

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Governing Body

Beaminster Museum Trust Management Committee

Date approved by Governing Body:	
Date for review of policy:	2029

PURPOSE

Volunteers are fundamental to the operation, development and success of Beaminster Museum.

The Museum is a volunteer-led organisation and relies upon the skills, knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment of its volunteers to achieve its charitable objectives and maintain Museum Accreditation standards. The Museum recognises that volunteering should be a positive and rewarding experience for all involved.

This policy sets out the principles by which volunteers are recruited, supported, trained and recognised.

POLICY AIMS

The Museum will:

- Provide a welcoming, inclusive and supportive volunteering environment.
- Recruit volunteers fairly and openly.
- Match volunteers' interests, experience and skills with appropriate roles whenever possible.
- Provide suitable induction, training and support.
- Ensure volunteers are treated with dignity and respect.
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Provide a safe environment in which volunteers can work.
- Encourage personal learning, development and social interaction.
- Recognise and value the contribution made by volunteers.
- Support succession planning and the long-term sustainability of the Museum.

THE VALUE OF VOLUNTEERS

Beaminster Museum acknowledges that without volunteers the Museum could not operate.

Volunteers contribute to many areas of Museum activity including:

- Stewarding and visitor engagement.
- Collections management.
- Research and local history.
- Care and conservation.
- Displays and exhibitions.
- Learning and children's activities.
- Marketing and publicity.
- Events and fundraising.
- Information technology.
- Facilities and building maintenance.
- Governance and administration.

The Museum recognises that volunteers contribute a wide range of skills, experience and knowledge which enhance the organisation and its service to the community.

RECRUITMENT

The Museum will seek to recruit volunteers from the widest possible range of backgrounds and experiences.

Potential volunteers will:

- Be provided with information about the Museum and available volunteer opportunities.
- Be offered an opportunity to discuss their interests and preferred areas of involvement.
- Receive a suitable induction.
- Complete a Volunteer Agreement where appropriate.
- Be made aware of relevant Museum policies and procedures.

The Museum reserves the right not to appoint volunteers where it believes this is in the best interests of the Museum, its collections, volunteers or visitors.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

All volunteers will receive an induction appropriate to their role.

This may include:

- Introduction to the Museum and its aims.
- Health and Safety information.
- Emergency procedures.
- Safeguarding awareness.
- Visitor care.
- Collection care requirements.
- Role-specific procedures.

Stewards will receive stewarding induction and guidance appropriate to public-facing duties and will be expected to be familiar with the Steward Handbook and shift procedures.

The Museum will encourage volunteers to develop new skills and, where resources permit, will support attendance at relevant training events.

SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATION

The Museum aims to foster a culture of teamwork, mutual respect and shared ownership.

Volunteers can expect:

- Appropriate support from team leaders and committee members.
- Regular communication regarding Museum activities.
- Opportunities to contribute ideas and suggestions.
- Reasonable flexibility regarding volunteering commitments.
- Recognition of their contribution.

Volunteers are encouraged to raise concerns, suggestions or difficulties with their Team Leader, Volunteer Co-ordinator or Committee member.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are expected to:

- Support the aims and objectives of the Museum.
- Act in a courteous, respectful and professional manner.
- Follow relevant Museum policies, procedures and guidance.

- Work safely and consider the welfare of visitors, fellow volunteers and themselves.
- Respect the Museum's collections, property and reputation.
- Maintain confidentiality where appropriate.
- Notify the Museum if they are unable to undertake an agreed commitment.
- Treat fellow volunteers and visitors with dignity and respect.
- Declare any conflicts of interest relevant to Museum business.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Museum is committed to providing equal opportunities for all volunteers.

No volunteer will be discriminated against on grounds including:

- Age.
- Disability.
- Race or ethnic origin.
- Religion or belief.
- Gender.
- Sexual orientation.
- Marital or civil partnership status.
- Gender reassignment.

All volunteers are expected to uphold these principles.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND SAFEGUARDING

The Museum is committed to providing a safe environment for volunteers, visitors and contractors.

Volunteers must:

- Follow Health and Safety procedures.
- Familiarise themselves with emergency arrangements.
- Report hazards, accidents or incidents promptly.
- Follow Safeguarding procedures where applicable.

The Museum will provide appropriate guidance, training and support to help volunteers fulfil these responsibilities.

RECOGNITION AND WELLBEING

The Museum recognises volunteering as both a contribution to the community and a valuable social activity.

The Museum will seek to:

- Maintain a friendly and welcoming atmosphere.
- Encourage teamwork and mutual support.
- Thank and acknowledge volunteers for their contribution.
- Provide opportunities for social and learning activities.
- Celebrate achievements and significant contributions.

The Museum believes that volunteers should feel respected, valued and proud of their involvement in preserving and sharing the history of Beaminster and the surrounding area.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION

If difficulties arise involving volunteers, every effort will be made to resolve issues informally through discussion.

Where concerns involve conduct, behaviour, safety, safeguarding or serious breaches of Museum policy, the matter will be considered by the Volunteer Co-ordinator and Management Committee.

The Museum reserves the right to withdraw a volunteering opportunity where this is considered necessary for the protection of volunteers, visitors, collections or the Museum itself.

IMPLEMENTATION

Responsibility for implementation of this policy rests with the Trustees, Management Committee, Volunteer Co-ordinator and Team Leaders.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Volunteer Agreement.
- Volunteer Welcome Booklet.
- Steward Handbook.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Safeguarding Policy.
- Access Policy.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required by changes to legislation, Museum Accreditation requirements or Museum practice.

I think this would sit naturally as **Section 5A – Volunteer Policy**, immediately before the existing **Volunteer Agreement**, with the Agreement remaining as the practical signed document and the Volunteer Policy becoming the governing statement for Accreditation purposes.