

Bath Record Office: Archives and Local Studies **Volunteering Policy**

1. POLICY FRAMEWORK

1.1 Council Corporate Strategy

The Council's Corporate Strategy priorities are to:

- Address the climate emergency
- Prepare for the future
- Deliver for local residents
- Focus on prevention
- Give people a bigger say

This Policy seeks to align with the specific Corporate priorities: to deliver for local residents by enabling participation and opportunities to engage in their local history and heritage; give people a bigger say by encouraging our volunteers to contribute to our service and take ownership of their history.

1.2 Heritage Services Service Aims

Bath Record Office: Archives and Local Studies forms part of Heritage Services under the Economy & Growth Directorate of Bath & North East Somerset Council. Heritage Services' statement of purpose is 'For learning, inspiration and enjoyment', which informs its aims:

- to enhance the quality of life for residents of Bath & North East Somerset
- to maximise public enjoyment of the Council's world class heritage
- to enable people to learn from the activities and achievements of past and present societies
- to promote understanding and appreciation of different cultures
- to contribute to the district's economic prosperity through our Business Plan

To achieve these Service Aims we:

- protect and develop the Council's unique historic collections and public buildings
- plan for and invest in their sustainability
- interpret them through displays, study facilities, learning programmes and special events
- mount the best available exhibitions from other regional and national collections
- sell high quality merchandise to complement our services
- hire out historic venues for a wide range of events and activities
- train and develop our staff to realise their full potential
- consult widely with users and stakeholders on an ongoing basis

- use information technology in accessible and imaginative ways
- work in partnership with others wherever appropriate

1.3 Heritage Services Business Aims

Through its Business Plan the Service aims for ongoing sustainability in three equally important and inter-dependent activities:

- **Conservation** – preserving our heritage for present and future generations to enjoy
- **Customer Care** – meeting the needs of all our audiences, customers and guests
- **Commercial Success** – maintaining our positive contribution to the Council's budget

To achieve these Business Aims, equal attention is devoted to these three core activities.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 Volunteers play an important role in helping BRO care for and make available its collections. BRO values its volunteers who assist, but do not replace, the paid staff in delivering the record office service. This policy outlines how it provides volunteering opportunities and manage their recruitment, supervision, training, well-being and health and safety.

2.2 Volunteering opportunities make a positive contribution to the wellbeing of individuals. They enhance community identity and promote social interaction, as well as contribute to the positive identity of the Council amongst residents of the district.

3. DEFINITION

3.1 A volunteer is a person who freely agrees to give their time and skills to support the activities of BRO. Volunteers work within clearly defined roles to complement and enhance the activities offered by the service and to add value to the service already provided by paid staff.

4. RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

4.1 BRO welcomes approaches from anyone who wishes to volunteer and will consider all those whose skills and expectations can be matched against appropriate defined tasks. However, in order to provide a meaningful experience, it will only accept volunteers for whom there are sufficient resources to provide appropriate management and support, and the facilities to ensure that their defined tasks can be undertaken effectively.

4.2 BRO may also advertise for volunteers on its website or target specific sources of potential volunteers when appropriate for specific projects with public benefit outcomes

4.3 Prospective volunteers will be asked to complete an application form and will be invited to attend an informal interview to discuss their interests and skills to ensure that they are given appropriate and rewarding tasks if accepted. This also provides the opportunity to discuss any potential access issues for which reasonable adjustments may need to be made.

4.4 BRO asks that all volunteers read and agree to the Volunteering Guidelines, Volunteering Agreement and Confidentiality forms and any other relevant documentation before they start volunteering.

4.5 The Volunteering Agreement makes clear what the volunteer and BRO can expect of each other. The Volunteering Agreement is not a contract of employment.

4.6 BRO reserves the right to decline any volunteers for whom there is no suitable role.

4.7 Volunteers at BRO undertake a month's trial period before becoming permanent volunteers, allowing them time to discover whether they feel comfortable in their role and also giving BRO the chance to assess a volunteer's suitability.

4.8 A risk assessment will be completed when recruiting volunteers below 18 years of age and made available, along with a copy of the volunteer role description, to the parent or guardian of the volunteer. Similarly, any role in which a vulnerable adult will be volunteering will be risk assessed prior to their beginning in the role.

5. BRO'S COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTEERS

BRO will:

5.1 Respect and not exploit its volunteers. It is recognised that the levels of time and commitment that individuals can provide will vary.

