

Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre

Volunteer Handbook



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Welcome to BCHRC

Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre is unique in the county (and possibly in the country) as a museum standard store that is staffed and run by volunteers. New voluntary helpers are always welcomed and there are opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities. Every effort will be made to match you with an activity that uses (and maybe develops) your particular skills.

An Introduction to BCHRC

Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre is managed and run by the House on Crutches Museum Collection Trust, which was the lead organisation in an informal grouping that bid in March 2003 for funds to buy and convert the Old Chapel after it was no longer in use as the town library. Other groups that supported the bid are represented on the BCHRC Centre Management Team, which manages the day-to-day running of the centre. Many of these groups are affiliated to the centre, and some have placed items in the store.

The centre opened in October 2004 and offers facilities to stabilise, catalogue and store items in a secure museum standard store, and serves Bishop's Castle and its rural hinterland. It also offers facilities for users to carry out their own research using the centre's resources, or to request research assistance, and has an impressive range of Outreach resources based on items in the House on Crutches and Railway and Transport Museum collections, which include lesson plans and activities relevant to the Key Stages of the national curriculum. In addition, the centre is available for hire for meetings and other uses that are relevant to its aims.

Who's Who at BCHRC

Below is a Who's Who currently in the Centre. If you have a question or a problem and don't know who to ask, one of these people will usually be available, and if they don't know the answer to your question they will know how to find out.

Sally Chappell, Curator, House on Crutches and BCHRC sub-committee member

Prue Dakin, Marketing co-ordinator

Bernard Edwards, Director, House on Crutches Museum Collection Trust, BCHRC sub-committee member and Health & Safety Officer

Volunteer Development Co-ordinator (waiting to be filled)

Graham Lloyd, BCHRC sub-committee Chair

Richard Moulson, Trustee, House on Crutches Museum Collection Trust, IT support

Judith Payne, Education Outreach Co-ordinator

Patricia Theobald, Director & Company Secretary, House on Crutches Museum Collection Trust and BCHRC sub-committee member

Robin Wayne, Director, House on Crutches Museum Collection Trust, Treasurer

Hugh Jones, Building & Estates

Volunteering at BCHRC

What you can do for BCHRC

The activities that are carried out by volunteers at BCHRC are described below:

Collection based activities

Documentation & cataloguing

- Learn how to record and process objects that are deposited in the store and make access to them possible
- Learn how to enter objects onto the MODES database, photograph them and attach the photographs to the MODES record

Conservation & housekeeping

- Learn how to repair and care for objects in the collections

Access activities

Display

- Learn how to use the resources in the collections to mount displays for the museums or for local events

Research & interpretation

- Learn how to answer enquiries from the public using the Centre's resources
- Become involved in your own research using the Centre's resources

Outreach

- Help make the collections and Centre resources available to a wider audience
- Host school visits or take the resources into schools (please note that a CRB check is required for this activity)
- Host visits by local organisations and community groups to the Centre or to the town museums, or give a talk on the centre and its work (please note that a CRB check is required for this activity if it involves vulnerable adults)

Centre management & administration

Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre functions almost entirely as a result of the efforts of volunteers including those willing to be involved in

- Management & administration
- Marketing & publicity
- Finance & fundraising
- Health & safety

What BCHRC can do for you

Introduction & Training

New volunteers or potential volunteers will be introduced to the centre and the activities that take place there. Training opportunities when available will be offered to volunteers free of charge. This may be in-house training or may be provided by outside agencies such as Shropshire Archives.

Support for Volunteers

We have a Volunteer Development Co-ordinator who is available to discuss any good ideas, or concerns, you may have. When you register as a volunteer you will be asked which areas of activity interest you, and if you decide you would like to work in different areas, you can speak to the Volunteer Development Co-ordinator. The current Co-ordinator's name & contact details are displayed in the Centre.

In addition, the Volunteer Development Co-ordinator will, if requested, represent volunteers' views to the Centre Management Team or try to resolve any problems on their behalf.

