

Volunteer Strategy

for the Broads 2017-22



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Volunteer Strategy for the Broads 2017-22

Strategic aim

The Broads Authority uses the time and skills offered by volunteers to support its work and achieve its objectives to manage the Broads. In working alongside our staff, volunteers provide valuable input, expertise and increased flexibility to our work programmes, and enhance the experience of everyone working for the Authority. In turn, by offering a range of volunteering opportunities, we seek to inform and influence peoples' life choices and behaviour, and improve their health and wellbeing, skills and employment opportunities, and overall quality of life.

Context

A recent public survey in England¹ showed that 41% of those questioned had volunteered formally (through a group, club or organisation) at least once in the previous year. A quarter of these volunteered regularly, with an average of 11.6 hours a month (BA volunteers, on average, give 16 hours a month).

Defra's 8-point plan for National Parks (2016)² relates closely to the aims of volunteering. It encourages the National Park family to develop plans and activities to help double the number of young people to experience a National Park as part of National Citizen Service by 2020; to encourage more diverse visitors to National Parks and promote volunteering in National Parks; and to promote innovative schemes for National Parks to serve national health.

The Broads Plan³, the strategic management plan for the Broads, has an aspiration to 'Strengthen connections between a wide audience, particularly local communities and young people, and the Broads environment'. This aspiration is supported by the following objectives:

- Widen the range of active and entry level/taster that promote physical and mental health and wellbeing, based in the Broads' natural environment
- Offer a flexible range of practical volunteering programmes, events and training, and establish a longer term succession strategy
- Improve the capacity of the Broads Environmental Education Network (BEEN) to develop and run educational programmes and events for local school children
- Develop and run motivational outreach activities and award schemes for young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, focusing on life and work skills training and practical experience

These objectives translate into more detailed actions for volunteering, set out in the Action Plan on pages 5-10 of this strategy.

¹ NCVO's Civil Society Almanac survey, 2015-16

² www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/509916/national-parks-8-point-plan-for-england-2016-to-2020.pdf

³ Broads Plan: <http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/broads-authority/how-we-work>

There is no doubt that volunteers make a huge contribution to the Authority, and more importantly to the Broads. In just one year (2015-16), a total of 16,000 hours were given by 170 volunteers and work experience students across more than 60 different activities from litter picking, patrolling the waterways and assisting with events, to invasive species control and monitoring, information centre repairs, and vessel maintenance. This included:



- 300 hours supporting the Education Officer in environmental education and outreach to schools, 780 hours helping at public events, and 240 hours of event administration (200 of those hours being provided by a single volunteer!)
- 58 active Ranger volunteers contributing 2850 hours to patrolling the waterways by boat and vehicle, and another 100 hours removing obstructions from the rivers. 16 volunteers spent 145+ hours ensuring our vessels were in the right place when needed or when going for repair.

In the same year, volunteers were supported in their roles by more than 700 hours of training, provided by Authority staff and external training providers.

Benefits

Volunteering creates huge benefits, both for the Authority and for the volunteers themselves. For the Authority, volunteers act as community ambassadors. They have skills to support and complement our staff skills, and can provide a pool of talent when staff vacancies arise. They are able to give dedicated attention to specific groups, issues or projects, and increase the volume, variety and outreach of our services, such as helping us reach more visitors at events. Volunteers can also provide valuable feedback about our practices or programmes, helping us make changes.

Volunteering has been shown to increase a person's ability to carry out activities associated with daily living, cope better with ill health, and adopt and maintain healthier lifestyles. For some, it can be a route to new skills, employment or a career change. Others gain a sense of achievement or fulfilment from passing on their skills and knowledge to others.

Many volunteers gain a sense of belonging, being part of a team working together for a key purpose. They feel valued by making a difference, and lifelong friendships are often made. Volunteering for the Authority also gives people a special opportunity to experience areas of the Broads that may be restricted or of limited public access, and to experience unique activities, such as handling a patrol launch.

Objectives

The Volunteer Strategy for the Broads forms the basis for a rolling work programme for the Broads Authority's volunteer service.

Guiding actions are set out under four key objectives:

Objective 1: Provide practical training and support to all BA volunteers and supervisory staff in an up-to-date, effective, efficient and fair way.

