Volunteers Handbook

RHET
The Royal Highland Education Trust
Patron HRH The Princess Royal

Help us sow seeds of knowledge and grow young minds

"Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless."

The Royal Highland Education Trust | Charity Number: SC007492
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Hello and welcome

Welcome and thank you for offering your time to educate people about food, farming and the working countryside in Scotland.

This information pack provides more information about who we are and what we do.

The Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) is the umbrella organisation to your local Countryside Initiative (CI) and aims to provide guidance on the key issues we need to consider when working with a wide range of people.

Volunteers are the backbone of RHET and are involved in all aspects of the organisation.

Offering farm visits (face to face or digital) or helping out with an event helps to inspire many young people and is very rewarding.

We are always looking for new volunteers and greatly value their input.

By volunteering with us you will meet a wide range of people from different backgrounds, learn new skills, add to your CV, share your passion for Scottish food and farming and have fun!

Thank you for taking the time to find out about us and we hope you find this handbook useful throughout your volunteer journey with us..

If you have any questions regarding any of the content, please do not hesitate to contact your local Project Coordinator or the RHET Central Team in Ingliston, Edinburgh.

We look forward to working with you.

Katrina Barclay
RHET Executive Officer

RHET

Aims, visions & values

Since 2001 RHET has been working to provide the opportunity for every child in Scotland to learn about food, farming and working countryside and to create a wider understanding of the environmental, economic and social realities of rural Scotland.

We provide classroom talks, farm visits, offer teacher training opportunities and support schools to deliver engaging and factual sessions through the production of school resources.

Our aims are:

- To raise awareness of food, farming and working countryside in Scotland.
- To encourage schools to engage in the rich and varied learning opportunities linked to food, farming and working countryside.
- To encourage teachers to "grow" with their class and consume fresh produce.
- To increase environmental awareness around food production in Scotland.
- To provide access to information, resources and activities that will increase awareness of food production.
- To provide opportunities and support for volunteering.
- To work in a sustainable manner.
- To provide a network link for the rural community.

Our values are:

Equality

We will undertake creative positive action to improve the understanding of people across Scotland of the issues faced by rural areas and food producers.

Collaboration

We believe that by working with volunteers and a wide range of partners to collaborate on projects and events, we will provide a comprehensive and valuable resource for our users.

Passion

We believe voluntary action is built on the passion of individuals and communities to make a positive difference and create a life long learning experience for the pupils of Scotland.

A little bit more about us

How did it all start?

The Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) was established in 1999 as the educational charity of the Royal Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland (RHASS).

RHET does not have a traditional, hierarchical, organisational structure. We are currently 13 RHET Countryside Initiative charities operating under an umbrella banner, sharing the same broad aims, and working to the same planning framework.

Each Countryside Initiative consists of a local board/committee and Project Coordinator, all of whom work together to deliver RHET's aims and ambitions.

Why food, farming and working countryside?

Food underpins society and is a requirement for life.

As the recent pandemic has demonstrated, appreciating, and understanding food, the journey it takes to get to the plate, how to utilise it effectively and developing a knowledge of food sustainability are vitally important.

Many children, young people and teachers are not fully aware of where their food comes from, how it was grown or reared, the resources and processes that are used in its production, the impact of their food choices on their own health & well-being, and that of our local and global communities and environments.

RHET provides information on these needs, issues, and encourages discussion, reflection and systems thinking as well as highlighting career opportunities and skills required for working in this diverse sector.

Our work

You get an idea below of the range of projects we have on offer here at RHET. As a small organisation, we can't promise everything all the time, but we do ensure that classroom talks, farm visits, fundraising and committee work run throughout the year.

All our volunteers undergo a protecting vulnerable groups (PVG) check to help keep everyone safe.

The RHET model of working

Each Countryside Initiative consists of a local voluntary board/ committee, a Project Coordinator and a network of volunteers helping to deliver a unique offering of visits, talks and events.

