



VOLUNTEERING: A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHURCH OF ENGLAND CATHEDRALS

**Created by the Centre for the Study of
Christianity & Culture, University of York
in consultation with Cathedral Volunteer Managers**

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Anoushka (staff) and volunteers, Lichfield Cathedral

INTRODUCTION

*'Volunteering is doing more than you have to,
because you want to, in a cause you consider good.'*
Ivan Scheier

*'Volunteering brings joy, purpose and belonging ...
a gift that we give that goes on giving back to us.'*
Archbishop Justin Welby

Every Church of England cathedral is deeply indebted to the many volunteers who contribute their time, skills, and enthusiasm to maintaining and enhancing the beauty of the building and supporting the community's daily life, worship, welcome, and outreach to visitors. Across the country, cathedrals attract thousands of volunteers from a wide variety of age groups and backgrounds. Many are members of churches; others are not. All are greatly valued.

All volunteers need appropriate support and structures to help them to enjoy their roles and maximise their contribution to the full. It is important to understand fully the needs of volunteers, so that they too can grow from the experience. They are offering their time freely so they should take some benefits in exchange. Some may be looking for new friends, others to escape loneliness and isolation, and others still may simply want to give back something to the community. There are those too who feel that offering their time is their duty and do not wish to be called a 'volunteer' but it is nevertheless important to foster a sense of belonging to a wider volunteer community.

The purpose of this National Framework

Much work has been done in these areas by Church of England cathedrals large and small, drawing where relevant on research and good practice in the wider volunteering and heritage sector, whilst acknowledging the distinctiveness of the cathedral context.

This document draws extensively on this work, and the wealth of knowledge possessed by those working in cathedrals, to provide a national framework of standards and expectations for practice against which local volunteer programmes can be set. Importantly, this will support compliance with Church of England Safer Recruitment Guidance and other statutory responsibilities. The framework does not seek to prescribe every detail but to provide a comprehensive list of key requirements to ensure that all cathedrals demonstrate good practice and the highest level of support and guidance for volunteers, as they make their invaluable contribution to the life and mission of communities across the country. The Appendices include a list of sample documents (available separately) and useful resources.

The importance of volunteers

Volunteers undertake a very wide range of roles. Their contribution is vital because of the wide range of skills and experience they bring to diverse tasks such as governance, bellringing, textiles, flower-arranging, stewarding, guiding or working in the cathedral archives to name but a few.

Welcomers, guides, and chaplains are for most visitors the public face of the cathedral, the people who determine whether experiences of exploration, learning and worship are positive or negative. Other volunteers enable the cathedral to operate effectively, albeit from behind the scenes, but their role is just as important as the public facing teams. Every volunteer,

though, needs to understand the ethos of their own cathedral, how they fit within its structure, how they add value, and what their own personal ambassadorial role is.

‘Volunteer’ does not mean ‘amateur’. Volunteers in governance roles, such as Chapter, Fabric Advisory Committee (FAC), and statutory committee members, have particular responsibilities set out in law or in the cathedral's constitution and statutes and their knowledge and expertise are paramount.

Volunteers are also one of the biggest conduits into the local community. Their experience will be reflected in how they portray the cathedral to their family, friends, neighbours and work colleagues. They also have the potential to create a positive (or negative) reputation through the instantaneous and far-reaching nature of social media.

The need for volunteers to be appreciated and supported

All members of staff, clergy and lay, frequently work alongside volunteers, whether formally or informally, and it is extremely important that volunteers know that they are valued, are treated as individuals, and greeted and thanked whenever possible by all clergy and staff. Volunteering should always be of mutual benefit to the volunteer and the cathedral. Volunteers should therefore be enabled to use their particular gifts, skills, and experience to best effect and to find fulfilment and further develop their potential through their roles.

Volunteer Managers (some of whom may be 'volunteers' themselves) play a vital role, often overseeing the coordination, supervision, and training of several hundred people engaged in a wide range of tasks. This requires a specialised, wide-ranging skill set. The demands faced by Volunteer Managers need to be understood and supported by the Chapter and other members of staff. The complexities, idiosyncrasies and pastoral needs of volunteers can be very significant and addressing these effectively requires a partnership between the Volunteer Manager and other members of the cathedral staff team.

The need for volunteers to embrace and embody the purpose, priorities, and attitudes at the heart of the cathedral's vision

Cathedrals seek to attract a diverse community of volunteers. All volunteers are welcome but must be in sympathy with the mission statement of the cathedral and the Christian values which underpin the life of the cathedral community. These include respecting the cathedral as a place of worship, spiritual exploration, and rich shared heritage, which welcomes all.

For many visitors, entering a cathedral may be a completely new experience. Each person needs to be welcomed warmly, whatever their apparent background, age, or appearance, and encouraged to explore with confidence throughout their visit. The quality of welcome offered can be decisive, not only in determining a visitor's response to our cathedral but to all cathedrals and other churches in the future. Research shows that it is vital not to pre-judge an individual's likely interests or responses, or to seek to categorise them as 'tourist,' 'worshipper,' or 'pilgrim,' but simply to treat them as people who may experience a range of responses while in the building – sometimes surprising themselves.



