

Volunteering Policy

This is the Volunteering Policy Statement of:

The Combe Mill Society
Blenheim Palace Sawmill
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Combe Mill Society

This Volunteering Policy of the Combe Mill Society has been reviewed by the Board and approved by e-mail exchanges 7 March 2013.

Signed:.....  Date: 7 March 2013

Name (in Capitals):.....TONY SIMMONS

Position in Society:..... CHAIR

Introduction

Volunteers play a vital role in keeping Combe Mill running, offering a great visitor experience, undertaking a wide range of roles, from renovating machinery, guiding and demonstrating and helping with learning and family activities. Behind the scenes supporting the administration, publicity and promotion and running retail and catering activities. We are very grateful for all the support and commitment we get from our existing volunteers but are always keen to encourage others to support Combe Mill in a wide variety of roles.

The policy recognises that, in order to increase the number of people helping to operate the Mill as a visitor attraction, not everyone will be able to commit to the demands of full membership of the Combe Mill Society. Therefore there will be a distinction in future between Members and Helpers

This document records the Society's policy on managing the recruitment, retention and mentoring of volunteers.

Policy Statement

We, the Combe Mill Society, aim to provide opportunities for our community to enjoy operating, maintaining and demonstrating the machinery and artefacts of Combe Mill to the public and community groups. We recognise the great value our volunteers bring to Combe Mill and to our visitors. We note that everyone involved with Combe Mill is a volunteer and will be treated as an equal.

Within Combe Mill Society volunteers are involved in one or more of the following roles:

100 Club Organiser	Archivist
Bookings Secretary	Facilities Manager
Parking Attendant	Catering Manager
Catering Assistant	Curator
Chief Engineer	Company Secretary
Compliance Officer	Education team member
Event Organiser	Engineer
Fund Raiser	Guidebook Advertising Manager
Guidebook Editor	Librarian
Membership Secretary	Minute Secretary
Newsletter Editor	Open Day Steward
Photographer/Filmmaker	Poster Organiser
Press Officer	Publicity manager
Retail Manager	Retail Assistant

Senior Blacksmith	Blacksmith
Social Network Manager	Ticket Seller
Tour Guide	Treasurer
Volunteer Coordinator	Webmaster

Roles could be combined provided the person possesses the required aptitude and skill.

We aim to work within the following principles of good practice:

- volunteer roles will be well thought out and clearly described so that everyone is sure about their respective roles and responsibilities
- we will comply with current Data Protection Legislation and guidance in the handling of all information we hold on all volunteers
- volunteers will have regular opportunities to share their thoughts/concerns/ ideas with their fellow volunteers and the committee of the Society
- all our existing and future policies and procedures will take into account how they affect our fellow volunteers.

The purpose of this policy is to

- recognise the value of the contribution everyone makes to our Society
- be true to the purpose, values and intentions of the Society in our approach to volunteers
- recognise the roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers
- ensure that we offer satisfactory opportunities and support to volunteers in carrying out their chosen roles to the highest standard possible.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with any other relevant policies, procedures and guidance that exists.

Policy Review

The Society will review the effectiveness of its volunteering policy no less often than yearly and will self-audit again the check list contained in its Volunteering Procedure.

Policy Implementation

The Board of Directors will appoint a person to manage the recruitment, induction and mentoring of volunteers. Details of the coordination of volunteers are described in our Volunteering Procedure that may vary from time to time. In the absence of such an appointment the Membership Secretary will assume the role.

Combe Mill Society aims to provide support and essential training, education, learning and development opportunities for all our volunteers. The Society will ensure that volunteers can discuss their progress and successes, and raise issues and ideas including their development requirements with the Volunteer Coordinator.

Our Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for supporting new volunteers but can involve others as part of the support process. We encourage, for example, experienced volunteers supporting new volunteers in their role, and all members contributing to the ongoing support, training and development of our volunteers.

Volunteers are encouraged to meet to discuss with members any issues arising informally before any formal action is taken. If there is a concern/issue from either party which cannot be resolved amicably, the Volunteer Coordinator may choose to approach the Board of Directors to take a more formal line of resolution.

Our support and supervision approach includes providing volunteers with a named 'buddy' to act as mentor, access to relevant information and access to training, learning and development opportunities to ensure volunteers and the Society get the most from their respective contributions.

