workshops and events, to live in community and to be a part of the EarthHeart vision. As a working site, Health & Safety is of great importance to us. Risks are complex as the site is enjoyed by guests, contractors and working volunteers and there are often maintenance projects being undertaken. Some of the people coming to EarthHeart are unfamiliar with the rural environment and the risks it presents.

The Earthheart site is 4 acres in size, and there are significant areas that do not have mobile phone reception. The risk level of some activities is automatically increased due to our remote nature. Due to this we take a common sense approach to risk and unnecessary hazards are removed, risks are reduced and a culture of safety is fostered. Health & Safety is a common topic of conversation and people are frequently reminded that they are responsible for maintaining and improving safe practices. A Health & Safety Manual is available on request prior to coming to EarthHeart, however it is mandatory that all volunteers review the manual and sign our Health & Safety waiver during a stay with us.

EarthHeart Boundaries and agreements:

- Drink and drugs- We are a strictly drug & alcohol free community. We are also strictly non-smoking. (If you are in the process of giving up but not quite there yet and you need to smoke occasionally we are happy to support your continued journey but where and when you can smoke will be very restricted.

- Pets – Please note that we have a dog who lives here called Ruby (if you suffer from allergies then we might not be the right place for you). We do not allow volunteer pets such as dogs, cats, rabbits onto the premises unless by prior agreement and can be discussed at the point of application.
- References - We may ask you to provide references before or during your volunteer stay with us. Please be aware that this may include a CRB check.

Travel Information:

- Cinderford is our nearest town, a mere ten minute drive from us if you have a car or you can catch the #31 bus from down the track (The Swan Inn is the name of the bus stop on the timetable). This is also the bus which operates to and from Gloucester which is the best hub for onward travel to London, Bristol and beyond. You can find information on bus timetables on the link below. Scroll down to #31. https://tiscon-maps-stagecoachbus.s3.amazonaws.com/Timetables/West/WEST_23_24_30_31_Gloucester_Coleford.pdf Cinderford is a small historic mining town – not a huge amount going on but it does have a few interesting

charity shops, plus the following high street banks – HSBC, Lloyds and Cheltenham & Gloucester. It also has two chemists, two big super markets (Co-Op & Lidl), a good health food shop,

a few pubs, plus a Post Office and Health Centre. It's Art deco cinema is something of an attraction all of its own and a bargain price of just £3.50 a pop!

We are blessed to be based in one of the UK's most beautiful natural regions. The Forest of Dean has plenty on offer - mountain biking, cycle tracks, zip-wires, kayaking, for explorers there's a great range of attractions, from caves and steam trains, and for something more relaxing, enjoy the Sculpture trail, the many many walks, the spectacular views and ancient castles, museums and cathedrals.

EarthHeart UK

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What to bring:

- Waterproof coat and shoes
- Plenty of warm clothes suitable for working outdoors in all weather that may get torn and muddy.

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- Strong shoes and wellies for working (canvas shoes and trainers are not suitable)
 - Bedding.
 - A Torch
 - Sun cream
 - Hats for hot and cold weather
 - Hot water bottle
 - Everything else you might personally need for your stay.
 - All toiletries must be strictly organic and biodegradable because of our eco-septic tank system.