Objective 2: Build the capacity of volunteers to lead tasks and run public events and activities on behalf of the Broads Authority

Objective 3: Encourage active volunteering from a more diverse range of people, particularly young people and those with disabilities or health-related issues

Objective 4: Increase the Broads Authority's capacity to sustain an active and improving volunteer service into the long term

Progress will be reported to full Broads Authority meetings twice a year, and made available on the Authority's website. This will allow us to monitor progress and make any necessary changes. The strategy will be reviewed and updated in 2022.

Guiding Principles

In implementing this Volunteer Strategy, we are guided the following principles.

- Volunteers feel welcomed and valued - they invest in us and we invest in them.
- We are open, honest, caring and committed to developing better engagement with the public
- Through volunteering, peoples' health and wellbeing, and their skills and employability, are improved
- We maintain high standards in what we do, including training, safety and equipment provision
- The volunteer service is effective, efficient and sustainable into the long term, including recruitment and retention, training, administration, funding, and manpower options (e.g. apprenticeships)
- Volunteers learn more about the Broads (and the work of the Authority in managing it) so they understand, enjoy and care for it
- Our work is environmentally sustainable, builds resilience to climate change, and takes an integrated approach to caring for nature and people in the Broads

For more information about this plan, contact Beth Williams, BA Volunteer Coordinator

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Visit our website: <http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/broads-authority/who-we-are/volunteers>

Volunteer Strategy for the Broads: Action Plan 2017-22

Objective 1: Provide practical training and support to all Broads Authority (BA) volunteers and supervisory staff in an up-to-date, effective, efficient and fair way.

Ref	Key actions	Key outputs by 2022	Resources	Timescales
1.1	Review all existing BA volunteer training programmes to identify additional training needs and best practice (using comparisons with other National Park Authorities and relevant organisations).	Good quality volunteer training programmes are in place, following up-to-date and relevant best practice.	BA Volunteer Coordinator National Park Authority Volunteer Coordinators	Autumn 2017
1.2	Review, update and run basic training programme for new volunteers in line with BA policy and procedure. Deliver tailored Health and Safety training to all volunteers and refresh the training programme on a 3-year cycle.	All new volunteers clearly understanding their roles and can undertake basic activities in a safe and competent manner and in accordance with BA policy and procedure. Volunteers are working to minimum Health and Safety standards in accordance with BA policy and procedure.	BA Volunteer Coordinator BA: C,M & E ⁴ Supervisors, Deputy Rangers, Education Officer, Visitor Services Supervisor External: Occupational Health and Safety Committee	Autumn 2017 Ongoing, every 3 years for each volunteer
1.3	Identify and develop external partnership links and other means to increase the level of training offered to volunteers, including the feasibility of a centralised volunteer training hub.	Volunteers are appropriately trained by experienced and specialist providers; if feasible, a centralised volunteer training hub is in operation.	BA Volunteer Coordinator NP Volunteer Coordinators, stakeholders and key organisations	By 2019

⁴ Broads Authority Construction, Maintenance and Environment Teams

1.4	Develop and run training programmes for BA staff that will enable them to supervise volunteers (incl. particular needs/circumstances) in a confident and safe manner	BA staff are supervising a range of volunteers on a regular basis and in a confident and safe manner. They can work competently and safely with volunteers with particular needs (e.g. adults at risk), and in particular circumstances (e.g. large groups, school groups, out of working hours). People with particular needs are able to take part in volunteering activities under appropriate, tailored supervision.	BA: C,M & E Supervisors, Visitor Services Supervisor, Deputy Head Rangers, HR, volunteer supervisors External: Wellbeing advisors	From 2017
1.5	Explore and promote volunteer shadowing exchange programmes with other National Park Authorities and other relevant organisations.	BA volunteers are taking up opportunities to gain experience and develop their roles through shadowing other NPA/organisational volunteers.	BA Volunteer Coordinator Volunteer focus group	In 2018/19

Objective 2: Build the capacity of volunteers to lead tasks and run public events and activities on behalf of the Broads Authority.