Insurance

We will provide appropriate insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking voluntary work approved and authorised by us. An Employer's Liability `certificate is on display at the centre.

Procedures & Standards

You will be introduced to the appropriate way of carrying out the tasks you want to undertake, and to general standards for the use of the Centre.

What does it involve? Mostly common sense, like how to handle objects and avoid accidental damage.

We maintain a How To file which covers most of the procedures carried out at the centre, which is constantly reviewed and updated. We also invite volunteers to make suggestions or amendments that they would like to see in the file.

Volunteer Record

This will record what training and basic information you have been given, and is kept in your Volunteer Handbook. Please make sure you keep this information up to date.

Outline of Policies and Procedures at BCHRC

The following policies are held at BCHRC in the Policies & Procedures file and on computer and can be accessed at any time you are at the centre

- Child Protection Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Disciplinary Procedure *
- Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy
- Grievance Procedure *
- Health and Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Handy Hints *
- Lone Working Policy *
- Volunteering Policy
- Working with Vulnerable Adults Policy

The policies and procedures marked with an asterisk * follow in full in the Appendix

Contents of Appendix

Disciplinary Procedure
Grievance Procedure
Health & Safety Handy Hints
Lone Working Policy
BCHRC, The Legal Framework
Your personal Volunteer Record
Copy of Volunteer Agreement



Disciplinary Procedure

Disciplinary Procedure

If there is a problem with a volunteer or their work, it should first be discussed between the volunteer and the Volunteer Co-ordinator. The volunteer has a right to be accompanied at this discussion, which might indicate a training need for the volunteer, extra support or supervision, or a change of activity.

If the matter cannot be resolved in this manner, an informal warning may be issued to the volunteer to improve conduct or performance within a certain period of time. An informal warning does not form part of the disciplinary procedure. A review meeting will follow to discuss any improvements that have taken place. If sufficient progress has been made, no further action will be needed.

However, if there is insufficient progress or the matter is very serious, the standard three-step procedure should be followed. The three steps of the standard procedure are:

- i. The written statement. (as described above)
- ii. The hearing
- iii. The appeal meeting

The written statement

As the first part of the procedure a formal warning will be issued. The volunteer will be informed in writing of this warning (which should indicate which areas of conduct/performance need to improve and within what time-scale) and informed that one more warning could lead to exclusion. The statement should also refer to the right of appeal.

The hearing

- The hearing should be far enough ahead that the volunteer has had time to think about the written statement, but it should not be delayed for too long. The volunteer has a duty to take all reasonable steps to attend.
- The volunteer has a right to be accompanied to the hearing
- The hearing must be at a reasonable time and in a convenient location. If the employee or person accompanying them is disabled this must be taken into account and reasonable provision made to ensure that they can participate fully
- The hearing is held to establish the facts and resolve the dispute, and notes should be kept of who says what
- The person chairing the hearing should summarise what has been said and give a date for the decision, allowing time to consider any new facts that came up

When the volunteer is given the decision they must be offered the opportunity to appeal against that decision if it goes against him or her (a time limit of 5 days is acceptable)

The appeal meeting

If the volunteer wants to appeal he or she must inform the centre and a meeting will be arranged to hear the appeal. The same rules apply to this meeting as to the hearing. If possible someone more senior than the person who held the disciplinary hearing should hold the appeal meeting. If this is impossible an extra effort needs to be made to deal with the matter impartially; this could include inviting an impartial outside person of standing to chair this meeting. After the meeting volunteer is informed of the decision, making it clear that it is final.

Serious misconduct

If a volunteer is accused of serious misconduct (for example, theft, an act of violence, malicious damage, deliberate falsification of documents, harassment) then BCHRC reserves the right to suspend them from the premises immediately while the case is being investigated. The volunteer has the right to put his/her case to the Volunteer Co-ordinator and the nominated BCHRC Management Team member and to be accompanied by a colleague.