Your local project coordinator will brief, train and support you on the projects they have operating which include amongst others growing your own potatoes.

Each area governs its own delivery and links with the National Strategy.

There are also national projects which areas can choose to be involved with for example Grow your own Loaf. All the national offering is highlighted online at www.rhet.org.uk

Our work

Committees

Each Countryside Initiative has its own committee. By joining a committee you can help to shape delivery in your local area.

Farm visits

RHET is the leading provider of fully risk-assessed Farm Visits throughout Scotland. Our network of volunteer farmers and land managers enable us to offer free farm visits (face to face and digital) to both primary and secondary school.

Classroom talks

We support learning in school through offering classroom talks and hands-on activities. Our volunteers are key in helping deliver these talks which are all about how food, farming and the countryside work in Scotland.

Food and farming events

Most Countryside Initiatives run one or more multi school, whole day events. These are held on farms, estates or in Auction Markets, offering a variety of different learning stations around food production and countryside issues.

Teacher training

The professional learning we deliver involves tackling current issues through providing practitioners with information, together with the opportunities to gain knowledge and expand pedagogies through experiencing industry and/or undertaking classroom activities, utilising both virtual and face to face opportunities.

Fundraising

Each CI is an individual charity and requires funds to enable it to function. Fundraising is a vital role, a volunteer can support by organising a fundraising event such as sponsored walk or ladies lunch, or by filling in grant application forms.

The Royal Highland show

The RHET network, operating out of the discovery centre, delivers educational sessions as part of the Highland Show. This involves working with a range of partners and providing opportunities for schools from across Scotland to visit the show.

Volunteering is a mutual partnership with roles and responsibilities from each side.

What you can expect from us

We will give details of the volunteer role, explain the benefits of the volunteer role to the organisation, outline the commitment required as a volunteer, provide details of the volunteering opportunities and support you on your volunteering journey.

You can expect:

- **To be treated fairly and with respect**
- **Insurance** – all our volunteers are insured during their time volunteering with us via our Public Liability Insurance.
- **Health and safety** – you will be provided with safe working conditions that do not pose a risk to your health.
- **Risk assessments** - are undertaken for all activities and will be shared with you.
- **Support** – you can expect regular support and guidance from your Project Coordinator, volunteer meetings and update newsletters.
- **Training and personal development** - we aim to provide our volunteers with training opportunities for example Elementary Food Hygiene Certificate and delivering talks. Other in-role training is also offered.
- **Out of pocket expenses** – may be available on request.

What we expect from you

RHET is looking for the following from you as a volunteer:

- **Commitment and reliability** – please contact your Project Coordinator if you are not able to attend and let us know if you no longer wish to volunteer.
- **Honesty** - we have a good deal of trust in our volunteers and expect that you are honest in how you deal with the organisation and the people who use its services.
- **Provision of balanced information** - which is unbiased and encourages engagement with the industry.
- **Work within our policies** - e.g. Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Child and Adult Protection.
- **To respect each other and be aware of each others' needs.**
- **To maintain confidentiality** - of the organisation and of its clients, customers or service users.
- **To perform your role to the best of your ability and enjoy being involved.**

We'll support you

We really value our volunteers at RHET and without you we could not run our services.

Your local Project Coordinator is there to support you, both formally and informally and staff members are also available for support if required.

Dealing with difficulties

We hope you enjoy your time volunteering with us and we'll be as open and friendly as possible to make this happen. We hope to deal with any problems informally, through a chat with your local project coordinator or other staff member.

However, if you do have a complaint, or if someone complains about you, we have policies in place to ensure this is dealt with quickly and appropriately. Please see the volunteer problem solving policy for more information.

Other useful information

Our RHET Ingliston Office can be contacted at rhetinfo@rhass.org.uk or 0131 3356227

Our website www.rhet.org.uk

Follow your local Countryside Initiative on social media Facebook, Twitter & Instagram

To see any of our policies or procedures please contact your project coordinator.

