

Make a difference and feel better with our Rights of Way team!

Somerset's Rights of Way volunteer community is back active and working with a few adjustments as lockdown continues to ease – and there are plenty of opportunities available to be part of it.

Somerset County Council has five volunteering roles in the Rights of Way team, and all can be flexibly adapted to suit your circumstances. Volunteering is a fantastic way to gain new skills, meet new people and give back to the local community.

The vacancies currently advertised on <https://volunteering.somerset.gov.uk/> are for Ease of Use surveyors, Trail Watchers, Parish Path Liaison Officers and Somerset Strimmers. All roles can be undertaken individually, so if social distancing rules are adhered to when working, the roles are safe for all.

There are five steps to wellbeing recommended for everyone as social contact with others has dramatically reduced. Becoming a Rights of Way volunteer can help you:

- **Be Active** – walking gets you out of the house; your fitness improves and so does your mental health.
- **Connect** – Volunteering is a great way to meet new people. Although meetings cannot currently take place with other volunteers, using public rights of way increases interaction with others doing the same, but please make sure to stick to social distancing rules.
- **Give** – by giving your time to volunteer work, you can see your impact on your community and its surroundings. Supporting the Rights of Way network benefits local users, tourists and businesses – you really can make a difference!
- **Keep learning** – once you find a role you are comfortable with; you can learn new ways to support the network over time. This gradual adaptation can increase confidence and personal involvement in the community.
- **Take notice** – Discover what a beautiful landscape Somerset has by doing this. Volunteering is a great way to explore personal curiosities and historical stories in our area.

Councillor John Woodman, Somerset County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways said: "We know many people have been taking advantage of the lockdown and good weather to enjoy our fabulous rights of way. Volunteering not only helps improve the area for everyone but can also massively benefit your physical and mental wellbeing.

"Walking is free and one of the easiest ways to lose weight; and regular walks are vital for a clear head and improved mental health so if you have some free time to spare, signing up to help our Rights of Way teams can only be a good thing."

If you are one of the many people who have been exploring your local area more than you ever have before using the Rights of Way network – now is a great time to help ensure others can enjoy them and maintain the benefits you have already received by doing so!

To find out more about the voluntary opportunities with the Rights of Way team, please visit <https://volunteering.somerset.gov.uk/>.