5.2 Attempt to match the skills, interests and expectations of individuals to defined tasks when volunteering.

5.3 Provide a volunteer role description to include a clear description of tasks associated with the role, details of skills required, and training offered to support the role including any health and safety issues, data protection and information security.

5.4 Prepare written, detailed instructions which explain to the volunteer how the tasks associated with a volunteer role should be completed.

5.5 Provide appropriate support and supervision and clear information about which member of staff to report to and seek assistance from.

5.6 Provide all volunteers with induction training on starting. This will cover:

- Emergency evacuation
- Security, Health and Safety, Grievance/Complaints Procedure and other relevant policies and procedures
- An introduction to other staff members and volunteers

- Familiarisation with the Record Office and work areas
- Specific training required to carry out the allocated tasks, as and when needed

5.7 Provide volunteers with a safe workstation with the appropriate equipment and facilities to carry out their tasks effectively.

5.8 Provide review sessions with each volunteer at appropriate intervals.

5.9 Recognise and acknowledge the work carried out by volunteers and welcome the suggestions of volunteers.

5.10 Treat volunteers in accordance with Bath and North East Somerset Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

5.11 Provide a safe working environment that meets the requirements relating to Health and Safety, Insurance cover, Child Protection and other relevant legislation.

5.12 Respect the confidentiality of all personal information held by BRO relating to volunteers unless there is a legal obligation of disclosure under the Data Protection Act (2018) or Freedom of Information Act (2000).

5.13 Conduct exit interviews with volunteers when they leave to learn how the volunteering experience may be improved in future.

6. VOLUNTEER UNDERTAKING

All volunteers will be expected to:

6.1 Agree that copyright in any material produced from voluntary work for BRO will be owned by BRO unless previously agreed otherwise.

6.2 Comply with Bath & North East Somerset Council's Equal Opportunities policy, and BRO's regulations, policies and procedures on issues such as security, health and safety, emergency evacuation, confidentiality and any others as appropriate.

6.3 Provide feedback or evaluation at the end of their work with BRO if requested.

6.4 Each volunteer will be required to wear a badge to identify them as an official volunteer with BRO. This should be worn at all times when volunteering.

6.5 Each volunteer is responsible for completing the volunteer log which records time of arrival and departure.

7. WORKING PATTERNS

7.1 Work will take place on site at BRO located in the basement of the Guildhall. There is an allocated volunteer's workroom but some project work may need to be undertaken within the BRO strong rooms.

7.2 All volunteers must sign in at and collect a 'Visitors Pass', which should be worn at all times.

7.3 Volunteers sometimes work independently, but specific projects may require work as part of a small team, or in pairs.

8. EXPENSES

8.1 BRO will be able to reimburse travel expenses and other subsistence upon submission of receipts.

8.2 Appropriate refreshments are provided by BRO.

9. TERMINATION OF VOLUNTEERING ROLE

9.1 Both the volunteer and BRO have the right to terminate the Volunteer Agreement at the discretion of either party.

9.2 While there is no employment relationship and no contractual obligation exists, volunteers who no longer wishes to actively volunteer with BRO will be asked to give their reasons by speaking with their supervisor, in the first instance.

9.3 On occasion it may be necessary for BRO to end a volunteer's involvement with the service. This may be because the role is no longer needed or the volunteer is no longer suitable for the role. Due notice will be given and, if necessary, reasons given.

10. RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1 BRO does not have a dedicated volunteer coordinator. Volunteer recruitment and ongoing supervision is divided between the professional staff. Volunteers working on archives collections will be supervised by the Collections Managers whereas volunteers working with local studies collections will be supervised by the Local Studies Librarian or Assistant Local Studies Librarian.

10.2 Administrative work concerning the volunteer programme is carried out by the Collections Managers. This includes keeping volunteer details up-to-date, organising 'thank you' events and training sessions for volunteers, producing a bi-annual newsletter, compiling statistics and processing expenses claims.

10.3 Each volunteer is allocated a supervisor, although volunteers working in groups usually fall under the supervision of the Collections Managers.

11. REVIEW

11.1 This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if any significant changes occur within the service.

VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date	Detail
1.0	01/05/2020	Succeeds previous Bath Record Office Volunteering Policy drafted in 2017
1.1	09/11/2020	Reworked for Cabinet member approval. Decision made 20/11/2020