



The Kennet and Avon Canal Trust Volunteer Handbook

*“Volunteers do not necessarily have
the time; they just have the heart.”*

Elizabeth Andrews

Volunteers are an essential and valued part of our charitable Trust. The Kennet and Avon Canal is probably one of the best known waterways in the country and this would never have been possible without the contribution of our volunteers. It is down to the countless hours of volunteer effort in the past which has ranged from digging out mud to raising many thousands of pounds, providing the Trust with the means to protect, enhance and promote the rich heritage and wealth of activities that together make up the Kennet and Avon inland waterway. Even so, the demands on volunteer's time and effort on the waterway have not diminished; indeed it can be argued that the need is growing for more engagement and involvement to ensure that we can continue to enjoy the legacy of our industrial past.

This Handbook has been developed to ensure that you have a rewarding and enjoyable experience as a volunteer. The Trust is committed to supporting its volunteers and this Handbook will help you to access the support we provide. Intended to be a guide – rather than a rule book – this Handbook gives important information about the Trust and some of the different opportunities available, providing useful contact details and information about policies that might affect volunteers. The handbook is not intended to displace local advice documents used in some branches.

Above all, we hope it helps both you and the Trust to get the most out of your volunteering.

For the avoidance of doubt; this handbook does not constitute an employment contract nor is there any intention to create or imply an employment contract between the Trust and its volunteers.



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

The MBE for volunteer groups

Table of Contents

Information for Volunteers	3
Background	3
Organisation	3
Branches	3
Trust Council	3
Enterprise (Mail Order/cafes/shops/boats)	4
Visitor Centres	4
Promotion and publicity	4
Training	4
Initial training	4
On-the-job training	5
Gaining qualifications	5
Providing a reference	5
Policies and Procedures	6
Volunteer policy	6
Our commitment to you	6
Your commitment to us	6
Standards for volunteers	6
Insurance Cover	7
Health and Safety	7
General	7
Risk assessments	7
Use of Power tools and Electrical	7
Protective Equipment	8
Accident reporting	8
Fire precautions	8
Child Protection Policy	8
Data protection issues	8
Equality and Diversity	9
Purchase of Equipment and Supplies	9
General	8
Travel expenses	8
Eating and drinking arrangements	9
Leaving	9
Comments, suggestions, problem solving and complaints	9
Trust Contacts	10

Information for Volunteers

Background

The Kennet & Avon Canal links the Thames with the River Avon and provides the only inland navigable passage from Reading to Bristol. The canal meanders for 87 miles through some of the most attractive countryside in Southern England. Built more than 200 years ago it is now a beautiful waterway featuring many locks, tunnels, fine aqueducts and pumping stations demonstrating the ingenuity of our forebears at the time of the industrial revolution. When the canal fell into disuse and was facing abandonment in the 1950s, the Kennet & Avon Canal Trust was formed to campaign for its restoration, a task fully completed in 2003. The Trust now works to Protect, Enhance and Promote the amenity on behalf of all users including walkers, cyclists, anglers, boaters and tourists. The Trust has restored and operates an original steam powered pumping station and its museum has been described as 'the best small waterways museum'. The Trust's trading arm owns and operates 4 passenger trip boats and 5 cafes and shops. At the end of 2015, The Trust signed a Strategic Alliance with the Bruce Trust under which it is operating the 4 Bruce boats specially designed to provide holidays for disabled, disadvantaged or elderly people along with their family, friends or carers. In March 2016, the Trust took ownership of the Lady Hilda, a 62 feet narrowboat which is specially designed to provide youth/community boating and training for groups of up to 9 people.

This section outlines the organisation of the Trust and gives an idea of the many and varied opportunities and benefits available to our volunteers. Apart from a small number of jobs which are salaried, the Trust is run and maintained wholly by volunteers. There are roughly 500 volunteers across the Trust involved with the various preservation groups, shops, museum, archives, steam engines, trip boats and Bruce boats, most of whom are very active. The Trust benefits hugely from the support of our volunteers. The sheer scale of work necessary to serve the public, run the trip boats and perform necessary repair and maintenance on our buildings, boats and pumping station would be completely unaffordable if labour costs had to be paid. Our volunteers also play a significant role in raising sufficient funds to pay for the costs of materials, which otherwise we would struggle to find.

For our volunteers, the gain is the satisfaction of being involved with our history and heritage, the comradeship that the communal spirit encourages, for some the ability to work in areas of expertise which may no longer be open professionally, and for others the opportunity to learn new skills and gain expertise in a range of volunteer roles. If you are interested in any of the volunteer opportunities described below, you should speak to your Branch Chairman or contact the Trust Administrator (see Trust Contacts on page 10).