The volunteer will be informed of the decision within 10 working days of suspension and has the right to appeal against exclusion to the independent arbitration panel of the Shropshire County Council Museum Service, whose decision is final.

Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre



Health & Safety Handy Hints

Fire

All volunteers must be familiar with use of extinguishers and also when not to use them but to evacuate the building and telephone for help.

First Aid

The first aid box is for personal volunteer use only. Do not use it on any members of the public as this may incur legal responsibility, but offer its use only.

Bishop's Castle Surgery 01588 638285
Shrop Doc out of hours 08450 202131

Safe Working Conditions

1. VDUs

Working position should be checked at each use. Breaks needed if used for long sessions

2. Store

Do not enter or work in the store by yourself.

When using the steps – one person on the steps and one on the floor to receive objects

Handle heavy objects with great care

It is recommended that work on artefacts should be outside the store so that constant conditions are maintained in the store

Check area is clear before moving stacks

3. Mezzanine floor and stairs

Greatest care must be taken when moving artefacts from or to this level, and preferably two people should be involved.

Contact with the Public

Treat all members of the public with courtesy. To assist with dealing with visitors in a satisfactory way, see How To Record Enquiries & Visitors at BCHRC in the How To file. See also First Aid above.

In the event of violent or threatening behaviour – WALK AWAY and seek help.

Lone Working

If you are working at the Resource centre by yourself we recommend

1. That you let someone know where you will be
2. That you use the safety chain on the door
3. That you have prepared an exit strategy
4. That you do not enter the store by yourself

Please contact Bernard Edwards (01588 638107) if you have any queries.

Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre



Grievance Procedure

If a volunteer has a complaint against a member of staff or another volunteer they should first discuss the matter with the volunteer co-coordinator. If the complaint is against the volunteer co-ordinator the complainant should discuss the matter with a member of the Centre Management Team.

If not resolved informally at the initial meeting, the grievance must be raised formally following the three-step procedure outlined below.

The three steps are:

1. The written statement
2. The meeting
3. The appeal

Written statement

The employee must set out his/her grievance in writing and send a copy to the volunteer co-ordinator or member of the CMT.

Meeting

The volunteer must be invited to a meeting to discuss the grievance. The meeting should not be delayed unnecessarily and must be within 28 days, but the person holding the meeting is entitled to give themselves time to look into the background to the grievance and check what action has been taken in similar cases.

The meeting should be at a reasonable time and location and the complainant has to attend. They can be accompanied by a colleague and if the volunteer or the companion is disabled all reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that they have no problems participating fully in the meeting.

After the meeting the volunteer must be informed of the decision and offered an appeal meeting if the decision goes against him or her.

Appeal

If the volunteer is still dissatisfied, he or she should tell the volunteer co-ordinator that he or she wishes to appeal against the decision or lack of one. A meeting must be arranged to discuss the appeal. If possible someone more senior than the person who chaired the

grievance meeting should chair the appeal meeting. If this is impossible an extra effort needs to be made to deal with the matter impartially; this could include inviting an impartial outside person of standing to chair this meeting. After the meeting volunteer is informed of the decision, making it clear that it is final.

Modified procedure

In general, the standard grievance procedure will apply even after the volunteer has left. However there is a shorter procedure that can be used when the aggrieved volunteer is no longer working at the Centre and:

Both parties agree in writing that it should apply; **or**

It is not reasonably practicable for one or other party to carry out the standard procedure. For example if one of them has left the country for an extended period.

The two steps are:

1. The ex-volunteer sends a written statement of grievance
2. The volunteer co-ordinator writes back to the ex-volunteer giving a response to the points raised.

When procedures do not apply

The procedures will not apply when one party behaves in such a violent and unreasonable manner that the other party could not be expected to sit down with them and go through the procedures.

There will be circumstances when factors beyond the control of either party mean that it is effectively impossible for the procedure to be gone through, for example if one of the parties concerned leaves the country or becomes seriously ill.