Contact list

Project Coordinators

ARGYLL & BUTE

Katherine Dempster
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DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

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07521 145 325

FORTH VALLEY

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Bethany Nicholls
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Contact list

Project Coordinators

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PERTH & KINROSS

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SCOTTISH BORDERS

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Ann Redpath (Assistant)
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07810 866 543

ABERDEEN, ABERDEEN CITY & MORAY (RNCI)

Lynne Watson
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07716 424 147

Contact list

Main office number: 0131 335 6227
Email: rhetinfo@rhass.org.uk

Central team

Katrina Barclay,
RHET Executive Officer
Katrina started her time with RHET as Lothian project coordinator back in 2011.

The role involves providing support and direction to all members of the RHET network on legislation compliance, procedures, policy framework and strategic progress and developments. Networking, fundraising, raising the profile of RHET at regional, national and international opportunities is key to the promotion of the work of the volunteers.

Katrina is part of the senior management team of RHASS and is involved in a variety of projects including health & safety, PR, media and staffing responsibilities for RHET and RHASS.

katrinab@rhass.org.uk
0131 335 6201 / 07769 329 176

Cheryl Morrison,
RHET Operations Officer
Cheryl joined RHET in March 2017 as Administrator and became Operations Officer in Oct 2023.

Cheryl oversees the RHET central office operations, supporting the RHET Network with her central colleagues. She assists the RHET Executive Officer with tasks such as engagement forecasting, reporting activity against goals and targets for the board. Other areas of responsibility include budget management, funding applications, statistical analysis, and supporting the implementation of policies and procedures.

rhetinfo@rhass.org.uk / cmorrison@rhass.org.uk
0131 335 6230 / 07718 424 111

Pauline Todd,
RHET Administrator
Pauline joined RHET in November 2023. Pauline carries out administration for the Ingliston team, and is responsible for overseeing information collation, supporting, and engaging with the RHET network and ensuring the office operation runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Pauline Is also responsible for co-ordinating the RHET national volunteering program and identifying funding opportunities for RHET.

ptodd@rhass.org.uk
0131 335 6227

RHET Board

Hugh McClymont Dumfries. RHET Director and Chairman RHET Dumfries & Galloway Countryside Initative.

SRUC South & West Dairy Farms Manager at Crichton Royal and Barony Farms Dumfries.

Passionate about all RHET stands for.

Marion McCormick worked in a Commercial Director's role with Aldi Scotland for nearly 20 years and now runs a confectionery business in Glasgow with a partner.

Marion has worked closely with many agricultural and rural businesses and has been involved in several rural policy forums for Scotland over several years.

Christine Brown lives in Innerleithen within the Scottish Borders. Grew up on a dairy farm in Perthshire and trained as Home Economics teacher. Starting teaching in Penicuik moved to be Head of Department and Depute Head Teacher at Galashiels Academy, now works at a Quality Improvement Officer for Scottish Borders Council. Married to George with three sons Ross, Murray and Stuart. Christine is the new Chair of the Forum.

Lynne Reid lives at Plean Farm with Husband Alan, they have 3 adult daughters, and 3 grandchildren who all help on the farm. The Reid's moved from Ayrshire to Plean farm 28 years ago, this will be our 28th winter on this Farm, they milk 160 cows on 353 acres and some rented summer grazing for young stock.

"I have volunteered for RHET for 20 years as a farm host, classroom speaker. I am chair of Forth Valley CI and now also Chair of the RHET Council. I love being involved with RHET as educating children about food production on real working farms is so important, it can offer informed lifestyle choices and career opportunities."

Alana McLean has a Bachelor of Communications – Public Relations, is a graduate of the Scottish Enterprise Rural Leadership Programme and works alongside the team at Jane Craigie Marketing supporting clients across the agriculture, food and rural industries.

