

Are you interested in astronomy and dark skies? Does learning about, or enhancing your knowledge of, astronomy and dark skies appeal to you?

If you would like to develop your skills and teach others of the wonderful benefits of dark skies this role is for you.

As part of our 'Starry Starry Nights' project we are looking for volunteers to join a team to better understand and promote the benefits of dark skies, to educate people and organisations on light pollution and improved lighting and to host stargazing events to encourage all to enjoy our dark skies.



Role Description

Volunteers will work with the Chase and Chalke LPS Team (part of Cranborne Chase AONB) to promote and enhance the AONB's dark skies. This role has a wide variety of opportunities so volunteers can choose which activities they are interested in.

Volunteer Responsibilities

With the support of the Chase & Chalke LPS, volunteers will:

- Receive free training in the use of Sky Quality Measure (SQM) reading equipment
- Take Sky Quality Measure (SQM) readings
- Understand the issues around light pollution and how lighting schemes can be improved
- Give presentations/talks to local organisations (eg parish councils, social groups) to educate them and others about light pollution and how to mitigate it
- Work with AONB and local landowners to identify appropriate dark sky sites
- Be able to identify constellations and fun asterisms, understand and use planetarium software and to pass this knowledge on to others
- Organise and lead stargazing events, assess progress and outcomes, providing feedback to LPS Team.



Volunteer Dark Sky Custodian

Essential Information	
Minimum Age	18
Personal Attributes	Would suit a friendly, welcoming individual with good communication skills, who is willing to learn and to share knowledge. Must be punctual and reliable, able to take control and be calm and assertive when required. Attention to detail, a sense of humour and enthusiasm for dark skies and the benefits they bring are key. Must be confident, both to go out (alone) in the AONB in the dark and when talking to local organisations.
Location of the Role	Varied locations around the Cranborne Chase and Chalke Valley area.
Driving Licence Required	Yes - Own transport preferable, can use public transport but limited timetables and coverage.
Single/Shared Role	This role can be done individually, or shared.
Project Start & End Date	Start autumn 2021, ongoing.
Time/Days Required	Flexible. Training, stargazing events and other activity to be determined by Dark Sky Custodian in partnership with AONB/LPS contacts. SQM readings to be taken at least once for each metering area in the Custodian's designated patch, usually a max of 15 areas per patch.
Training & Support	Free induction and training on the equipment and taking SQMs will be provided via a series of documents, videos, online Q&A sessions and in person meetings (subject to COVID restrictions). All equipment provided. Resources are available for talks/presentations, eg lighting guidance notes, light pollution PowerPoint presentation including support from our team. Equipment is available for star gazing events – binoculars, tripods, telescopes and other materials.
Dress Code	We aim for a friendly and relaxed working environment, so there is no strict dress code. However we recommend warm and waterproof clothing for outdoors
Expenses	Travel expenses (fuel at 45p per mile, or public transport) will be paid – fuel receipts or transport ticket will be required.
Benefits to Volunteer	Free training and support. An opportunity to add to their learning, knowledge and experience. A sense of purpose and wellbeing; gained from being active under dark skies. A feeling of being connected with the landscape, fresh air and exercise. Social aspect of working with others and the reward of seeing others experience dark night skies for themselves.

Project Contacts

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