



WEYMOUTH MUSEUM TRUST VOLUNTEER POLICY

(Registered Charity 1143692)

Approved by trust: April 2022

Next review date: April 2023

1. Introduction

Weymouth Museum Trust (WMT) relies on the generosity its volunteers who give thousands of hours of their time to the museum each year. They are involved in a wide range of activities, from documenting, curating and conserving collections to staging exhibitions, working in the Museum shop or helping with events and fundraising. For many people volunteering is a way of taking their hobbies and interests on to a new level, learning new skills or passing on knowledge. It is also a great way to meet people and a very satisfying way to spend free time. The WMT could not care for its collections adequately or put on such a wide range of exhibitions and activities without the help of its volunteers. This policy gives guidance on the management of volunteers, and for volunteers themselves who are undertaking work, programmes or projects for or on behalf of the WMT. With this in mind:

- The WMT recognises the important contribution made by volunteers in helping to fulfill the aims and objectives of the WMT and the overall experience of our members and visitors.
- The WMT encourages active volunteer involvement within these guidelines regardless of age, gender, ethnic origin, nationality, religious/political belief, sexual orientation, marital status, disability or socio/economic background.
- This policy also applies to school and work placements or scholarly and academic internships subject to additional terms and conditions contained within the WMT Safeguarding Policy.

WMT hopes that volunteers will enjoy their time with the museum and will carry out their role to the best of their ability. The Trust hopes that volunteers will keep us informed of any problems encountered during their time with the museum. Questions are encouraged if volunteers are unsure of any tasks and if things are not as expected.

2. Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide overall guidance and direction to WMT staff and volunteers engaged in volunteer involvement. It is intended for internal guidance only and does not constitute

either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement.

For the purpose of this policy, a **volunteer** is anyone who – without compensation or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement of agreed expenses incurred in the course of duty – performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the WMT.

3. Recruitment

Volunteer opportunities will be advertised on a variety of platforms including the press and media, Volunteer Centres, social media, volunteering websites and through local press and community channels.

Potential volunteers will be required to complete a registration form and may be invited to an informal interview at the Museum. This interview will be a discussion to determine suitability for the volunteering roles available. Weymouth Museum will determine whether the volunteer's application will be accepted subject to interview, satisfactory references and where appropriate, a DBS check. A DBS check will be required for those working with children or vulnerable groups.

Volunteers will be appointed on merit and the individual's ability to carry out the specified task. There is an introductory period of 12 weeks, which allows both the volunteer and the Museum to decide whether the volunteering arrangement is suiting both parties. Either side can terminate the agreement at any time.

It is WMT's aim to recruit volunteers from all sections of the local community, with a range of skills, life experience and knowledge. There is an equal opportunities policy and all eligible persons have equal access to volunteering on the basis of their ability and experience.

4. What can be expected when volunteering with the WMT

Volunteers can expect:

- A welcoming, stimulating and creative museum environment in which to volunteer.
- A full induction to WMT and the museum and have clearly specified lines of support and supervision.
- Clear information about their role and what is expected of them. WMT will endeavour to match volunteers to tasks that reflect their skills, talents and interests.
- Safe working conditions and to be fully aware of health and safety issues. This will form part of the induction process, including a full tour of the working area and building.
- To know what their rights and responsibilities are if something goes wrong or a complaint is made via access to grievance and disciplinary policy and procedures.
- To gain a wider knowledge of their particular areas of interest.
- Opportunities to use existing skills, but to also access training and learning opportunities to develop new skills.
- To be consulted on decisions that will affect what they do.
- To have their involvement in the work of the museum will be recognised and appreciated by the WMT.

- To be treated fairly and with respect by staff, other volunteers and visitors, regardless of gender; sexual orientation, age, parental or marital status, disability, religion, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, or socio/economic background
- Volunteers in receipt of benefits have the right to volunteer their time at WMT without having these affected. This includes people receiving Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support and Incapacity Benefit. Volunteers must inform their Job Centre that they are participating in voluntary work.
- An initial review after 12 weeks to evaluate the work being undertaken and to identify any ongoing support and training needs.
- Written references or statements of achievements can be provided upon request.

5. Expectations of volunteers with the WMT

WMT expects that volunteers will:

- Attend a full volunteer induction
- Carry out tasks in a way which corresponds to the aims and values of the WMT and its Museum.
- Follow WMT's policies and procedures
- Attend training and support sessions as required
- Be of smart appearance and wear a volunteer badge when on duty.
- Be committed, punctual and reliable, coming in as arranged and giving reasonable notice if unavailable.
- Respect confidentiality with regard to personal and privileged information they are exposed to.
- Keep themselves and others safe at WMT sites as outlined in health and safety policy and procedures
- Treat staff, other volunteers, members and visitors with respect regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, parental or marital status, disability, religion, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, or socio/economic background.
- Allow copyright for any creative works carried out by volunteers for the WMT to belong to the WMT.
- Recognise that the WMT has the right to terminate a volunteer's placement if his/her services are no longer needed for any reason and at any time.
- Not engage in any actions or communications that may bring the WMT and its Museum into disrepute. This includes verbally, in writing or via electronic means (e.g., social media).

