

# **Chesterfield Canal Trust Volunteer Policy**

## **1. Background**

### ***(a) The Chesterfield Canal Trust Ltd***

The Chesterfield Canal Trust Ltd (CCT) is a charitable company run entirely by volunteers, incorporated in July 1997. In 1998 it took over the assets of the former Chesterfield Canal Society (founded 1976). We currently have over 1300 members. There are several publications, including an annual Visitor Guide, which detail the work of the Trust.

### ***(b) Aims***

The aims of the Trust are to promote the full restoration and appropriate development of the Chesterfield Canal, and to campaign for the construction of the Rother Valley Link, a navigable waterway to join the Chesterfield Canal to the Sheffield and South Yorkshire Navigation.

## **2. Purpose of the Volunteer Policy**

We believe that volunteers have an important role to play in achieving these aims, and we are committed to involving all kinds of people and making sure they get the best out of the experience.

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.

## **3. Management of the Trust**

The Trust has a Board of Trustees which is elected at the Annual General Meetings, which normally take place in March.

The Trust is managed in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles of Association, a copy of which can be loaned from the company secretary.

In addition, the Trust is guided in its business by the Companies Acts of 1985 and 1989, and the Charities Act 1993.

The range of activities of the Trust is supervised by Section Heads who are responsible for discrete areas of our work, e.g. running a trip boat or the volunteer work party. A Trustee is identified as having responsibility for oversight of a specific area of the Trust's work, and acts as first point of contact with the section heads and work teams for these areas. Section heads and their teams are regularly invited to

Trustees' meetings for updates and to consider proposals for future action, and are invited to include a report of their work in the annual report.

#### **4. Participation in the Trust's activities through the Supporters' Group**

At the time of writing (July 2012) Supporters' Group meetings are held on the second Wednesday of alternate months at different venues along the canal.

The Trust has a policy of continually reviewing its aims, activities and expenditure and relies on its membership to assist in this process.

#### **5. Volunteer opportunities**

We have 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 harmful development to the canal and its corridor
- Carrying out practical restoration and conservation work
- Running three passenger trip boats on the canal, plus a restored ex-BW working boat, Python, used for publicity and promotional purposes
- The building of a new Cuckoo Boat, 'New Dawn'
- 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
- Taking our exhibition trailer, the James Brindley, to different locations throughout the year
- Providing illustrated talks for local and national audiences
- Organising a social programme for members
- Writing, publishing and distributing our award-winning members' magazine 'Cuckoo'
- Keeping a photographic record of the canal, its wildlife and its restoration
- Encouraging historical research into the canal
- Writing, distributing and selling new publications about the canal
- Acting as a canal ambassador Designing, publishing and distributing promotional material
- Organising fund – raising activities
- Representing our views on planning issues affecting the canal
- Seeking sponsorship and donations
- Researching, publishing and leading walks along the canal
- Garden maintenance at Hollingwood Hub
- Helping to improve access and interpretation
- Helping at our annual Festivals
- Providing help at one-off events such as a towpath survey or Cuckoo stuffing.

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.

## **6. Policies and procedures.**

### ***(a) Recruitment and selection of volunteers***

We have no formal procedures for recruitment and selection of volunteers. We recruit volunteers through a variety of mainly informal channels – visits to our worksite, Hollingwood Hub, the James Brindley promotional trailer, trip boats and events, and through our publicity and occasional appeals. In addition new members are telephoned by the Membership Secretary and are invited to indicate if there are areas in which they may wish to become involved.

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.

All volunteers must be members of the Chesterfield Canal Trust.

### ***(b) Conduct of volunteers***

All volunteers, in whatever capacity they are involved, act as ambassadors for the Canal Trust, and as such the highest standards of behaviour are expected. Any volunteer whose behaviour is judged not to meet these standards, or which may threaten the health and safety of fellow volunteers or members of the public, may have their membership withdrawn.

### ***(c) Expenses***

The Trustees decided in April 2013 to stop paying volunteers' expenses. This is because it puts a dramatic drain upon our resources. This policy will be kept under review.

### ***(d) Equal opportunities***

We welcome volunteers from all sectors of society, all ethnic groups, all sexual orientations and all religions.

Wherever possible, we encourage those with disabilities to become involved.

### ***(e) Training***

Training is 'on the job' and volunteers must be advised by their Section Head or deputy. 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.

Accreditation can sometimes be gained from education providers for volunteering. Ask at your local college.

#### ***(f) Health and Safety***

Generally speaking, volunteers are not covered by Health and Safety legislation in the same way as employees. However the Trust accepts 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.

Strict adherence to our Health and Safety guidelines are particularly important on our volunteer work party and in our trip boat operations. The Section Heads will acquaint you with appropriate procedures.

A copy of the Trust's Health and Safety policy is available from the Treasurer.

#### ***(g) Insurance***

Volunteers are covered by the Trust's insurance while on Trust business, and public liability insurance is included, but only if they are paid up members of CCT. Be sure to renew your membership promptly.

Our insurance covers members over the age of 18. Volunteers who have not reached the age of 18 must have the written consent of a parent or guardian prior to volunteering.

Be sure to check with your car's insurers if you are using your car on Trust business.

#### ***(h) Timesheets***

All volunteers should complete timesheets (available from Section Heads), detailing time spent on Trust activities. They should be completed at least four times a year and sent to either the appropriate section head or CCT vice-chairman. Timesheets are necessary for calculating match funding in grant bids and their completion has resulted in many additional thousands of pounds grant aid for the restoration.

Agreed by the Trustees July 2012