Before moving to Scotland from Australia, Alana founded a project focused on farm succession and, as a result, was announced as an Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Trailblazer. She lives in Aberdeenshire with her husband.

Kirsty Craig lives on a beef farm in Fenwick, Ayrshire with her husband Allan and two children. "Back in the day" she was an active member of Lesmahagow Young Farmers Club and has been a fundraiser for 20 years.

Kirsty currently heads the UK Major Gifts Philanthropy Team at the University of Glasgow and gets particular pleasure in raising funds in support of ground-breaking cancer research and to enable students from disadvantaged backgrounds to attend university.

Prior to this role she planned and ran a programme of events including the Great Scottish Run and the World Pipe Band Championships

RHET Board

Anna Davies has many years of public relations, communications, marketing and publishing experience and set up full-service rural communications agency Scene & Herd back in 2009, to give rural businesses a stronger promotional voice.

In 2020, Scene & Herd launched the successful OnFARM podcast which is now performing in the top 10 per cent of podcasts globally and in late 2021 they will launch the OnFARM Academy – online PR and Marketing training specifically designed for rural and foodie businesses.

Bruce Christie has been involved with RHET from it's inception, first of all as a volunteer and then as a committee member of ACI. He has been Chairman of ACI since 2010. Bruce is the Farm manager at Dalhousie estates in Brechin Angus.

This is a very diverse business ranging from intensive arable cropping and an Aberdeen Angus herd on the low ground, to hill sheep production in Glen Esk. Before moving to Angus, Bruce was a farm manager in the Black Isle and was chairman of Highland machinery ring.

Until recently Bruce took part in a number of triathlons, he says that this was a good way of keeping fit and checking on things around the farm!

Bill Brown farms alongside his wife and two children on their mixed organic farm, home to cattle,sheep and laying hens. This is after finishing a degree in Agriculture at Edinburgh University, Bill returned home to farm in Peeblesshire.

Both Bill and his wife Margaret have been involved with Borders RHET for over 20 years, and enjoy welcoming groups to the farm. Bill is now the chair of Borders. In his spare time Bill enjoys skiing and sailing.

Liz Waugh has been involved in the fresh produce industry for over 30 years.

Originally a farmer's daughter, she trained as a Chartered Accountant and following various roles, she joined Kettle Produce Ltd, a major supplier of fresh vegetables within the UK.

She lives in Cupar and enjoys travelling near and far and lots of walking.

Appendix

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PVG Scheme

As a volunteer with RHET, you are delivering a regulated role and we will ask you to complete a PVG (Protecting Vulnerable Groups) form.

This process is free and is carried out online. Assistance will be provided if required.

Please ensure you tick the relevant box on your volunteer form so we can issue you the correct paperwork.

PVG Application Process

1 **ID VERIFICATION** The Project Coordinator will carry out an ID verification check. This can be completed either **in person or via video call**, where the applicant's identification documents will be checked.

Please do not send identification documents to RHET Central.

2 **APPLICATION PROCESSING** RHET Central will submit the application request to **Volunteer Scotland** for processing. Volunteer Scotland will process the request and forward it to **Disclosure Scotland**.

3 **COMPLETE THE ONLINE APPLICATION** Disclosure Scotland will send the applicant an email containing a link to complete the online application form.

Important: The applicant must complete the online application within **14 days**. If the application is not completed within this period, it will expire.

A **new application request** will then need to be submitted through RHET Central, and the entire process will need to start again.

4 **DISCLOSURE CHECKS** Disclosure Scotland will carry out the necessary disclosure checks.

5 **SHARE YOUR APPROVED PVG**
Once Disclosure Scotland has completed its checks and the PVG has been approved, the applicant must:

1. Log in to their **ScotAccount**.
2. Follow the instructions to **share their PVG with RHET Central**.

The PVG process is not complete until the applicant has shared their approved PVG with RHET Central.

