VOLUNTEERING POLICY

1. Definition

   "Volunteering is ….. an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives". (Volunteering Compact Code of Practice).

2. Understanding Volunteering

   There are many differing reasons for an individual to decide to volunteer. It may be to develop new skills, or to gain further experience by utilising existing skills gained in a different context. It may just be to enhance their CV. Others wish to contribute assistance to an organisation that has helped or inspired them or whose ideals they identify with. Many will want to meet with others, keep active and do something worthwhile with their spare time.

   There will be a wide range in the amount of commitment that individuals are able to give. A proportion will be happy to join an organisation and give their support across a wide spectrum whilst others will express their preference to volunteer for specific projects with definitive timescales. Activities may take place outside and involve physical labour, or involve secretarial or administrative duties indoors. It is important to offer the widest scope of opportunities and activities to appeal to the widest number of potential volunteers.

   Whilst research carried out by some larger organisations manned by volunteers has shown that a Heritage volunteer group is rarely fully representative of the local population, we will strive to broaden the overall range of people who volunteer and we aim to:

   - Increase opportunities for volunteers to be people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to help maximise diversity.
   - Increase the quality of such opportunities.
   - Help match the required tasks with the relevant volunteers.
   - Provide fully targeted training and support for all volunteers.
   - Offer demonstrations and 'taster' sessions to attract new volunteers.

   Our emphasis will be on encouraging volunteers from all walks of life and will include specifically:

   - Younger people giving time as consultants in the museum and library.

- Skilled professionals offering fundraising, learning, business planning and IT skills to the organisation.
- Older volunteers for access testing responsibilities.
- Local volunteers contributing to oral history projects, particularly interviewing longer term residents on memories.
- Anyone involved in decision making as a Trustee or in the Project Management team.

3. <u>Encourage Volunteering</u>

Volunteering is a vibrant expression of active citizenship. It is a powerful force for social change, both for those fulfilling their potential through volunteering and for the wider community as a whole. Volunteers offer support, expertise and innovation to any organisation, enhancing impact and adding value.

Volunteering can:

- Assist an organisation meet its aims and objectives.
- Enable more tasks to be carried out.
- Allow service extension beyond core activities and help alleviate short term demand.
- Allow access to new skills and enhancement to projects with wider experience and provide an external perspective.
- Create valuable links with the community and provide experienced ambassadors for the organisation.
- Promote involvement and maintain "grass root" feelings and perceptions.
- Encourage partnership funding for external grants.

We will meet our obligations as a service provider under the Disability Discrimination Act as part of our everyday operations and intend to reach out to disabled people to be volunteers.

4. <u>Planning Volunteer Activity</u>

This is set out fully in our project Activity Plans. However in addition full account has been taken of the additional costs involved. Volunteers do give their time freely and are excellent value for money, but are not cost free. We have taken full account of the **HLF** Thinking about ….. Volunteering guidelines in setting out our policy.

5. <u>Volunteer Time as a non-cash contribution to our Project</u>

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) will count volunteer time given as a non-cash ("in kind") contribution to the overall Project costing. There are three levels for costing volunteer time:

- Unskilled tasks can be costed at up to £50 per day. This might include stewarding for the library, museum or guildhall, or general maintenance work.
- Skilled tasks can be costed at up to £150 per day. This might include training activities or planning and leading an education workshop.
- Professional tasks can be costed at up to £350 per day. This might include writing a business plan or creating an interpretation strategy or learning activities.

6. <u>Training for Volunteers and Volunteer Managers</u>

The training we will offer to volunteers will depend on the kinds of tasks they will be carrying out and the number of volunteers needing training.

- Induction and in-service training with a named supervisor, a member of staff, Trustee or another volunteer shows the volunteer how to do the task and supervises them as they do it. This is low cost and appropriate when you have small numbers of volunteers and the tasks they will be doing are relatively straightforward.
- In-house training programme – suitable where more in-depth knowledge about issues or tasks is necessary. It is most appropriate when new volunteers are taken on in groups where it will be helpful to draw on specific examples and case studies relevant to our project.
- External training where volunteers attend an open public course or a professional trainer is brought in to run a course. Appropriate courses will ideally be sourced locally – a Further Education College or Adult Education Centre may be appropriate.

Proper management and support for volunteers is crucial and it will be a resource intensive exercise. In addition to training and supervision, volunteers often require additional encouragement and support to ensure satisfaction in their roles. It will be good practice, even if there is not an official volunteer manager, to have someone who is specifically designated to co-ordinate and deploy volunteers as part of their role, and who has had the necessary co-ordinator training.