Ref	Key actions	Key outputs by 2022	Resources	Timescales
2.1	Develop BA Volunteer Leader and Volunteer Trainer roles to assist staff, incl.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review and update Volunteer Leader role in line with identified needs and expectations of supported staff, and investigate costs and funding for a Volunteer Leader training programme ▪ Recruit, train and deploy Volunteer Leaders to assist BA Operations Technicians in the first instance, with possible expansion to other teams after trial period. ▪ Investigate feasibility of Volunteer Trainer role; if appropriate, recruit, train and deploy Volunteer Trainers to assist the Volunteer Coordinator and C, M & E supervisors in the first instance, with expansion to other teams after trial period. 	Volunteer Leaders and Volunteer Trainers are in place to support BA work programmes, and Leaders are supervising volunteers during non-standard work hours.	BA Volunteer Coordinator BA: C,M & E supervisors, Education Officer External trainer support	From April 2017

2.2	<p>Provide training and supporting resources to volunteers to enable them to represent the BA at public events without direct BA supervision</p> <p>Produce events resource packs targeted to specific events and activities, incl. teaching resource packs, for use by volunteers (cross links with BA Education Strategy)</p>	<p>Trained and adequately resourced volunteers are representing the BA at public events, without the need for BA staff attendance.</p>	<p>BA Volunteer Coordinator</p> <p>BA Education Officer</p> <p>Broads Landscape Partnership, external training providers</p>	<p>In line with BA Education Strategy</p>
2.3	<p>Develop Visitor Service volunteer role and recruitment processes, incl. production of clear role descriptions for Visitor Service Volunteer (information hubs, Yacht Stations, Reedham Quay) and for site specific volunteers to work with visitor service staff</p>	<p>Volunteers are supporting BA staff at peak periods and at specific locations, including maintenance duties and visitor information provision.</p>	<p>BA Visitor Services Supervisor, supported by BA Volunteer Coordinator</p>	<p>tbc</p>
2.4	<p>Develop and run training programmes to enable volunteers to run events with school children, incl. Broads Curriculum activities, without direct BA supervision.</p> <p>Put measures in place to enable volunteers to help research and produce Broads Curriculum materials and activities (cross links to BA Education Strategy).</p>	<p>Trained and resourced volunteers are assisting the BA, Broads Environmental Education Network and schools in the production and delivery of environmental education activities, incl. Broads Curriculum activities.</p>	<p>BA Volunteer Coordinator, BA Education Officer</p> <p>External: Broads Environmental Education Network, Broads Landscape Partnership</p>	<p>In line with BA Education Strategy</p>
2.5	<p>Develop a revised modular BA training programme that incorporates targeted training for Ranger volunteers</p>	<p>Trained Ranger volunteers are providing an effective and tailored resource to BA Ranger Teams.</p> <p>Non-Ranger volunteers are able to assist Ranger Teams (e.g. practical volunteers helping with winter tree mgt.)</p>	<p>BA Deputy Head Rangers, BA Volunteer Coordinator</p> <p>BA: Rangers, C, M & E supervisors</p>	<p>2017/2018</p>

Objective 3: Encourage active volunteering from a more diverse range of people, particularly young people and those with disabilities or health-related issues.

Ref	Key actions	Key outputs by 2022	Resources	Timescales
3.1	Develop and run volunteering opportunities tailored for young people, incl. those from disadvantaged backgrounds	Through LPS Young Ranger programme and other tailored schemes, young people, incl. disadvantaged young people, are taking part in proactive, motivational activities in a volunteering capacity.	Young Ranger Pilot Scheme: BA Education Officer, Broads Landscape Partnership, education providers	Young Rangers pilot from May 2017, other LPS activities to 2022
3.2	Develop and run volunteering opportunities tailored for family groups, incl. training programmes to enable groups to take responsibility for specific locations / tasks	Family groups are taking part in volunteering opportunities geared to their needs.	BA Volunteer Coordinator, volunteer supervisors	From 2018
3.3	Develop site-specific opportunities for volunteers that encourage local community engagement and a sense of ownership, increasing accessibility to volunteering, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify and list key sites that lend themselves to volunteer-led management/ maintenance ▪ Recruit and train local people to look after specific sites (e.g. yacht stations, information centres) under the direction of BA teams 	Opportunities are in place to allow volunteers the option to be based at sites close to their communities, and take 'ownership' of maintenance and checks at those sites.	BA Volunteer Coordinator, Ranger Team, Visitor Services	2017-18
3.4	Identify volunteering initiatives and resources to support the delivery of health and wellbeing objectives (e.g. Age UK walks, Green Gym, Healthy Walks, MIND activities, HMP Norwich activities)	BA volunteers are helping to run activities (generally run by external groups and organisations) that are aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of targeted groups.	BA Volunteer Coordinator Delivery partners, e.g. Age UK, local authorities, MIND, The Conservation Volunteers	From 2018

Objective 4: Increase the Broads Authority's capacity to sustain an active and improving volunteering service into the long term.

