



Registered Charity No 1156662

Volunteer Policy

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1. Purpose

- 1.1 Buckingham Canal Society (BCS) believes that volunteers have an important role to play in achieving its aims, and is committed to involving all kinds of people and making sure they get the best out of the experience.
- 1.2 We recognise that volunteers are a valuable resource of support for our trustees and members, and working with volunteers is an effective way to promote community development.
- 1.3 The purpose of the policy is to provide overall guidance and direction to volunteers. The policy is intended for internal management guidance only and does not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement.
- 1.4 This policy sets out the broad principles for volunteer management within Buckingham Canal Society.
- 1.5 This policy is endorsed by the Trustee Board and is reviewed every 12 months to ensure that the terms and conditions are appropriate for volunteer management within our organisation.

2. Management of Volunteers

- 2.1 The range of activities of BCS is supervised by Work Party Leaders who are responsible for each area of our work. Leaders have responsibility for oversight of a specific area of the Society's work, and act as first point of contact for these areas.

3. Volunteer opportunities

- 3.1 BCS has a wide range of volunteer opportunities to suit people with different backgrounds and experience.

These include:

- Campaigning in support of our aims, and to prevent development to the canal and its corridor that is likely to compromise restoration.
- Carrying out practical restoration and conservation work.
- Surveying, engineering and design work.
- Organising events to publicise the canal.
- Promoting responsible use of the canal.
- Running a sales stand at national, regional and local events, to encourage new members and / or volunteers.
- Taking our exhibition to different locations in the region.
- Giving talks/ presentations.
- Organising a social programme for members.
- Writing, publishing and distributing our magazine - The Buckingham Navigator.
- Keeping a photographic record of the canal, its wildlife and its restoration.
- Encouraging historical research into the canal and keeping an archive.
- Designing, publishing and distributing promotional material.
- Organising fund-raising activities.

- Representing our views on planning issues affecting the canal.
- Seeking sponsorship, donations and grants.
- Researching, publishing and leading walks along the canal.
- Helping to improve access and interpretation.

3.2 It is clear that within this list there is the opportunity for everyone to get involved and help to 'make a difference'. Although volunteers often bring with them appropriate skills, qualifications and experience, we are committed, within the available resources, to offering encouragement, training and support to enable volunteers to extend their skills or acquire new ones.

4. Recruitment and selection of volunteers

4.1 The Society values the contribution made by volunteers and recognises that the volunteering relationship is a reciprocal one.

4.2 We have no formal procedures for recruitment and selection of volunteers. We recruit volunteers through a variety of mainly informal channels, such as visits to our worksites, trip boats and events, through our publicity and occasional appeals and through volunteer bureaux. Information about our organisation and volunteer roles is displayed through our Charity's website and other communication channels including volunteer recruitment websites and local voluntary groups.

4.3 We encourage potential volunteers to gain 'hands on' experience in the area of their choice before making a commitment, and subject to their suitability. Volunteers must disclose details of any medical condition or disability which might limit their capacity to contribute.

4.4 Volunteers will not be required to make a specific time commitment. All volunteer contributions will be valued.

4.5 No volunteer will be put in a situation, or expected to carry out duties, for which they are not suitably trained and/or qualified

4.6 Volunteers are not required to become members of the Society although membership is encouraged and enables volunteers to keep in touch through the Society magazine, The Buckingham Navigator.

4.7 All volunteers are required to complete a skills form, an Equality & Diversity form, and a volunteer agreement prior to commencing their volunteer duties.

5, Induction

5.1 It is important to the Society that volunteers feel welcome and are inducted into their role so that they feel comfortable and know what is expected of them. The length and exact content of induction will vary depending on the volunteer's role, normally it will include:

- An introduction to the Society, who we are, what we do, and where the volunteer's role fits into this
- Information about conduct, standards etc.
- Information on who will be supervising and supporting them (in most cases this will be our Work Party Leader)
- Relevant health and safety information.

- Information about available training.
- Information about expenses, if applicable.
- Information about what to do if they are unhappy with any element of their volunteering.
- The risk assessment for their role(s)

5.2 From the point of induction, volunteers are required to take part in Health and Safety briefings at the start of each volunteer session.

