



Volunteer Development Handbook

Introduction

OUR PARTNERS



Introduction

Welcome to the **Cotswold Canals Connected Development Handbook**. The aim is to **guide and support readers** along the journey of developing and/or enhancing an effective, enjoyable and robust volunteer programme for organisations working with volunteers.

Many charitable organisations rely heavily on volunteers to achieve their aims. Implementing structures and procedures that are achievable with **limited money and time alongside the everyday activities** can be a **time-rich task**. There are also **the demands** that come with a certain ‘professionalisation’ of volunteering particularly in terms of being current and compliant in key areas such as safeguarding, data protection, health and safety and inclusion, whilst also offering an enjoyable experience for all volunteers.

The aim of the combined set of handbooks is to provide a set of tools that will support the development of a robust volunteering programme in a **strategic way**. The handbooks provide clear guidance on how to assess what stage your volunteering programme is currently at, offer guidance towards developing/ enhancing a strong volunteering programme and support the progression of volunteering programmes in a sustainable and achievable way.

The handbook is aligned with the **Cotswold Canals Connected (CCC) volunteer development strategy** - a vision for volunteering along the Stroudwater Navigation canal, but it can also be applied to any organisation involving volunteers.

The four strategic goals



The information has been compiled by the CCC community engagement team in collaboration with CCC project partners:

- [Stroud District Council](#)
- [Stroud Valleys Canal Company](#)
- [Cotswold Boatmobility](#)
- [Cotswold Canals Trust](#)
- [Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust](#)
- [Museum in the Park](#)
- [SPiCE \(Ship Inn Community Enterprise\)](#)
- [Stroud Navigation Archives Charity](#)
- [Stroudwater Textile Trust](#)
- [Stroud Valleys Project](#)



The handbook is divided into four parts, and each part is a standalone e-document. Using the navigation panel function (turn on via the View tab) allows easy access to different sections within the document in use.

Hard copies are also available in ring-binder form to complement the e-documents.

Each handbook contains resources including models, checklists, case studies and table template headings to support the development / enrichment of a robust and current volunteer development plan. E-handbooks also contain hyperlinks to useful sites for added value.

Handbook 1 is all about **creating a volunteer development plan**, looking at where your organisation is now and where you would like to go. At the heart of this are two checklists that will give you an immediate overview of what you already have in place and where there is scope to develop; this will then inform your goals and timeline.

Handbooks 2, 3 & 4 form a collective **treasure trove of resources** that will help you reach the goals once Handbook 1 has been completed – you can dip in and out of them, refer to them simultaneously extracting ideas and information that is relevant and important to your organisation. The resources are split across three handbooks as follows:

- **Handbook 2: Policies, Procedures and Systems**
- **Handbook 3: Safeguarding and Health & Safety**
- **Handbook 4: Volunteer Management and Volunteering for All**

Quick reference templates can be found in the Appendix at the end of Handbook 2.

The best way to start this journey is with a cuppa, a pen and a colleague. Take your time to work through everything and remember (when using the e-document) that the navigation panel allows you to jump between sections. It's worth customising the handbook by adding documents relevant to your organisation either online or in the hardcopy.



Disclaimer: *The information provided in these documents is for general informational purposes only and should not be considered as legal advice. It is meant to give a broad overview of volunteering best practice, and we cannot guarantee the accuracy, quality, validity, completeness or suitability of the material provided for any particular purpose.*

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