Ref	Key actions	Key outputs by 2022	Resources	Timescales
4.1	Review, quantify and identify ways to enhance the level of BA administrative support to meet the objectives of the Volunteer Strategy	The BA Volunteer Service has adequate resources to provide greater flexibility and a more reactive day-to-day service to volunteers and supervisory staff	BA Volunteer Coordinator through internal consultation	2017/2018
4.2	Develop and implement administrative processes to create a more coordinated, centrally managed volunteer training programme across all the BA's functions	A central point of control is in use to coordinate the administration of all BA volunteer training and support requirements.	BA Volunteer Coordinator Internal consultation with C,M & E Supervisors, Deputy Rangers, Education Officer, Visitor Services Supervisor	By Spring 2018
4.3	Review volunteer travel and transport provision and needs, and develop evidence-based options to improve provision/access, incl. use of sustainable transport wherever possible	Processes are in place, supported by robust evidence, to help volunteers get to and from work sites in an easy, timely and cost effective way.	BA Volunteer Coordinator in consultation with volunteers, BA teams	2019 onwards
4.4	Identify and issue appropriate clothing and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to volunteers (incl. situations where lack of appropriate clothing may be a barrier to volunteering)	Volunteers have the necessary clothing and PPE to carry out their duties, and no-one is prevented from volunteering by a lack of appropriate clothing/PPE.	BA Volunteer Service and staff who supervise volunteers	Ongoing
4.5	Carry out internal and external research, incl. surveys, literature reviews and interviews, on incentives and barriers to volunteering, to inform more targeted/ appropriate recruitment processes	The BA is running recruitment and retention processes that enable a wider range of people to volunteer and maintains an adequate provision of trained volunteers to meet its service requirements.	BA Volunteer Coordinator in consultation with Volunteers and BA teams	From 2018
4.6	Review, and as necessary update or produce, BA volunteer role descriptions and duties to improve the level and flexibility of volunteer opportunities and support available to staff	Volunteers are recruited and in place to support the work of the BA across all areas, and there is greater flexibility to volunteers in the choice in duties, hours, etc.	BA Volunteer Coordinator in consultation with Volunteers and BA teams	Ongoing

Ref	Key actions	Key outputs by 2022	Resources	Timescales
4.7	<p>Review and update communications systems to publicise volunteer programmes and acknowledge volunteers and their achievements to a wider audience, incl:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop and run recognition schemes and events for volunteers (incl. award schemes, celebration days, discounts at TICs) where appropriate ▪ Develop and implement a communications plan to publicise BA volunteers and their achievements, both within BA and to external audiences ▪ Put processes in place to encourage greater social interaction between BA staff/members and volunteers 	<p>Communications systems are in place and people are finding out about, and signing up to, volunteering opportunities in the Broads.</p> <p>Volunteers are being publically recognised and rewarded, through awards and celebrations, for their contribution to looking after the Broads.</p> <p>BA members, staff and volunteers are engaging more with, and learning about, each other's roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p>BA Volunteer Coordinator, BA Communications Team</p> <p>Consultation with volunteers and other volunteer users, and with award scheme providers</p>	Evolving from 2017/2018
4.8	Investigate the feasibility of accreditation schemes for volunteers and produce options where appropriate	Where appropriate, accreditation schemes are available for volunteers, possibly in specific roles.	BA Volunteer Coordinator	2019/2020
4.9	Identify potential sources of external funding, sponsorship and other means to support the BA volunteer service, including outsourcing volunteering	Database of external support options is in place, and opportunities to increase resources are followed up.	BA Volunteer Coordinator, external funding advisers	Ongoing

Broads Landscape Partnership Scheme

A range of volunteering activities and events will also be developed and implemented through the Broads Landscape Partnership Scheme: Water, Mills and Marshes. The scheme involves 55 partners carrying out 38 projects that focus on the people, communities and heritage of the Broads drained marsh landscape. For information contact Will Burchnall, LPS Programme Manager on 01603 610734, email will.burchnall@broads-authority.gov.uk, or visit the Broads Authority's website at: <http://www.broads-authority.gov.uk/looking-after/projects/water,-mills-and-marshes>

Date of publication: March 2017

Author: Broads Authority