6 **KEEPING YOUR DETAILS UP TO DATE**
Once you become a PVG Scheme Member, you are required to inform Disclosure Scotland of any changes to your personal details, such as your **name or address**.

7 **IF YOU STOP VOLUNTEERING WITH RHET**
If, for any reason, you are no longer volunteering with RHET, please inform:

RHET Central: rhetinfo@rhass.org.uk
Disclosure Scotland: 03000 2000 40 or info@disclosurescotland.gsi.gov.uk

What is involved?

RHET

Your questions answered:

Farm visit host

The importance of farm hosts	The Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) is an educational charity with the aim of increasing young people's understanding of food, farming and working countryside. Farm Visit hosts are a key part of this as they provide the opportunity for groups to experience first-hand how food is produced and how land is managed. We offer schools both face to face and digital fram visits. You can provide valuable information about how your farm works to help educate children.
Who is there to support you?	The Project Co-ordinator will support you. Your Project Co-ordinator will also attend visits to help you along the way. There are ongoing free workshops available if you want to enhance your farm visits.
How much time do I need to commit?	This is entirely up to you but preferably one visit per year. There is no upper limit to visits and it will depend on the interest from schools in your area. Your Project Co-ordinator will discuss this with you.
How does it all work?	Schools apply to have a farm visit and, after liaising with the Project Co-ordinator to make sure the requirements of the booked group can be met, dates (for the visit and the pre visit) are set for a group to visit your farm. Each farm visits requires a risk assessment and we will work with you to undertake a risk assessment for your farm, after which you can host agreed visits booked through RHET. We ask that you help us evaluate visits. As a farm host you are not responsible for training, supervising or being in sole charge of the children on the visit. This responsibility lies with the teacher in charge. Your Project Co-ordinator will explain how digital farm visits work in your area.
Getting involved	To get involved, please complete the Volunteer Application Form, email us at rhetinfo@rhass.org.uk, call 0131 335 6290 or speak to your local Project Coordinator.

Classroom speaker

The importance of classroom speakers	The Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) is an educational charity with the aim of increasing young people's understanding of food, farming and working countryside. Classroom speakers are a key part of this as they provide the opportunity for groups to hear about food, farming and working countryside. We offer face to face and digital classroom talks.
Who is there to support you?	The Project Co-ordinator will support you. We offer speaker training plus a programme of training based around helping you become more confident at addressing groups of young people.
How much time do I need to commit?	This is entirely up to you but preferably one talk per year. There is no upper limit and it will depend on the interest from schools in your area.

How does it all work?	Schools apply to the Project Co-ordinator for a classroom speaker and after liaising to make sure the requirements of the booked group are met, a date would be set and confirmed with you and the school. We work with you to agree what you would like to talk about to groups and what age groups would suit you best. Classes particularly want to hear about your farm and your way of life. The Project Co-ordinator will ask if you can help with any requests that have come in for a talk and will provide a prop box. We ask that you help us evaluate visits. During a talk about farming in the classroom, you are not responsible for being in sole charge of the children - this responsibility lies with the teacher. Your Project Co-ordinator will explain how digital farm visits work in your area.
Getting involved	To get involved, please complete the Volunteer Application Form, email us at rhetinfo@rhass.org.uk, call 0131 335 6290 or speak to your local Project Coordinator.

Royal Highland show volunteer

The importance of Show help	The Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) is an educational charity with the aim of increasing young people's understanding of food, farming and working countryside. The Royal Highland Show is our busiest time and we need help to educate and inform the children coming to the Show in school groups.
Who is there to support you?	All the RHET staff help at the show, as do the Project Coordinators from all the areas.
How much time do I need to commit?	During the 4 days in June, various activities in the children's Discovery Centre require assistance from volunteers. On the Thursday and Friday, tour guides are required to take classes (with teachers and helpers) on a short tour of the showground. Volunteering slots last 2.5 hours.
How does it all work	To let us know you are interested, fill in the Show form and we will then allocate you a task. These vary hugely : - on a stand assisting/carrying out an activity - helping with tidying after food prep - interacting with the public In return for your time we provide a show entrance ticket.
Getting involved	To get involved please complete the online sign-up form via this link, e-mail us at rhetinfo@rhass.org.uk or call 0131 335 6290