Organisation

Branches

Trust membership is divided into geographical branches. The branch network spans the waterway length with each branch management different in its focus largely because of the volunteer activities in each area. There are 7 branches with a specific geographical focus: Bath & Bristol, Bradford on Avon, Devizes, Crofton, Hungerford, Newbury and Reading. In addition, an 8th branch (the Bruce branch) serves the Bruce boats which are based at Great Bedwyn. The Trust Headquarters is the Canal Centre on Devizes Wharf. Day to day administration of the Trust's paid staff at Devizes (finance and administration), Crofton (site manager), and Bedwyn (Engineer) falls to the Trust Administrator, who is based at Devizes.

Trust Council

The Council is the governing body of the Trust. Its members (Trustees) are all volunteers, elected by the membership at the AGM. There are up to 11 trustees and they meet monthly to ensure the Trust is properly managed, with its finances in good order and working on its charitable objectives.

Enterprise (Shops/Cafes/Boats)

The trading arm of the Trust (Enterprise) was set up with the sole purpose of raising funds for the Trust and is governed by the Enterprise Board. All members (Directors) of the Enterprise Board are volunteers, appointed by the Trust Council and the company is wholly owned by the Trust. There are cafes at Bradford on Avon, Devizes, Newbury, Aldermaston, & Crofton and trip boats at Bradford on Avon, Devizes, Hungerford, and Newbury. The cafes are largely run by commercial partners. and the trip boats are entirely crewed, skippered and maintained by volunteers. The hiring out of the Bruce boats is managed through Enterprise.

Visitor centres

Kennet and Avon Canal Museum. The K&A Canal Museum is housed in the building on the Devizes Wharf, and is managed by volunteers. It has a range of displays depicting the history of the K&A canal and also holds a larger collection of artefacts and archives in storage. It is open throughout the year for visitors and also provides organised visits for schools and other interested parties. The K&A archives are based by Caen Hill locks and managed by a small group of volunteers and are available to the public throughout the year.

Crofton. The Trust owns Crofton Pumping Station. It was built in 1807 to raise water 40 feet from Wilton Water to the summit of the canal. Crofton is famous for its two steam powered beam engines – an 1812 Boulton and Watt and an 1846 Harvey engine. The older engine is the oldest steam engine in the world still able to fulfill its original role. It also has a café and shop. It is open to the public every day from Easter to the end of September and has regular steaming weekends throughout the season, all managed and worked by volunteers.

Promotion and publicity

The Trust Magazine – The Butty

The Trust publishes a members' magazine, the Butty twice a year, as well as a regular bulletin.

The Trust Website - katrust.org.uk

The Trust website promotes the waterway, the Trust and its activities. There are also websites for Crofton and each of the trip boats.

Canalside events

The Kennet & Avon Canal Trust organizes several events to attract members of the public to the canal, including the Newbury Waterways Festival, Reading WaterFest (in association with Reading Council), Devizes Carnival on the Canal evening and other seasonal events such as carol services.

Twinning

The Kennet & Avon Canal Trust is twinned with Les Amis du Canal du Nivernais in Burgundy, France and the Museum of Canal and River Navigation in Battaglia Terme in Padua, Italy. Members of the Trust are entitled to free entry to these museums.

Training

Initial training

The Trust provides induction training and support for all its volunteers, to provide a general orientation on the nature and purpose of the organisation, the volunteer activity or programme for which they have been recruited, and more specifically on the purpose and requirements of the position that they are accepting.

On the job training

Volunteers may receive specific on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their volunteer assignment. We are always open to suggestions for new training possibilities and encourage our volunteers to expand their capabilities by working alongside others more experienced in a particular skill. Some of our existing volunteers are experts in specific fields and hold relevant qualifications and so volunteers who have an interest in learning a particular new skill should contact their Branch Chairman or the Trust Administrator (see Trust contacts on page 10) to enquire about new training opportunities.

Providing a reference

As a volunteer with the Trust, we can provide you with a reference when you apply for paid work, study or another voluntary position. This is available up to 3 years since your last day of volunteering for us.

Policies and procedures

Volunteer policy

In keeping with other charitable trusts and as part of our obligations under Charity Commission Guidelines, the Trust has put in place several policies and procedures which are part of our volunteer support system. Not all policies and procedures are relevant to all volunteers; this will depend on the role or activity in which you are involved. Your volunteer supervisor will have access to the Trust's volunteering policy and procedures and other resources that support the safe and effective management of volunteers. Please ask if you would like to see these. You should also be able to keep this handbook for your future personal reference.

Our commitment to you

While you are volunteering with the Trust we will:

- Value your contribution to our work
- Provide an induction on the work of the Trust and your volunteering role and any equipment or training necessary
- Provide you with a named volunteer manager to give support, supervision and feedback on a regular basis
- Comply with Trust policies and procedures on volunteering
- Provide you with a safe environment in which to volunteer
- Treat you fairly and with respect and consideration at all times
- Reimburse authorised and legitimate out of pocket expenses where there are receipts or similar evidence of cost to you
- Provide adequate insurance cover for you whilst carrying out your tasks approved and authorised by us
- Try to resolve in a fair and just manner any problems, complaints or difficulties that you may encounter whilst volunteering with us.

