



Greetings!!



Hello everybody! My name is Steve Lowe and I have recently been appointed as the Volunteer Coordinator and Engagement Officer for the Cresswell Pele Tower project!

Phew what a mouthful – please call me Steve!

Some of you will be familiar with me as I have been involved with the Pele for some time via the community archaeology digs and other volunteering but was also Head of Conservation at Northumberland Wildlife Trust for 18 years.

I am excited to have the opportunity to assist with the work started by Barry Mead and a load of others, which has got the project to its current point. More importantly this is YOUR project, and my role is to make the site function into the future by working with people who care about it.

As you will be aware, the intention is to have the Pele open to the public (free of charge) but on limited days. The plans for the actual date of this remain in flux due to Covid but the general aim is for Easter 2021.

The need for Volunteers

We would welcome help with getting us to that point, which will include some landscaping works and maintenance as well as help with kitting out the building.



Once open, we need help with “meeting and greeting” and sharing the information about the site. This will be done via a rota and will, I am sure be great fun!

The aim is also to host planned visits, so guides would be welcome and if anyone has a particular skill with school groups that will be especially welcome as this is a great place to learn in a fun way using the tower, grounds and the local countryside and beach.

We are also hoping to run events as there is a nice space inside now. These could include all sorts of things including small craft fayres, ghost events, poetry evenings and storytelling!!



The Walled Garden

As if this isn't enough, our ambition is to fully restore the Walled Garden – taking it from a derelict space into something the local community and visitors can enjoy spending time in, relaxing, exploring the space and the colour and, we hope, growing things including food for local use.



I have been involved in the garden for some time with a group from Newcastle NHS Green Gym and the initial transformation is amazing. But there remains much to do and at present this is the principle volunteering opportunity.



The Walled Garden is open to volunteers every Thursday **BY APPOINTMENT** only. This is because the site is technically part of the building works and although perfectly safe including social distancing etc, we must adhere to a limit on numbers.

But anyone wanting to volunteer can let me know and I will ensure your interest is followed up.

MY ROLE

Despite the huge job title, it is simple - I am here to help!

However, I only have a couple of days a week so my aim is to get things in place that will allow much of this to run itself. That time is flexible though (at present).

So, I have drafted policies which will cover a range of things like Health and Safety, etc. They will be in place.

I am looking into training and support for volunteers.



Most importantly, I will be getting a huge biscuit tin, kettle and comfy seats for the Bothy.

Those of you who have not been recently may be unaware that the old, ruined bothy near the entrance has been refurbished and includes a loo and lots of space which is dedicated to the volunteers! **We must make it our own before Barry uses it to store his awards, fan mail and books.**



Landscaping works

We are hoping that volunteers will be able to start assisting with landscaping works around the Pele in January. This will be done alongside Groundwork but there should be scope to get involved then – obviously just in time for the harshest weather of the year!

Keeping legal

To do my job, I will be maintaining a spreadsheet/database for contact purposes. This will be maintained regularly and not shared with anyone as its sole use is to manage volunteers. However, to stay without the law I must have your consent for this so:

Please let me know if you have a problem with this!!



Covid 19

We will be working to the best practice available for working with volunteers. This will include limiting numbers, record keeping etc, but please bear with us – working outdoors is one of the safest things to do!

Volunteer roles

There will be lots of opportunities for involvement. We are especially keen to hear from people who would be willing to help:

- With opening the tower and helping visitors
- Gardening volunteers
- Education help
- Research and recording

But if you have any time and are willing to help, we hope to find something for you to do.

Its an exciting opportunity and one I am personally thrilled to have the opportunity to undertake.

At this stage, I would be grateful if anyone interested could confirm that by dropping me an email outlining their particular interest. I will do my absolute best to respond promptly.

Look forward to seeing you!

CONTACT ME:

Steve Lowe

E: stevelowe01@zoho.com

M: 07941 734736

