

Wendover Arm Trust – Volunteer Induction and Training Policy

Introduction

Wendover Arm Trust (WAT) is committed to the induction, training, support, and development of its volunteers. We aim to provide volunteers with the best information and skills so that they feel appropriately equipped for their role and can contribute as best as they can. We want our volunteers to have a positive and rewarding experience, whilst at the same time helping Wendover Arm Trust to fulfil its objectives.

Induction

Volunteer induction is important. Volunteers come to the organisation with a variety of skills and experiences and for differing reasons. They are willing to give their time for free, so it is important to find out more about their background and what their motivation for volunteering is. Induction is also the time to inform volunteers about Wendover Arm Trust and what it has set out to achieve. It is the time to explain to volunteers what the tasks are, what is expected of them in the various roles and what they can expect in return.

After an initial exploratory discussion and assessment of the volunteer's interests, WAT's induction usually becomes task specific and is delivered on a one to one basis by an experienced volunteer within that field e.g. volunteers interested in restoration work will be briefed by a restoration team leader, volunteers interested in supporting one of our events will be briefed by an events co-ordinator. All being well this will lead on to introductions to other volunteers and more detailed briefing of the tasks required.

Induction is an opportunity for prospective volunteers to raise questions. Volunteers will often be directed to information on our website which is considered important and useful. This could include:

- An overview of Wendover Arm Trust and what we are trying to achieve
- Information about the history of the Wendover Arm canal
- Various generic policy and procedure documents including Volunteer Code of Conduct, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy, Data Protection Policy
- Role specific documents e.g. Restoration Volunteer Handbook

Induction is also the time to confirm key information about our volunteers e.g. restrictions on availability, any medical information which WAT needs to be aware of, personal contact information and details of who to contact in case of emergency etc. All volunteers will need to complete a volunteer application form if they have not already done so.

Expenses

At present WAT is not in a position to reimburse volunteers for out of pocket expenses, apart from exceptional circumstances e.g. travel costs to out of area training courses or conferences; reimbursement of any items that are purchased on a pre-agreed basis for WAT

All restoration volunteers are required to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on site – safety boots, hard hats, Hi-Viz jackets, gloves etc. Many volunteers choose to supply their

own clothing as they regard it personal to them. If not, WAT will supply these essentials as required.

Training

WAT is committed to provide all essential training as a matter of course and other desirable training wherever possible. Training requirements are determined by a combination of the nature of the job and each volunteer's personal skills, knowledge, and experience.

Skills and knowledge training are particularly important for our restoration volunteers, where health and safety regulations are key and method statements and risk assessments must always be understood and adhered to. Some site-based tasks require specific training e.g. drivers of mobile plant must be authorised and hold an official 'driver authorisation' card. WAT oversees all such training and authorisation for its volunteers. Full details of what is required and what is to be expected on site are provided in the Restoration Volunteer Handbook and Health and Safety Guide. The restoration volunteer team leaders will reinforce the regulations, policies, and procedures with all new and existing volunteers.

Wendover Arm Trust is also committed to training and supporting its volunteers in non-restoration-based activity, whether that be helping with marketing, developing our schools and community links, strengthening our environmental work, fundraising etc. Training and development in these areas is less likely to be in-house but is still supported by encouraging attendance at external conferences, seminars, and workshops. For example, WAT has close links with the Inland Waterways Association (IWA) and Bucks Business First both of which provide a programme of events that WAT's volunteers have participated in.

WAT adopts a continuous programme of development for its volunteers. This is an informal process responding to the needs and interests of individuals as they arise, but one which still provides an opportunity for discussion and feedback between a volunteer and team leader. This is with the intention of maintaining the ongoing interest and supporting the development of our volunteers, as well as helping WAT progress its programme of work. The latter is particularly important to help manage succession planning for key volunteer roles which are essential for the future of the organisation.

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