Your commitment to us

The Trust needs to maintain high standards and ensure volunteering is safe for all. As a Trust volunteer you are in a position of trust and you may be responsible for tasks that have contact with customers, supporters or members of the public. We ask you to:

- Perform your role to the best of your ability.
- Attend at the dates and times that you have agreed, and to let your manager know as soon as possible if you are unable to come.
- Assist the Trust to meet its contractual and charity commitments to run boats and open attractions by doing your best to be available when needed.

Standards for volunteers

These provide a framework to guide you in the types of behaviour required whilst volunteering for the Trust. We value your honesty and reliability and expect this high standard within your volunteering role. The Trust requires that:

- You operate within our guidelines, procedures and standards.
- Your behaviour, attitude and language do not contradict the aims and interests of the Trust.
- You do not discriminate or use abusive or offensive behaviour
- You do not use your position or information gained inappropriately.
- You do not make statements to the media without approval from your volunteer manager
- You use the Trust's internet and IT equipment appropriately and only in relation to your volunteering activities.
- You are not under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances and you do not steal or carry out any other criminal behaviour.
- You do not accept gifts, money or vouchers from anyone.
- You do not smoke inside Trust premises and only use designated smoking areas outside
- You dress appropriately to the circumstances of the activities and tasks required.

Trust Membership

The Trust is a membership organization with nearly 2000 members who support us through a small annual subscription, receive a copy of the Butty twice a year and enjoy free entry to Crofton. Volunteers holding management roles such as members of branch committees, Boatmasters, Supervisors, and those who speak on behalf of the Trust are required to be members. Other volunteers are strongly encouraged to become members as this allows them to have a full voice in the running of the Trust.

Insurance Cover

The Trust has insurance protection to cover its volunteers while engaged in approved volunteering activities for the Trust. For insurance purposes, all volunteers must be formally recorded as working for us and supervised. That may be through a sign-in sheet at, for example, Crofton, or a trip log on the trip boats. Many volunteers use our online rostering system which records their details and activities. Supervision may be the responsibility of a nominated individual on the day, e.g. the Boat Master of the day, or a member of staff responsible for a particular area, e.g. museum curator or archives administrator. Volunteers should check with the supervisor before undertaking any new work or procedures and keep them informed of any changes or problems.

Job Descriptions

All volunteers should be given a clear, complete, and current description of the duties and responsibilities of the job that they are expected to fulfil apart from small general tasks. If you do not have or understand your job description, speak to your volunteer supervisor.

Health and safety

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) the Trust has a 'duty of care' to make sure there are systems in place to ensure the health and safety of its volunteers. We will make sure that you are in a safe and healthy environment, taking appropriate steps to reduce any risks you may face. As a volunteer, you also have responsibility for your own health and safety and that of the people you volunteer for and with. We will give you information about health and safety in your role as part of your initial training. The Trust has a written Health and Safety Policy, which can be obtained from your volunteer supervisor. Get in touch as soon as possible if you have any concerns about general health and safety, or if you are worried about your own role.

Risk Assessments

All Trust sites have risk assessments in place for most common jobs and your volunteer supervisor will make this available on request. This should be consulted before starting any job and the relevant risk assessment understood. If there is no risk assessment for a particular job then one must be developed, along with a method statement (if appropriate), in conjunction with the Branch Chairman or your branch Health and Safety representative, before undertaking it.

Use of Power Tools and Electrical Equipment

Special rules are in place for operating power tools and electrical equipment. In particular, there are certain pieces of equipment which can be operated only by named individuals or after specific training. Volunteers should consult their volunteer supervisor if they are unsure of the rules. It is forbidden to use portable electrical equipment anywhere which does not have a current PAT certificate. Volunteers using non-certified equipment do so entirely at their own risk.

Protective Equipment

The risk assessments will indicate where protective equipment must be worn and all volunteers will be issued with this where necessary, although volunteers are expected to provide their own working clothes and safety shoes. Volunteers are also encouraged to wear protective gear in circumstances

where they feel their welfare would be improved even if these are not requirements of the risk assessments. You should ask the volunteer supervisor for issue or replacement, when starting work. All protective equipment must be treated with respect and stored neatly after use.

Accident reporting

You should be aware of the importance and the legal responsibility of reporting all accidents and unsafe practices. Any volunteer having an accident whilst working for the Trust is encouraged, firstly, to seek help from another volunteer and, if necessary, request the first aid material. Self-treatment is seldom the best solution. After the accident has been dealt with, the Accident Book must be completed either by the individual concerned or, if he/she is not capable for any reason, by one of those who has witnessed the accident or its treatment. You should be informed of our accident reporting procedure during your initial training but if you are unsure about whether to report an accident or how to go about this, please ask your volunteer supervisor.

