

<b>Policy:</b>	<b>Volunteer Policy</b>
<b>Owner:</b>	Community Engagement Director
<b>Last reviewed:</b>	June 2024
<b>Next review:</b>	June 2025
<b>Sign off responsibility:</b>	Board of Trustees

**Documents linked to policy:**

EEDI Policy  
Expenses Policy  
Health & Safety Policy  
Safeguarding Vulnerable People Policy Statement  
Data Protection Policy

**Training linked to policy:**

**Distribution list:**

All staff and volunteers  
Public via website

**Purpose**

This policy sets out the Trust's approach to volunteering, specifically the role of volunteers and what volunteers can expect from BBOWT.

**Background**

As an organisation, BBOWT was originally founded by volunteers, and since then volunteering has remained at the heart of the organisation, key to enabling the Trust to deliver our work.

**Scope**

Volunteers bring valuable skills, experience and enthusiasm to BBOWT in order to deliver our activities. BBOWT remains committed to volunteering and aims to be a welcoming organisation and provide an excellent experience for all volunteers.

This policy relates to all volunteering roles as defined below.

**Definitions**

### Volunteers

People who contribute their unpaid time to benefit the aims and objectives of the Trust. Activities are carried out without the expectation of financial reward. It is a free choice, made by the person giving up their time. The Trust cannot be compelled to provide regular work, or payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken.

### Key Volunteers

Those BBOWT volunteers who:

- have responsibility for assets of the Trust, e.g. nature reserves
- have responsibility for handling Trust monies
- have responsibility for organising other volunteers
- have responsibility for a significant representational or ambassadorial role on behalf of the Trust

Examples include group chairs, treasurers, reserve wardens and work party leaders. Many are responsible for the health, safety and wellbeing of other volunteers and support the conservation management of our nature reserves.

All Key Volunteers are asked to sign an agreement outlining expectations on both sides.

### Volunteer Traineeships

Volunteer Traineeships specialising in reserves, community, and ecology are offered each year. Generally, Volunteer Trainees commit to three days per week over a period of 6 to 12 months.

## **Responsibilities**

### Recruitment

BBOWT is committed to equality, equity, diversity and inclusion (EEDI) across our teams, including volunteers.

Every volunteer will be able to view the volunteering opportunities available via the BBOWT website. All volunteer opportunities have a volunteer role description and where possible reasonable adjustments will be made for individuals.

Centralised recruitment is carried out by appropriate means and is designed to be accessible. Recruitment is led by the Volunteering Team and the relevant team leader to ensure good communication with the volunteer at all times.

Volunteers in eligible roles will be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. All volunteers are required to follow the relevant codes of practice for their role and work under the direction of appropriately trained staff or volunteers.

### Induction & Training

All new volunteers will receive an appropriate welcome and induction from a member of staff or another volunteer. This will equip them to carry out their activities and understand their contribution to BBOWT's aims. While the induction has a vital role in sharing information, its most crucial function must be to welcome new volunteers to the organisation.

All Key Volunteers will be required to complete appropriate training to support them in operating safely and effectively.

A bespoke training package will be provided for all Volunteer Trainees.

### Supervision & Support

All volunteers will have a supervisor for their volunteer role who will support them. The supervisor may be a Key Volunteer or a member of staff.

All volunteers will also be supported by the Volunteering Team. For queries that can't be answered by the volunteer supervisor, the volunteering team will be able to help.

Feedback from volunteers is encouraged through the quarterly Volunteer Voice Forum, (VVF). The purpose of the VVF is:

- Be the discussion forum to provide volunteers perspective about volunteering practices:
  - Are they working?
  - Bring recommendations as needed
- Discover inconsistencies of volunteering activities across the organisation
- Be a representative voice of BBOWT volunteers and where possible bring suggestions and comments from other volunteers
- Review requests/issues raised from Volunteer Management Group
- Group discussion & collective feedback on issues

The Volunteer Management Group, (VMG,) is a forum which meets on a quarterly basis to support volunteering. The purpose of the VMG is:

- Be the discussion forum to interrogate volunteering practices:
  - Are they working?
  - Bring recommendations as needed
- Be a decision-making group where appropriate
  - Any decisions not made here go to Operational Leadership Group (OLG) or Director Team (DT)
- Ensure consistency of volunteering activities is being delivered across the organisation
- Be the voice and representative of all BBOWT teams

- Bring suggestions/comments
- Ensure actions/questions raised go back to individual teams for discussion
- Review requests/issues raised from Volunteer Voice Forum (VVF)

### Expenses

BBOWT does not pay expenses to volunteers.

Travel expenses are paid in the following circumstances, as outlined in the Expenses Policy:

- For volunteers travelling to a location for health and safety training that they have agreed with their supervisor. This training includes any first aid or safeguarding course.
- If volunteers are part of a roving team, travel can be claimed from their team base
- For specific projects only, and this will be highlighted in the relevant volunteer role description.
- Volunteer Trainees for travelling to their place of work or, for accommodation if that is more economical. Expense claims are capped at £390 per month.

### Health & Safety

BBOWT has a duty of care to ensure that a safe and healthy environment is provided for all volunteers.

All volunteers have a duty of care to themselves and others as set out in the Health and Safety Policy and the Safeguarding Vulnerable People Policy Statement.

Volunteers will receive a health and safety induction appropriate to their role and be given access to appropriate information and guidance and, where necessary, training.

BBOWT will take seriously any breaches of health and safety good practice.

### Data protection

As outlined in the Data Protection policy, BBOWT is committed to meeting its responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 2018 ("DPA 2018") and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and will take all reasonable steps to ensure appropriate processing, accuracy and confidentiality of personal data.

### Problem solving and complaints

While the involvement of volunteers is by and large a positive experience for everyone involved, it is important to bear in mind that sometimes things can go wrong. From time to time there may be instances where a volunteer has a complaint about another volunteer, a member of staff or the organisation itself. Similarly, a member of staff, another volunteer or a member of the public may have a complaint about a volunteer's

contribution, attitude or conduct. In these instances, the Volunteer Complaint procedure should be followed. This procedure is available to all volunteers and employees.