5.3 Volunteers are assigned a named contact person for support and supervision. BCS will also provide timely support, supervision and guidance for volunteers to develop the qualities, skills and knowledge, as required.

6. Conduct of volunteers

6.1 We are open to participation by people with a diverse range of abilities and outlooks and will not reject anyone at the initial meeting stage. However, we do expect our volunteers to follow reasonable instructions, and not do or say anything which compromises the safety of themselves, other volunteers, staff, or members of the public, or which compromises the reputation, integrity or work of our organisation.

6.2 Where a volunteer does not meet or comply with these minimum standards of behaviour, or turns out to be unsuitable for their chosen role, we will work with them to identify opportunities which are more suited to their skills, or to mutually overcome obstacles to their involvement.

6.3 In the rare case that obstacles cannot be overcome the volunteering will have to cease.

7. Record Keeping

7.1 We'll keep minimum details on volunteers including the agreement form, emergency contact details, correspondence and other relevant information in accordance with our Confidentiality and Data Protection policies.

7.2 We'll actively reduce the use, storage and disposal of paper documents in our society and encourage our volunteers, trustees and committee members to handle documents electronically as much as possible.

8. Personal Protective Equipment

8.1 We supply appropriate protective equipment (e.g. hard hats, gloves, waders etc.) and volunteers are responsible for its care and safe return at the end of each day of volunteering.

8.2 We do not normally issue boots, steel capped footwear or waterproofs.

9. Expenses

9.1 We do not wish anyone to be denied the opportunity of volunteering for financial reasons. Accordingly, genuine and agreed expenses incurred in volunteering, e.g. travel, can, with prior

approval, be reimbursed on production of a receipt and on completion of an expenses form. Check with the Work Party Leader before you claim, who can provide the appropriate form.

9.2 Volunteers are generally encouraged to bring their own refreshments with them.

9.3 If you are unemployed you can still claim benefits while you are a volunteer. Ask at your local benefits office if you are not sure. It is recommended that you tell your Benefits Agency if you are volunteering.

10. Equal opportunities

10.1 The Society adopts an equal opportunities policy for each volunteer regardless of his or her sex, marital status, religion, disability, colour, race, or ethnic origin. All decisions are based solely on the relevant merits and abilities of each individual.

10.2 Volunteers who have not reached the age of 18 must provide a copy of the written consent of a parent or guardian prior to volunteering.

11. Training

11.1 Training is 'on the job' and volunteers must be advised by their Work Party Leader. We expect volunteers to identify their previous experience or qualifications, if any. Volunteers are encouraged to attend appropriate training sessions arranged by various providers, as resources allow.

11.2 The Society has a duty of care to ensure a healthy and safe working environment, and that our work practices do not cause harm to our volunteers or members of the public.

11.3 Strict adherence to our Health and Safety guidelines are particularly important on our volunteer work parties. Work Party Leaders will acquaint you with appropriate procedures.

11.4 Notwithstanding the responsibilities of the Society above, everyone is responsible in law for acting to ensure their own safety, that of their fellow volunteers and the public at large.

11.5 All volunteers will be required to supply personal information including emergency contact details and details of any medical condition restricting suitability for certain activities. These details will be kept confidential.

11.6 Lone working – please see our lone working policy [here](https://www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk/resources/)
<https://www.buckinghamcanal.org.uk/resources/>

11.7 All accidents are to be reported immediately to the Work Party Leader

11.8 A copy of the Society's Health and Safety policy is available from the Honorary Secretary.

12. Insurance

12.1 Volunteers are covered by the Society's Public and Employers Liability Insurances while on Society business.

12.2 This does not extend to personal possessions and vehicles, etc.

12.3 Be sure to notify your insurance company if you are using your car on Society business.

13 Timesheets

13.1 Timesheets will be completed by the Work Party Leader recording all volunteer input to BCS activities and volunteers should ensure that they are included at the end of each session. Timesheets are necessary for calculating match funding in grant bids and their completion could result in many thousands of pounds grant aid for restoration.