



The Basingstoke Canal Society

Volunteer Handbook



This handbook is designed to help you understand your role, responsibilities, and how we can work together to help protect our wonderful Basingstoke Canal

Your Team Leader or BCS Supervisor will conduct your induction, talk you through this handbook and answer any questions.



The Basingstoke Canal Society

WELCOME



Welcome to The Basingstoke Canal Society

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with us. Your time, energy, and dedication are vital in helping us maintain and preserve the canal for the benefit of boaters, the local community, the environment and wildlife.

The Society is totally volunteer led and our volunteers are the life blood of the Basingstoke Canal and are critical to keeping it open for navigation and available for all to use.

The Society helped restore the canal in the 60s and has continued to help maintain and support the Canal. This is even more important today with there being severe pressures on the Canal's finances. Pleasingly however we are making progress and through our volunteer work we are making a big difference. Our objective remains the need to maintain a navigable canal for boats along with all the community benefiting through facilities for walking, paddleboarding, canoeing, fishing, cycling - or simply enjoying the wonderful nature and environment that the canal brings.

We have a team of around 300 volunteers giving over 32,000 hours of their time each year. As you get involved and receive the quarterly Basingstoke Canal News and see our regular Social Media updates, you will see the progress that we are making, along with the work that we plan to do.

So once again thanks for joining us. I am sure that you will find it very rewarding and great fun.

Ian Moore, Chairman, The Basingstoke Canal Society



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OUR MISSION AND PURPOSE - KEEPING THE CANAL ALIVE

The mission of The Basingstoke Canal Society (BCS) is to secure the environmentally sustainable long-term future of the canal for its users and the community

We are committed to maintaining and protecting the canal for navigation, recreation, wildlife, and future generations. Your contribution helps us preserve this vital resource and its surrounding environment.

Many activities and initiatives are planned and prioritised to ensure the canal meets the needs of users and is accessible to all. Our volunteers can decide on a personal level what contribution they can make and how frequently they can offer support.

All of this effort contributes to **Keeping the Canal Alive**

GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

With the range of volunteering opportunities and the size of the BCS, it is important to set out the expectations and responsibilities of both the Society and volunteers.

What we will do for you as a volunteer. We will provide:

- a clearly defined role and task that interests you and benefits the BCS
- a nominated member of staff to support you in your volunteering activity
- safe working conditions
- a clear induction programme and relevant training
- the ability to see how your contribution helps the BCS and Canal
- an environment that supports equality and diversity
- regular and relevant communications on the progress of the BCS

What we ask of you as a Volunteer:

- become a member of the BCS
- work with the BCS to achieve our aims and objectives
- be reliable, give commitment and respect others
- satisfy yourself that you are suitable and fit for the volunteer role you have taken on
- attend relevant training and observe health and safety guidelines
- respect confidentiality (incl. GDPR) and, where required, use the Society IT systems
- always uphold the reputation of the Basingstoke Canal Society (BCS) and the BCA
- ensure personal information is always up to date.



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INDUCTION AND TRAINING

The content and duration of the volunteer's induction will depend on the role and the area of the Society in which it sits.

The Team Leader or Supervisor will discuss the role including:

- your role and how it fits into the Society
- relevant policies and procedures and notably, health and safety
- PPE, dress code, what to bring etc.
- the risk assessment for the role (and where kept)
- location and usual timings of the tasks
- introduction to the team

Training provided will be relevant to the role. This will be planned between the volunteer and the Team Leader/Supervisor.

MEMBERSHIP

All volunteers are required to register as a member of the BCS. Being a member provides insurance cover for BCS work done in accordance with guidelines. You will also receive regular quarterly newsletters and other email updates to keep you informed of the Society's progress. As a member you also get a free annual trip on the John Pinkerton on one of the Members' Evenings

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Your Health and Safety is a priority of the BCS in all that we do.

There is a legal duty to ensure, as far as is reasonably practical, the health, safety and welfare of volunteers and members of the public. This is laid out in the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

The Society's Health and Safety policy exists which volunteers and other workers are required to abide by. It can be found on the website



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Volunteers will be provided with an induction, information, training and supervision to ensure they are competent and aware of workplace risks and the measures used to control them.

- Prioritise your safety and that of others at all times.
- Follow all safety guidelines and wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Report any hazards, injuries, or unsafe conditions to your Team Leader immediately.
- Avoid disturbing natural habitats unnecessarily and handle plants, wildlife and aquatic life with care and consideration.
- Use tools and materials responsibly, ensuring proper storage and care after use. Only power tools supplied by the BCS may be used and only by those volunteers specifically trained to use them.
- Report damaged or missing equipment to your Team Leader.
- For your safety, no lone working is allowed

YOUR HEALTH

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fit and able to do the role that you have chosen. Should you not feel well, or if there is any aspect of an activity which you feel unable to engage in, raise this with your Team Leader.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Volunteer Leaders are responsible for ensuring that Risk Assessments are in place for appropriate activities. Volunteers have a responsibility to understand the risk assessment and ensuring that their behaviour and practice fully complies with it.

