Information Sheet & Application Form

About Blackerton Ecocentre

The Ecocentre is being established on the site of a former care home. Blackerton was a whole village set up to provide a home and employment for people with learning difficulties. It was established in the 1960s and closed in 2010. We moved onto the site in Autumn 2014, buying the care home itself (the former farmhouse), a neighbouring cottage, woodwork studio and woodlands. On site there is also a community woodland and plenty of other green communal space. We also own part of a field which was formerly used for Special Olympics training. Our plans are:

- To renovate the care home in stages to establish a training centre for courses in low-impact living, sustainability, bushcraft, Forest School & other related areas.:
    - Finishing the renovation of the theatre, dining room and lounge, toilets and family room to give us some room for courses and activities.
    - Finishing the renovation of the guest rooms in the Ecocentre to create bunk rooms and single rooms, offering accommodation for up to 30 guests.
    - Renovating the basement bar/games room to offer some social space to volunteers and guests.
- To tidy the outside areas, ideally creating some growing space alongside a car parking area (required by planning).
- To make use of the growing land organically and in accordance with permaculture principles, to create keyhole gardens and other small gardens to inspire people with small areas of land to grow their own food.
- To bring the woodwork studio back into use for woodwork and environmental crafts.

We can offer a variety of work, depending on the weather/season/your preferences. We ask you to work, on average four hours a day on five days a week (usually Monday to Friday), although we are happy to be flexible and we'll be happy for you to swap shifts with each other or to work across fewer days etc. There will almost always be one of us onsite, and we will arrange in advance if you'll be working on your own. If you'd prefer to self-cater then we'd ask you to work fewer hours, usually just 16 a week rather than 20 (though please note our remoteness so you can carefully plan shopping).

www.blackerton-ecocentre.com
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We can offer accommodation in spacious rooms (mix of single, double and twin rooms available for volunteer couples or friends who would like to share a room). There are shared bathrooms/toilets and a volunteer lounge and kitchen which will eventually become those of the Ecocentre. We also have a self-contained flat which is available for long-term volunteers and may be especially suitable for volunteers with children. It has four bedrooms, a bathroom/toilet, kitchen & lounge. We also have a smaller one bed flatlet with a kitchenette.

We will provide food; the logistics of this will vary a little depending on the number of volunteers we have staying but this will generally be vegetarian for all meals. We have wifi in most parts of the building.

Blackerton is in rural North Devon in an isolated setting; there is no bus service that runs close by. We are happy to collect volunteers by arrangement from Tiverton Parkway, which is the closest railway station. We're also happy to offer lifts when possible to the nearby towns of South Molton & Dulverton. We can offer the use of bicycles and there is a bridleway that passes through the village that offers some interesting walks into the surrounding countryside. Please do note the remote setting and be prepared for a quiet time unless you have your own transport.

We can accommodate up to twelve volunteers (plus children) and we plan to host several volunteers at once so that you can entertain each other. Volunteers do need to speak English to a good standard as it will be the common language and with many volunteers we need to know we can communicate effectively with all of you. Do arrange to call us and chat to us if you're not sure if your English is good enough. We will expect you to speak English when you are working and in communal areas.

Please see our website for news, photos of the site and details of when we have volunteer spaces available. In 2021, our hosting will be dependent on Covid restrictions which will limit the number of different households permitted to live together. We hope to be able to host volunteers between the following dates:27th March – 18th April, 29th May – 5th June, summer dates TBC and we are happy for volunteers to spend between 2 & 4 weeks with us. If you are interested in staying longer or at a different time, please contact us but we may not be able to accommodate you.

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About Us

We're Victoria & Jake Ward, parents to four home educated children who live on site with us. Jake is a qualified Bushcraft Instructor and passionate about getting more people outdoors and learning traditional skills. He currently works for a local special school. Victoria is a yoga teacher and runs the School of Babywearing, which provides training for people supporting parents in the use of slings and baby carriers. She has a passion for environmental arts and crafts, storytelling and drama.

We live at the front of the Ecocentre building with volunteer accommodation further back in the building. The Ecocentre itself has a pub/games room which can be used in the evenings - it has a dartboard & pool table and a bar - drinks not provided!.

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Application Form

Name:

Address:

E-mail:

Date of Birth:

WWOOF/Workaway ID (if appropriate):

Emergency Telephone number:

What dates are you available from & to and how long would you like to stay? Please note that for stays over one week, we will chat to you & review your stay after one week to ensure that this is working for you and for us.

Do you have a preference for the kind of work you carry out with us?

Have you any medical conditions/allergies/dietary requirements or special needs we need to be aware of? Please note that we do have cats who may access communal areas.

Have you any specific skills that you think are relevant to us?

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What is it about working at the Ecocentre that particularly appeals to you?

How do you feel you would be able to work in an environment where children are learning from the world around them rather than in school?

Do you have any mental or emotional issues that might affect your stay?

Is there anything else you would like to know from us?

Please provide details of at least one referee (e-mail address if possible) who can comment on your suitability for this role:

You can complete this form and return it to us by e-mail/post or complete it online via our website: www.blackerton-ecocentre.com/volunteerform

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