Lone Working Policy

BCHRC recognises the problems that can be associated with lone working. This policy offers guidelines and suggestions to staff and volunteers who may find themselves in a vulnerable situation.

Lone Working in the Office

There may be occasions when you are alone in the office. When this happens it is advisable to put the safety chain on the door, particularly in the winter evenings.

Dealing with Aggression

Learn to recognise and deal with anger. An angry person will always show some of the following signs;

- Red or sweaty face
- Glaring eyes and raised voice
- Constant movement and pointing
- Tense muscles
- Rapid and shallow breathing

If you do encounter such a person

- Stay calm; speak gently, slowly and clearly maintaining eye contact.
- Try to defuse the situation by talking things through as adults.
- Walk away from the person to give them space.

Physical attack

The law expects you to try and avoid physical confrontations, but you do have the right to defend yourself and colleagues.

- Escape should always be your number one priority.
- Be noisy. Noise attracts attention and distracts offenders.
- Use your personal attack alarm if you carry one – a personal attack alarm will deter dangerous dogs.

All incidents should be reported following procedure laid down in the Health & Safety Policy

Out and About

- **Try to inform another colleague/volunteer where you are going and when you will be back. If not feasible inform family member/friend.**
- Dress appropriately for the area you are going to visit.
- If possible carry a mobile phone, change, BT charge card and personal alarm.
- If meetings take place at people's homes, familiarise yourself with the surroundings, the occupants and assess any potential hazards.

Driving

- If you are involved in an accident you are legally required to exchange details with the other driver or report the accident as soon as possible at the nearest police station.
- When driving in a built up area it is advisable to have the doors locked and windows shut.
- If you think you are being followed, drive to a safe place.
- You do not have to stop for a non-police vehicle.
- If you encounter aggressive driving, reduce your speed gradually and allow them to pass.
- Always park your vehicle in well-lit busy areas.

BISHOP'S CASTLE HERITAGE RESOURCE CENTRE: THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

In 2003 the House on Crutches Museum Collection Trust (HOCMCT) became a Company Limited by Guarantee, No. 4793093* and a Charity, No. 1100582 to enable it to enter into a contract with the Heritage Lottery Fund to set up Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre (BCHRC).

BCHRC is therefore owned and run by HOCMCT, as a community resource. To help maintain the closest possible links with user groups, they are represented on the BCHRC Centre Management Team (CMT).

The structure of HOCMCT is:



Regulation

Annual returns are made to Companies House, The Charity Commission and Museums, Libraries & Archives, West Midlands (MLA-WM).

The HoC Museum is registered with the National Museums network and is connected through that scheme to the Shropshire C.C. Museum Service and receives professional advice and support from their staff as well as from the Shropshire Archive, (formalised in 2006).

HOCMCT meets the MLA-WM standards for museums and is also striving to meet national archive standards.

You can help support HOCMCT in a number of ways:-

- Volunteering at BCHRC or HoC Museum
- Joining HOCMCT as a company member (no charge, forms available from the Secretary or Treasurer - open to individuals or organisations nominating one representative)
- Joining the Friends of HOCMCT (annual sub. £2 single, £3 couple - forms available from the Secretary or Treasurer)
- Affiliating to BCHRC (annual fee £25 for groups or individuals - forms available from the Secretary or Treasurer)

*Registered Office, BCHRC Chapel Yard, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire SY9 5DE

VOLUNTEER RECORD

NAME.....