Risk management is the process of identifying, assessing, and mitigating threats or uncertainties that can result in a negative impact. The Society and the Team Leaders will have conducted a risk analysis for each task and will share it with volunteers on the day.

Volunteers are not expected to undertake tasks that they are uncomfortable with or are untrained for.



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DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

BCS welcomes everybody who uses the canal and volunteers who support it.

The BCS approach to diversity and inclusion mirrors that of the Charity Commission itself which is to:

- understand and draw people from the communities it serves – drawing from a range of backgrounds, experiences and locations
- be accessible to everyone – engaging the sector and public we serve
- be flexible – supporting innovation, performance and engagement
- welcome talent from wherever it comes – attracting the best talent from all backgrounds

The Society is committed to treating all people equally and with respect irrespective of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

DATA PROTECTION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Our records are kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and all volunteers must abide by it.

Only the minimum necessary volunteer details will be held on BCS's volunteer database and are accessible only to designated members of staff. Volunteers are responsible for ensuring that their data is up to date eg change of address or tel no.). Any changes should be given to the relevant Team Leader

You must not disclose any information you are given in confidence to any person or pass on the contact details of other volunteers without their prior consent.

Please also note that the need for confidentiality remains after you have completed a task or are no longer a volunteer for BCS and you should not disclose sensitive information obtained whilst a volunteer under any circumstance. Data protection: The Data Protection Act - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

ATTENDANCE

We recognise that your decision to give your time is voluntary and flexible. All we ask is that volunteers keep the Team Leaders informed if a volunteer needs to change arrangements

EXPENSES

The BCS does not pay expenses unless in exceptional circumstances which have been agreed beforehand.



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RAISING CONCERNS

The welfare of volunteers is of the highest priority. There may be an occasion where a volunteer is subject to an unwelcome experience or sees something that is not as it should be. It is important for volunteers to have a channel through which they confidently raise concerns in complete confidence.

The first point of contact in any such situation is the relevant Team Leader.

In matters that concern safety, environment or data, where it has not been resolved directly with the Team Leader, any Trustee or the Society Chairman can be contacted by email (Ian.Moore@Basingstoke-canal.org.uk). Any such issues will be handled in strict confidence

COMMUNICATION

BCS believes that regular and quality communication is vital to keep volunteers informed and create a sense of community within a group that is often dispersed geographically, by types of work and hours worked.

Trustees keep all volunteers up to date with BCS with regular monthly email volunteer updates. As a member you will also receive the quarterly Newsletter and occasional emails. There are also regular updates on the Society's website, Facebook, Linked In and Instagram.

A GUIDE TO MOTOR INSURANCE FOR VOLUNTEERS OF THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL SOCIETY

This short guide is intended to help volunteers using their own vehicles in connection with voluntary canal activities. Driving your car can include the following scenarios -

- to a canal meeting at any location, including taking colleagues as passengers
- to a site to carry out canal side works or crewing or training and other jobs
- transporting tools that are the property of BCS or others (eg BCA).

Whatever category your volunteering falls into and if you drive anywhere in connection with this, you should check with your motor insurers that your usual insurance for Social Domestic & Pleasure includes these volunteering activities. There is no common standard for this in the insurance industry so all insurers treat this differently – some include automatically, some will ask more questions, some will want to know likely annual mileage, some will want to charge an additional premium.

The insurance industry trade body, The Association of British Insurers, do publish a useful guide which lists the main insurers and their attitudes to policy cover, which we would recommend you read.



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<https://www.abi.org.uk/globalassets/files/publications/public/motor/2019/abi-guide-to-volunteer-driving---the-motor-insurance-commitment.pdf>

If you are unsure please refer to your Team Leader who will refer to the appropriate BCS Committee member for further help and guidance.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Social media plays a vital role in our communications with the community, users of the canal and wider stakeholders. As volunteers, you will be working behind the scenes and be privy to sensitive information. It is vital that you are discreet with this knowledge and never share any sensitive information that our visitors would not otherwise have access to. We want to protect our volunteers and reputation of the BCS. To do this we ask all volunteers:

- Not to post disparaging or defamatory posts about the BCS, its members or volunteers or the Basingstoke Canal Authority (BCA)
- To gain consent when sharing information or images of individuals
- Never to share information on minors (under 18) or vulnerable adults
- Not to reveal any sensitive information about the BCS or volunteers.

Similarly, we work collaboratively and positively with the BCA and therefore our conduct on social media should reflect this. Any communication with the BCA or other partners who are involved in the Basingstoke Canal should be polite and appropriate, whether from personal or BCS email addresses.

POLICIES

All of the Society's policies relating to the above are shown on our website
<https://basingstoke-canal.org.uk/bcs-policies/>

This handbook is not exhaustive, though it should be sufficient to inform all volunteers of the expectations of the BCS. If a volunteer has any questions about the content, then these should be discussed with their Team Leader either at induction or at any future time.