Fire precautions

As a volunteer, you will be instructed and trained in your specific duties in the event of a fire. Please ask your volunteer supervisor to show you emergency exits and meeting points, if not already covered in your initial training.

Child Protection Policy

The Trust reserves the right to carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check on any volunteer who is likely to have regular contact with children in their volunteer role. School groups are not accepted at any of our visitor centres without an accompanying teacher.

Data Protection Issues

When you join the Trust as a volunteer, you are asked to provide data which includes contact information and limited facts about your health. In addition, data on individuals is continuously compiled by those with responsibility for training. The 2018 Data Protection Act places obligations on those that hold the information and gives rights to those who provide it. **Please see additional GDPR document available from the office**

Equality and diversity

We want to ensure that we provide equality of opportunity in all aspects of volunteering. Discrimination or harassment in any form is unacceptable. All volunteers and members of the Trust have the right to be treated fairly and without discrimination and so if you feel you are not being treated fairly, if you want to speak up for someone else or simply want more information about what this means, please let your volunteer supervisor know or contact the Trust management (01380 721279, office.manager@katrust.org.uk) to ask for a confidential discussion.

Purchase of equipment and supplies

The purchase of equipment and supplies for any area of the Trust is the responsibility of the management. Volunteers should always check with their volunteer supervisor before purchasing anything on behalf of the Trust. Where purchases are authorised, receipts must be produced and approved by the management before reimbursement can be provided. Volunteers may be asked to sign a receipt for any monies reimbursed.

Travel expenses

Expenses are not normally reimbursed for travelling to and from your volunteer location. This may change if a non-routine journey has been specially requested in advance and only the Branch Chairman can approve such expenses. Travel expenses incurred whilst giving talks on behalf of the Trust at clubs and societies should be reclaimed from the organisation concerned.

Eating and drinking arrangements

Generally, food is not provided for volunteers although, when open during the summer season, the cafés may provide meals and snacks at a discount under local arrangements. Each branch will have its own policy on provision and purchase of refreshments and you should ask your volunteer supervisor for details.

Gratuities and Donations

Gratuities and donations are for the Trust and not for any individual volunteer. Volunteers should make customers aware that they are not permitted to accept gratuities and that visitors can donate money in The Trust donation boxes, which are positioned in the shops/cafes and on the trip boats.

Leaving

When you do decide to stop volunteering with the Trust, for whatever reason, we hope you will fill in our exit interview questionnaire so that we can get some feedback about how you found your time with us. We also welcome any suggestions you may have for improving the volunteer programme.

Comments, suggestions, problem solving and complaints

We are constantly striving to improve our volunteer management and welcome any comments or suggestions you may wish to make. The Trust aims to achieve the highest standards in all its activities and, as a volunteer, you have the right to complain if you feel we are not meeting those standards. If you become aware of activities which you believe to be illegal or not right, you should report the matter to your volunteer supervisor. If not satisfied with the outcome, then you can approach your Branch Chairman or a member of Trust staff.

If any of your questions have not been answered here, please get in touch with your volunteer supervisor for further information or contact one of the individuals listed below.

Trust contacts

Trust administration:

Kennet & Avon Canal Trust
Devizes Wharf, Couch Lane, Devizes
Wiltshire, SN10 1EB
01380 721279

Trust Administrator:	Jean Cook	office.manager@katrust.org.uk
Administrator:	Becky Barker	admin@katrust.org.uk
Finance Officer:	Helen Flavin	finance@katrust.org.uk
Booking Administrator	Jen Furmage	bookings@katrust.org.uk

Branch Chairs:

Bath & Bristol:	David Fearn
Bradford on Avon:	Bryan Baker
Devizes:	Simon Eveleigh
Crofton:	Peter Turvey
Bruce Branch Chair	Paul Eames
Hungerford:	Ceri Hanlon
Newbury:	Trevor Staig
Reading:	David Copley

Trustees:

Chairman:	Chris Sims*	chair@katrust.org.uk
East:	David Copley	d.copley247@btinternet.com
Museum	Terry Mundy	archieandteach@aol.com
Company Secretary	Daisy Mundy*	archieandteach@aol.com
Treasurer	Chris Bolt *	cwbolt@gmail.com
Crofton	Peter Turvey	crofton.chair@katrust.org.uk
Enterprise	Will Job*	williamjob@hotmail.com
River Avon corridor	David Fearn	david.fearn456@btinternet.com

Enterprise Directors (plus those marked * above)

Tim Pyatt	Director of Boats
Deborah Robinson	Legal