

Wendover Arm Trust – Volunteer Code of Conduct

Introduction

Our volunteers are vital for our work at Wendover Arm Trust (WAT). They have been and continue to be fundamental in delivering our restoration work and all the associated activities which go with it. As such they are the life blood of the organisation and on which we build our reputation. They are our ambassadors.

We are fortunate to have so many people who have given their skills, time, and commitment to advancing WAT's objectives. We believe all our volunteers are highly responsible, however as an organisation it would be remiss of us not to set out our expectations of those who sign up to work for our organisation.

We want to make sure that all our volunteers have a positive and rewarding experience. We also want to promote WAT as a highly reputable organisation, building confidence and trust with the public and our partner agencies. We believe that setting out a code of conduct for our volunteers is an important way of achieving this.

General Conduct

As a volunteer you should behave in a helpful and courteous way and treat other volunteers, colleagues, and members of the public with dignity and respect. Any communication and contact with members of the public, supporters or external agencies should always promote our work positively.

As a volunteer you are placed in a position of trust and are expected to behave in a way that upholds this principle. If you are ever unsure about what is expected of you then further advice should be sought from your volunteer leader or another member of Wendover Arm Trust.

Accountability

As an organisation we are very dependent on our volunteers. As an individual volunteer we recognise your prerogative to exercise choice in the activities you undertake, however we ask that you make such decisions mindful of the overall situation. If you have made a commitment and find yourself unable to fulfil this, then the expectation is that your designated contact within WAT is informed as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made to manage our affairs. This applies to both your general role as a volunteer, together with your commitment to specific events, activities, and tasks.

Confidentiality

As a volunteer you may have access to sensitive and/or confidential information e.g. personal data, commercially sensitive information, organisational plans which have yet to be made public, business critical passwords and security codes. You have an obligation to protect such data. You should not discuss or disclose such information to anyone other than person/s authorised to receive it, both during and after your involvement with the Trust. WAT has a Data Protection Policy which all volunteers must abide by, a copy of which is located on our website.

Health and safety

All volunteers must comply with WAT's health and safety requirements. This is in the interests of themselves, other volunteers, visitors, members of the public and anyone else associated with Wendover Arm Trust.

This is particularly important for the restoration volunteers, who due to the nature of the work are required to operate within specific regulations. WAT has produced separate detailed health and safety guidance specifically for our restoration volunteers which must be read and understood prior to commencing any restoration activity.

Otherwise, volunteers are responsible for reading or attending any health and safety briefing that may be given in advance of an event, activity, or any other purpose for which you may be volunteering.

Equal opportunities

Wendover Arm Trust is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion within our organisation and those we work with. WAT has a separate policy statement which sets out our expectations of our volunteers and others, a copy of which can be found on our website.

As a volunteer you should not receive any less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Similarly, we expect all volunteers to uphold the same principles when dealing with other volunteers, members of the public and all others associated with Wendover Arm Trust.

Safeguarding

We want to welcome children, young people and vulnerable adults onto the canal and promote their involvement in all aspects of WAT's work. To do so we must ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place to provide a safe and secure environment for all. WAT will be developing a separate safeguarding policy which we expect all volunteers to uphold.

Whilst those under the age of 16 years are encouraged to visit the canal, unfortunately they cannot be involved in our main restoration working parties due to insurance restrictions.

Illegal Drugs and Alcohol

As a volunteer you should recognise that the use of drugs and alcohol may impair the safe and effective running of the business and/or the health and safety of yourself and others. Consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs is strictly forbidden in situations where it will affect your performance during a restoration working party. Consumption of alcohol is occasionally permitted at other events but only in moderation. On all occasions, you must ensure that your actions do not bring into question the standards expected from yourself or Wendover Arm Trust.

Conflict of interests

You must declare any potential conflict of interests which already exist or may arise in the context of your role as a volunteer for WAT e.g. where there is any potential financial advantage.

Gifts and hospitality

Any gifts or hospitality offered or received, other than those of a nominal value should be registered with WAT. Nothing should be accepted if it could be seen as bribery.

Change of circumstances

You must inform WAT of any change in circumstances which may affect your voluntary activity e.g. criminal offence, change in personal circumstances.

Comments, feedback, and grievances

WAT is committed to encouraging an open environment in which volunteers can express their views freely and responsibly. We want to build a level of organisational maturity where issues are raised and dealt with constructively and everyone is treated with dignity and respect. As a volunteer you are encouraged to provide comment and feedback in this context.

It is recognised that on occasions volunteers will raise issues which have caused some resentment, suffering or distress to themselves and possibly others. In such situations the volunteer's team leader or manager will talk through the situation and seek to respond in a timely and appropriate manner. The resolution will be informed by the wishes and suggestions of the individual raising the matter. Steps to address the situation will be considered and acted upon by the volunteer's team leader or manager.

If as a volunteer you remain unhappy with the situation, you can raise the issue with WAT's Council of Management via letter or e-mail. A Council representative will give further consideration to the matter, talking to all those involved as appropriate. He or she will make a final decision on the issue, which may or may not include further action required to resolve the situation.

Concerns about conduct or performance

On occasions concerns may be raised about the work of a volunteer e.g. from a member of the public, a representative from an outside organisation or another volunteer. In such situations the relevant team leader or manager will discuss the concerns raised with the volunteer and seek to resolve the issue in a quick and appropriate manner.

If it becomes apparent that a volunteer's behaviour does not meet the standards expected, then steps to address the situation will be agreed. This may include further training, advice, and support. Alternatively, volunteers may be invited to explore other volunteering opportunities.

Ultimately the team leader or manager has the right to ask an individual to stop volunteering for the organisation. Such a decision will not be made lightly and will always involve prior discussion with another member of WAT who holds a position of authority.

Volunteers have the right to appeal against a decision to end their involvement in the organisation. Such appeals should be made by letter or e-mail to WAT's Council of Management. A Council representative will give further consideration to the matter, talking to all those involved as appropriate. He or she will make a final decision, the outcome of which will be confirmed in writing with the volunteer.

Declaration

I understand that by accepting a voluntary position with Wendover Arm Trust I am agreeing to abide by this code of conduct and all other policy documents referred to here.

Volunteer's name (Block capitals):

Volunteer's signature:

Date:

Policy approved by WAT Council: May 2020
Proposed date for review: May 2023