

# EARTHHEART UK

## VOLUNTEER INFORMATION HANDBOOK



### **Our Vision**

**To co-create a world where we remember that the evolution of our consciousness is reliant on the thriving of the natural world and that the thriving of the natural world is reliant on the evolution of our consciousness**

*Jewels Wingfield*

## **The story so far**

Jewels is the founder and visionary of the EarthHeart project and held a vision since her early 20's 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 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).

The land 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.

There is a very special ambiance and energy - often simply just being here is powerfully healing for many people. EarthHeart has not been built as a commercial premises, but rather it has been gently and intentionally created as a home and as an offering – to honour the land and our Earth based spirituality.

## The EarthLodge - ceremonial space



## EarthHeart Volunteering Program

We want to help the younger generations to have a better life. Jewels and Mark have a wish to provide a beautiful place to live and support to help with navigating the modern world. As elders with a lot of experience in support people they offer this support by creating a place and space for young people who may be going through a transition and need a sanctuary to make this threshold. We typically have people between 30 and 50 years old.

The project is an alive, ever-evolving vision with a fluid community who aspire to be mutually supportive whilst in co-creation with one another, nature and life itself. We seek to grow people, find their gifts and encourage them. These aspirations are

balanced with the ongoing needs of the care-taking of EarthHeart. The work is primarily outdoor on land, and repair/maintenance of buildings and fencing etc. It's suitable for people who are seeking to live a simple 90% off grid life and are happy working outdoors in all weathers, getting mucky and tending to the land. Some of the tasks and projects happening may be your favorite activity and some may not be. We try to find a good balance between the two.

**We are an independent project and this is not a charity.** The funds to manifest the project were created solely from Jewels Wingfield's 25 years of work in the field and dedication to the vision while herself living on the land and in a van as a traveler, working across the UK and Europe.

The project costs on average £50,000 - £60,000 a year to run and this revenue is created solely through the work that Jewels and Mark facilitate. In this regard it is perhaps more limited as to what it can offer with supporting volunteers as we do not have a charity or organization behind us to lean into for support. The project is very much a co-creation of good will, generosity and dedication for all who become a part of the project.



### **EarthHeart has a life of it's own.**

It many respects it is the teacher to all who come here and we the learners. Listening to what it needs through nature itself and being able to respond while at the same time supporting the people who come here and visa versa. Volunteering with us is a way of contributing to the vision of "a more beautiful world our hearts know is possible" (*quote by Charles Eisenstein*) by engaging in more meaningful work and living in a truly stunningly beautiful place in nature.

Initially the vision was to create as a place that did not need money to keep it running, however this has proved to be unsustainable until the mainstream world is more open to the exchange of the gift economy. This means that EarthHeart relies partly on the generosity of volunteers to keep it alive. It is for people who want to experiment and explore how human beings can live more consciously and lightly on the planet.

## **As a Volunteer you will be involved in things like**

- Tending to the land daily via weeding, brambling, brackening
- Digging earth, moving earth and rocks, clearing scrub
- Infrastructure projects like fixing fences and repairing buildings
- Cleaning and preparing spaces for workshops
- Building a log cabin, woodstore or flower bed
- Fixing the turf roof on the EarthLodge
- Organising the tool store or woodyard
- Helping make EarthHeart a beautiful place

## **The Exchange**

Volunteering is offered on an exchange basis of gratitude of 27 hours per week. Work times are Monday to Thursday or some weekends when courses are 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.
- **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.
- **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.*

- **Conscious community** – While you are here we offer you an experience of living within an experimental conscious community that includes the value of balancing physical work equally with nourishment of the soul and heart. Circle sharing, mentoring from Jewels and Mark and conflict resolution if needed.
- **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. This may include having quiet time alone or, depending on who is here; playing music, singing, dancing, yoga, drumming, crafts etc - and of course interesting conversation. We also have bicycles which can be borrowed to explore the forest on. Sometimes we go on community outings to the lake to swim or maybe to a local event in the forest. 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, 6 months is the minimum length of stay and we prioritise people who are able to stay longer. This is for a number of reasons that has arisen from our lived and learned experience. A key aspect of this is to be able to continue to create strong and solid community and sense of continuity. 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. will always talk with applicants before they commit to find out what their situation is and what their needs might be in this regard.