6. The Volunteer Agreement

All volunteers and their supervisor will sign a volunteer agreement, a copy of which will be held by both parties. The agreement will be discussed alongside the expectations and requirements of the specific role itself.

Volunteers are expected to perform their duties on a regular scheduled and punctual basis. When expecting to be absent from a scheduled duty, volunteers should inform WMT as far in advance as

possible so that alternative arrangements may be made. Continual absenteeism will result in the application of the Disciplinary Procedure.

Volunteers who do not adhere to WMT's policies and procedures or who fail to perform their volunteer duties will be supported through supervision and, if no improvement is made, will be subject to the Disciplinary Procedure.

No volunteer will have their volunteer agreement ended until he/she has had an opportunity to discuss the reasons for this with their supervisor through the application of the Disciplinary Procedure.

Only authorised representatives of the WMT may end a volunteer's agreement. (Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service with the organisation at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice of their departure and complete an exit form and if required, an exit meeting.

7. Behaviour and Personal Conduct

While volunteering for WMT, volunteers are expected to:

- Promote the aims, values, vision and mission of WMT
- Perform their volunteer duties to the best of their ability
- Adhere to policies and procedures, including record keeping requirements and confidentiality
- Maintain regular communication and meet time and duty commitments, except in exceptional circumstances, or to provide adequate notice so that alternative arrangements can be made
- Be a committed member of the team
- Gain valuable experience from the voluntary opportunity
- Not engage in actions or communications that may bring the WMT or its Museum into disrepute. This includes verbally, in writing or via electronic means (e.g., social media).

8. Grievance Procedure

WMT aims to create a safe and inclusive work environment and for volunteers to feel valued in their work, however we recognise that there may be occasions where volunteers have concerns they wish to raise. It is our policy to encourage free communication between volunteers and their supervisor to ensure that any problem or issue arising during the course of volunteering can be resolved as fairly and quickly as possible.

Stage 1 – Informal: To try and achieve a speedy resolution to any problem or issue, you should start by having an informal discussion with your immediate supervisor. Should the grievance concern your supervisor, the matter should be raised with the WMT board.

Stage 2 – Formal: If the matter cannot be resolved by informal discussion or you are not satisfied with the outcome of the informal discussion, you must inform the WMT board that you wish to take the matter further and to submit a formal, written grievance to the board within 14 days. Every effort will be made to resolve your grievance at a formal hearing without unreasonable delay, and you have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or accredited Trade Union representative. You will receive the outcome of the hearing in writing. All grievance proceedings and records will be kept confidential.

Stage 3 – Appeal: If you are not entirely satisfied after a formal hearing you may appeal in writing. Your appeal should state why are you appealing against the decision and should be received by the WMT board within 7 days of your receiving the outcome letter. At an appeal hearing, you have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or accredited Trade Union representative. You will receive the outcome of the hearing in writing. The decision of the person dealing with the appeal is final.

9. Disciplinary Procedure

The disciplinary procedure is designed to help and encourage all volunteers to achieve and maintain the required standards of conduct, attendance and performance. It should be seen as a procedure to ensure that all volunteers are treated fairly and consistently. The stages are as follows:

- You will be notified in writing of the allegations and no hearing will take place until a minimum of 24 hours has elapsed.
- You will be provided with information relating to the allegation prior to the hearing.
- You will have the right to be accompanied at the hearing by a work colleague of your choice or an accredited Trade Union representative.
- You or your representative may ask questions or make statements; the representative cannot answer questions on behalf of the employee.
- Any decision made will be based on a reasonable belief, the balance of probability and on the evidence presented.
- The result of any disciplinary hearing will be confirmed in writing.
- You have the right to appeal any decision by applying in writing within 7 days of the decision stating your reasons for appealing.

Failure to attend a disciplinary hearing and to do so, without good reason, is deemed to constitute a failure to follow a reasonable management instruction and can amount to gross misconduct. In these circumstances your failure to attend will be considered alongside the reasons for the disciplinary hearing and a decision may be made in your absence.

10. Equal opportunities

WMT is committed to equal opportunities for all people whatever their background. WMT will treat all people fairly, whether they are seeking and using WMT's services, volunteering, applying for a job, already employed by WMT or contracting to supply goods or services to WMT. WMT will not discriminate unfairly on grounds of age, racial heritage, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, nationality, physical attributes, religious beliefs, responsibility for dependents, sexual orientation or socio/economic background.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the WMT or sooner if required.