| | Initial | Date |
|--|----------------|-------------|
| Welcome Pack – General (Information for first day) | | |
| Tour of Premises..... | | |
| Summary of Centre..... | | |
| Volunteer Handbook..... | | |
| Introductions of People..... | | |
| Volunteer Registration Form..... | | |
| Paperwork Systems..... | | |
| Computer Systems..... | | |
| Recycling..... | | |
| Emergency Contact Form..... | | |
| Policies & Procedures (Information to be gradually acquired where relevant to volunteer) | | |
| Child Protection Policy..... | | |
| Data Protection Policy..... | | |
| Disability Discrimination Policy..... | | |
| Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy... | | |
| Health & Safety Policy..... | | |
| Lone Working Policy..... | | |
| Volunteering Policy..... | | |
| Working with Vulnerable Adults Policy... | | |
| Disciplinary Procedure..... | | |
| Grievance Procedure..... | | |
| House Keeping Check List..... | | |
| Last to Leave Check List | | |
| Display Screen Equipment | | |
| Manual Handling..... | | |
| Archive Moveable Stairs..... | | |
| Store Access..... | | |
| Fire Fighting Equipment..... | | |
| First Aid..... | | |
| Accident/Near Miss Book..... | | |
| Emergency Contact Nos..... | | |

SIGNATURE.....(Sign after all above have been initialled)



Volunteer Agreement

This volunteer Agreement is a description of the arrangements between us, Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre and you (the volunteer) in relation to your voluntary work. The intention of this agreement is to assure you of our appreciation of your volunteering with us and to indicate our commitment to do the best we can to make your experience with us positive and rewarding.

Part 1 –Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre

We, Bishop's Castle Heritage Resource Centre, accept the voluntary service of
beginning/...../.....

We commit to the following:

1. Introduction and Training

We will introduce you to the Centre & help you find a role that suits your interests. We recognise that your interests & the role you want to fill may change. Training will be available where necessary. The Volunteers' Handbook provides full details of the organisation.

2. Support

We have a Volunteer Development Co-ordinator who is available to discuss any good ideas, or concerns, you may have. The current Co-ordinator's name & contact details are displayed in the Centre.

3. Procedures & standards

You will be introduced to the appropriate way of carrying out the tasks you want to undertake, and to general standards for the use of the Centre.

4. Expenses

Expenses are not routinely paid for travel to the Centre from home but may be claimed for travel to e.g. training or outreach sessions. Other expenses incurred on behalf of BCHRC will be reimbursed in full, on condition they have received prior approval of the Treasurer.

5. Health and Safety

We will provide appropriate training and feedback in support of our Health and Safety Policy, a copy of which is in the Volunteers' Handbook.

6. Insurance

We will provide appropriate insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking voluntary work approved and authorised by us.

7. Equal Opportunities

We will ensure that all volunteers are dealt with in accordance with the Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy, a copy of which is in the Volunteers' handbook.

8. Working with Children or Vulnerable Adults

We will ensure that all volunteers to whom it is relevant are aware of our policy in relation to working with children and vulnerable adults, which is intended for the protection of both our clients (recipients of our services) and our volunteers.

9. Any problems

If you have a problem please speak to the Volunteer Development Co-ordinator or to another member of the Centre Management Team (names & contact details are displayed in the Centre). For details of the Disciplinary & Grievance Procedures please see the Volunteer Handbook.

Part 2 – The Volunteer

I, (full name) agree to be a volunteer with The Bishop’s Castle Heritage Resource Centre.

I commit to the following:

1. Volunteering role

I will perform my volunteering role to the best of my ability.

2. Procedures and standards

I will adhere to the organisation’s rules, procedures and standards, including its Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy, Working with Children & Vulnerable Adults Policy and Health and Safety Procedures.

3. Confidentiality

I will keep confidential any information about the organisation and its users.

4. References

I will provide a referee, if requested, who may be contacted.

5. CRB Checks

If the work you are interested in would involve contact with children or vulnerable adults, do you agree to police checks in accordance with legislation?

Yes No (please tick)

This agreement is binding in honour only, is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intends any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

Agreed to (volunteer’s signature).....

(BCHRC representative).....

Date...../...../.....

For office use only

Date returned:

References requested: Yes / No

References received: Yes / No

Police check agreed: Yes / No

Police check received: Yes / No