The Volunteer Coordinator role entails:

Administration and Promotion

- Implement volunteer policies and procedures
- Develop and maintain working relationships with the volunteer team
- To coordinate volunteer staffing levels to ensure the safe running of the site
- Maintaining accurate activity records on volunteer induction and participation.

Recruitment and training

- Recruit new volunteers and review roles of existing volunteer teams
- Organise 'buddys' for new volunteers
- Coordinating recruitment and administering the induction process
- Organise recruiting events within the local and wider community to attract volunteers
- Work with the board of directors to develop and implement training including health and safety
- Support volunteers with their learning and social objectives

Communication

- Act as a single point of contact for volunteer communications
- Engage in effective communications with individual volunteers and 'buddys' to ensure quality standards are being met and managed effectively
- Represent the volunteers views at appropriate meetings

Managing Volunteers

- Ensure volunteers are placed in roles to match their strengths and interests
- Encourage volunteers to be proactive and ensure they have up to date information on Combe Mill, future projects and events.
- Monitor performance of volunteers and their roles.

Volunteer categories

The Society recognizes three types of voluntary contribution to the operation of the Mill:

Involvement	Volunteer category	Payment
Persons who make a practical and regular contribution and are involved in operating the Mill	Member	Annual subscription
Volunteers who are only able to offer occasional help such as acting as a steward or guide and not wishing to become full members	Helper	None
Supporters who cannot give practical help but wish to support us financially	Friend	Donation

Benefits

Friends receive in recognition of their donation:

- monthly newsletter
- admission to an annual Friends Day

Helpers receive the following benefits from helping:

- free refreshments when working at the Mill
- travel expenses when on Society business
- employee liability insurance cover while working at Combe Mill on society business
- monthly newsletter (electronically)
- free admission to our steaming events

Members receive all the above benefits PLUS

- voting rights and eligibility to stand for election as a board member after one year
- re-imbusement of cost of embroidered overalls after three months of membership
- key to the Mill in return for a cash deposit
- discounts on retail items
- free admission to all society events

Appreciation of Volunteers

The Combe Mill Society greatly appreciates and values the work of all our volunteers and aims to recognise their contribution both formally and informally in as many ways as possible.

We may formally recognise volunteers by:

- the provision of references for volunteers leaving us
- regular training and development opportunities
- involvement in the Society's decision making and review processes
- mentions in our newsletters.

Informal recognition of volunteers may be shown by:

- asking volunteers to represent the Society at outside events
- featuring volunteers in the media and articles to promote our work
- offering volunteers more responsible roles within the Society
- regular personal thank you.

Annual Meeting of Volunteers

The Annual General Meeting of the Society provides the opportunity for both Members, Helpers and Friends to have:

- A full update of what's going on at Combe Mill
- A talk/training session by someone outside Combe Mill as requested by the volunteers. It could be a curator, industrial archaeologist, social historian etc.
- Refreshments
- A chance for volunteers to feedback to the board of directors
- A thank you section where we highlight what individual volunteers have achieved over last year

Social Event/s Celebration

A summer BBQ and autumn social for volunteers and families at Combe Mill

Recognition

A notice of thanks for all Members/Helpers in the newsletter

Heritage Site or Museum Visit

A visit to another museum and a behind the scenes tour/talk on the museum/education service and lunch or afternoon tea.

Mentoring

Mentoring is an essential element in the induction and support process for new volunteers. All new volunteers will be provided with a 'buddy' to act during their first year of membership.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

All volunteers involved in the work of the Combe Mill Society should endeavour to follow this Code of Conduct and inform the Society in the event of becoming aware of or suspecting a breach of this Code of Conduct.

All volunteers should:

- treat everyone with respect regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality or belief: this includes co-volunteers, members, friends of the society and visitors
- remember that actions, word and gestures can sometimes be misinterpreted, regardless of their good intentions
- not have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others
- not exaggerate or trivialise harassment, victimisation or child and vulnerable adult abuse issues
- not carry out their role under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs
- dress to the required standard when carrying out their volunteer roles
- endeavour to follow all the Society's policies and procedures that apply to their role.

Leaving the Society

On leaving the Society, Members and Helpers may ask for a reference to present to another organisation or employer. Such requests shall be made to the Volunteer Coordinator and will not unreasonably be refused.

In the case of Members, the key to the Mill must be returned and the key deposit will be refunded.

Change of circumstances

Any member who has served for more than two years and who becomes unable to actively support the work of the Society can remain a 'member' and retain full benefits of membership.