“I believe in God, only I spell it N A T U R E”

*Frank Lloyd Wright*

### **Flexibility with your commitment:**

We run a flexible volunteering program with the possibility of flexible work hours, this is at the managements 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 terms 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. The volunteers have a dedicated area called The Shire which includes a collection of caravans discreetly places under the forest canopy with an outdoor

communal fire / lounge area in the centre for gathering round and also a heated log cabin for the colder months to eat and gather in. 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.

### **Working week structure:**

Volunteers work 4 days out of 7 and have 2.5 days off a month accrued.

*(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 and ends at 4.30pm
- We offer these time frames for volunteering work hours to allow for individual to potentially do their own work with enough hours left in the day for this.

## Weekly Happenings:

- **Morning meeting** – 8am-Mondays to Thursday

All volunteers are required to attend this meeting which will be held by either Mark or Jewels each day. It is a way to begin our day and have a brief 'how are you' so that we all have a sense of how we are doing. This promotes a feeling of community support during the day with everyone. It is also a chance to give and receive appreciation as well as assigning projects and tasks for the day.

- **Home care Tuesdays** 6pm-7pm This is time put aside to take care of the communal living spaces on a personal level during your stay. In the same way that you might take care of our own home. The community comes together and takes time to make things clean and beautiful.

- **Community gathering** –Tuesday 7pm-9pm

This is offered as an opportunity to connect with everyone outside of the context of work to bring what is in our heart and soul and share time together in a co-creative, meaningful way. It may be that we simply take turns to share about ourselves (not compulsory to share anything) or we may create an activity like dancing or singing etc or go out together into the forest.

## 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 with bio-degradable washing powder.
- **Meals & Food:** This is community living, food can potentially be a wonderful experience of sharing connection and nourishment and also it can bring up fears

and worries. We like to offer a system of trust and abundance with food and meals. We invite everyone staying to hold an intention of caring and sharing around food and meals preparation.

- **Breakfast** is self-serve; with cereals, toast and eggs all available in the camp kitchen
- **Lunch** 1.30-2pm – light self serve like soup or sandwiches, or sometimes volunteers will make something together, or prepare something the evening before
- **Supper** is invited as a communal event and the main meal of the day. Volunteers take turns to prepare and cook for everyone. All prepared meals are vegan with fresh ingredients, wheat free.



## Holiday Policy:

- The core agreement is 27 hours a week and no time off during the first month of volunteering here.
- Holiday days are taken in lieu of hours worked and are 2.5 days per month, you can either take them per month as you go along or save up for longer periods of time off. No holiday is taken during your first month with us.
- 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 required
- 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 – overnight stay and breakfast
- £18 per 24 hour loop (overnight stay, breakfast, lunch and supper)
- 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://tiskon-maps-stagecoachbus.s3.amazonaws.com/Timetables/West/WEST\\_23\\_24\\_30\\_31\\_Gloucester\\_Coleford.pdf](https://tiskon-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 address and contact**

Trafalgar, Brierley, Cinderford, Forest of Dean GL14 3JQ

Contact Information: Tel: 07890 060394 Email: [jewels@jewelswingfield.com](mailto:jewels@jewelswingfield.com)

## **What to bring:**

- Waterproof coat and shoes
- Plenty of warm clothes suitable for working outdoors in all weather that may get torn and muddy.
- Strong shoes and wellies for working (canvas shoes and trainers are not suitable)
- Bedding if you wish to bring your own or we can supply
- A Torch and plentiful supply of batteries
- 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.
- What you need to make a sweet home in a caravan that's yours.