

British Waterways Advisory Forum
First meeting of the
Volunteering Working Group
Held on
Wednesday 6 September 2006
at
Willow Grange, Watford

Present

Howard Pridding	Chairman, BWAf
David Fletcher	Vice Chairman, BWAf
Mike Palmer	IWA Waterway Recovery Group
Roger Butler	British Waterways
David Kent	National Federation of Anglers

Terms of Reference

The group considered draft terms of reference that had been put forward by BW's Regeneration Director, Derek Cochrane. A revised draft amended in light of the discussion is attached.

Those present considered the key output for the working group to be:-

“to advise BW corporate on the appropriate management arrangements for volunteering and to consider support mechanisms for implementation and induction with particular reference to safety and training”.

Current Barriers to Volunteering on the Waterways

An initial debate on barriers identified the following:-

- Health & Safety
- BW Time & Resources
- Un-social hours
- Interpretation of employment law
- Basic level of understanding and encouragement from all BW staff
- Quality of work
- Continuity
- General risk (financial, contractual, public safety, completion times)
- Training and associated support (BW staff and volunteers)

Opportunities for Volunteering Engagement in British Waterways Activities

Two distinct categories of volunteer were identified:-

1. Active, ie those wishing to be involved in manual tasks.
2. Passive, ie roles related to customer service, guided tours, trip boats, etc.

The following activities were identified as potentially suitable for volunteer work:-

Maintenance
Licence checks
Bailiff work
Towpath wardens
Hedge laying

Next Steps

Roger Butler said that BW had undertaken an audit to benchmark volunteer activity. He undertook to circulate this to members of the working group once his work had been completed. Mike Palmer offered to supply IWA Waterways Recovery Group data to the exercise.

There was discussion around training with the suggestion of a “Working with Volunteers” course for BW staff.

Date of Next meeting

It was agreed that a date would be set once members had had the opportunity to consider the BW Audit.

Post Meeting Note

Subsequent to the meeting James Bryan, Chairman, Board of Directors, National Community Boats Association volunteered to contribute to the working group.