Event volunteer

The importance of event volunteers	The Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) is an educational charity with the aim of increasing young people's understanding of farming, food production and the working countryside. We operate across Scotland and run a number of events aimed at engaging people with with food, farming and working countryside.
Who is there to support you?	You will have ongoing support from your Project Coordinator at every event with which you help. We also provide an ongoing training programme which event volunteers can access.
How much time do I need to commit?	Events are ongoing throughout the year so any time you can give on an ad hoc basis is helpful.
How does it all work?	Just let us know you are interested and we will do the rest. The role is very varied depending on the event.
Getting involved	To get involved, please complete the Volunteer Application Form, email us at rhetinfo@rhass.org.uk, call 0131 335 6290 or speak to your local Project Coordinator.

Committee member

The importance of committee members	The Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) is an educational charity with the aim of increasing young people's understanding of food, farming and working countryside. RHET has 12 Countryside Initiatives across Scotland and each is a fully registered company and Scottish charity. Each initiative has a Coordinator, a Board of Trustees and a committee which oversee the running of the initiative. The principal role of a committee member is to support the work of the Countryside Initiative.
Who is there to support you?	You will have ongoing support from your Chair, Project Co-ordinator and the rest of the committee.
How much time do I need to commit?	Committee meetings take place throughout the year (usually for a couple of hours in the evenings) with around 6 meetings per annum. The role also involves assisting with education events such as stewarding at Food and Farming days and possibly helping with fundraisers for the Initiative.
How does it all work?	Members attend and contribute to committee meetings on a regular basis and participate regularly in the ongoing activities of the Initiative. You input ideas and promote RHET and the work it does at the local level.
Getting involved	To get involved, please complete the Volunteer Application Form, email us at rhetinfo@rhass.org.uk, call 0131 335 6290 or speak to your local Project Coordinator.

Countryside initiative board chair

The importance of committee chairs	The Royal Highland Education Trust (RHET) is an educational charity with the aim of increasing young people's understanding of food, farming and working countryside. RHET has 12 Countryside Initiatives throughout Scotland and each Countryside Initiative (CI) is a registered company and Scottish charity with a Board of Trustees and Committee and a Project Coordinator. The Board of Trustees of each of the CIs has overall responsibility for the running of the CI, for ensuring it is compliant with current legislation and for formulating the CI's Strategic Plan. The Board can appoint a Committee to help with the day to day running of the CI.
Who is there to support you?	You will have ongoing support through your Board and from the RHET Board of Trustees as well as RHET's Central Resource at Ingliston.
How much time do I need to commit?	The minimum requirement is approx. 6 meetings per year plus helping out at some larger events, networking and meeting with your Project Co-ordinator on a regular basis. Local chairs are also recommended to attend at least 2 of the 3 Forum meetings held at Ingliston each year (The RHET Forum is a chance for all CIs (Project Co-ordinator and Chair) to hear what is happening on a National basis and is an invaluable chance to network with other Chairs). The RHET Council meets after the Forum to discuss and advise the strategic direction of RHET.
How does it all work	Chairs need to understand how RHET works and are likely to have been involved with the committee prior to becoming chair.
What type of person is RHET looking for to be a Board Chair?	RHET is looking for leaders to guide the Boards and Committees to enable them to fulfil RHET's purpose. Skills including open-mindedness, leadership, the ability to represent CIs at a variety of events and situations, support with fund-raising and punctuality are needed.
Getting involved	To get involved, please complete the Volunteer Application Form, email us at rhetinfo@rhass.org.uk, call 0131 335 6290 or speak to your local Project Coordinator.