Volunteers at Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford

A FRAMEWORK FOR VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

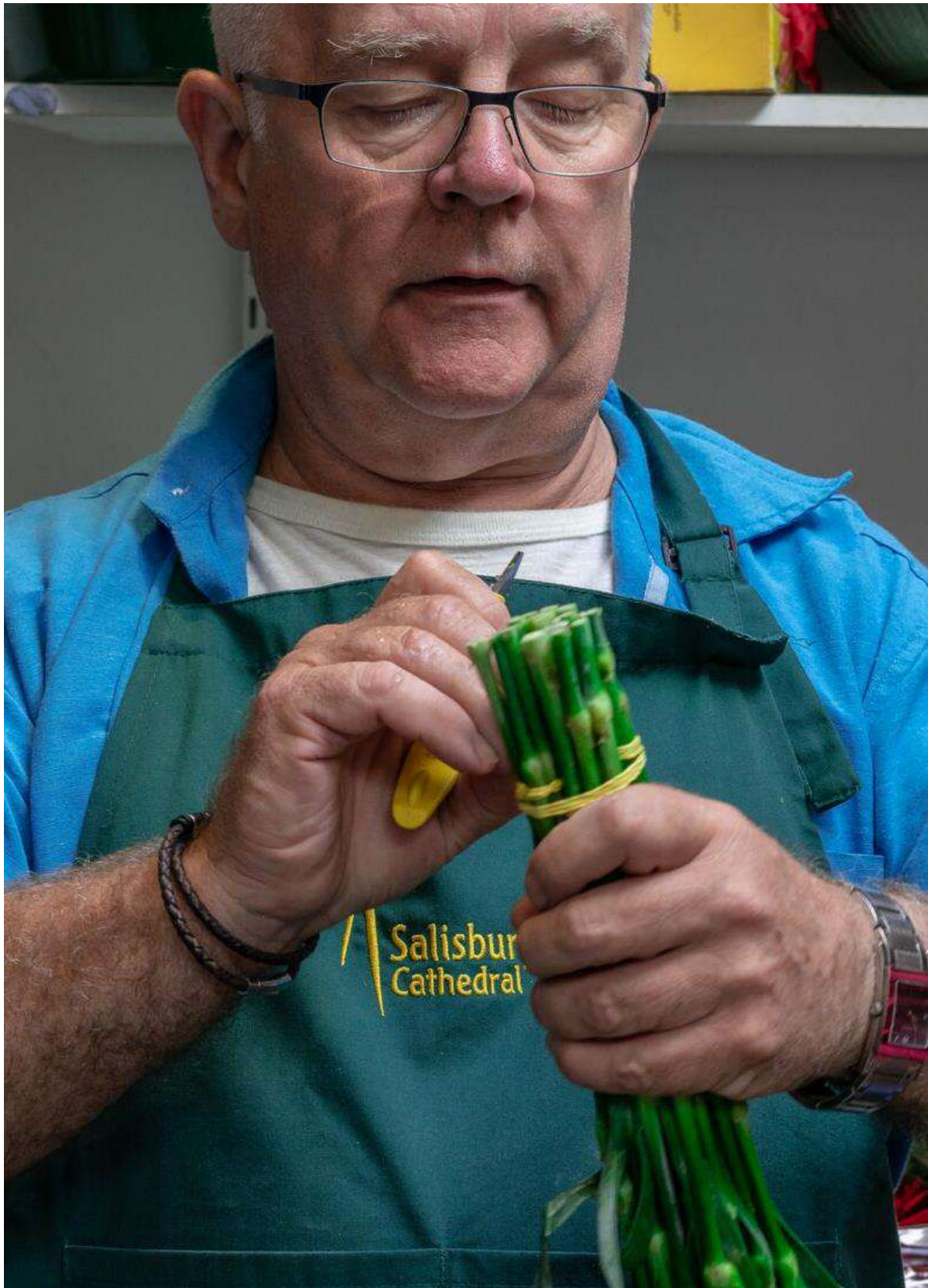
I. RECRUITMENT

Demographic changes mean that the volunteering landscape continues to evolve. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to a paradigm shift in the nature of volunteer cohorts with many older volunteers sheltering or withdrawing completely from their roles. Younger people who find themselves out of work are making themselves available. There is a need and an opportunity for all cathedrals to demonstrate flexibility and creativity in exploring more diverse pools of volunteers, developing new models of volunteering and ensuring maximum accessibility. These may include students, supported placements and internships, the use of digital media and micro volunteering and corporate volunteering.

All recruitment must follow the Church of England [Safer Recruitment Guidance](#).

Key requirements (See sample documentation in [Appendix A](#)):

- **Recruitment and selection processes must be transparent, open, and appropriately rigorous**
- **If a volunteer's application is accepted, volunteers should be placed in suitable roles which take into account their skills, experience and needs. They must be given clear role descriptions and lines of accountability**
- **An induction and initial training will be provided. An agreement outlining the responsibilities and commitments of the cathedral and the volunteer (see below) will be signed by both parties.**
- **Volunteers will be given copies of volunteer policies, handbooks/ codes of conduct and commit themselves to read and follow these. They will also make a commitment to undergoing all compulsory training, carefully considering all optional training offered in the future, and prioritising volunteer meetings.**
- **Volunteers will serve a trial period followed by appropriate periodic reviews throughout their service at the cathedral to ensure that the arrangement is working well for both parties**



Michael, Creative Director of Cathedral Flowers, volunteer at Salisbury Cathedral

CATHEDRAL COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTEERS

Cathedrals are places where everyone is to be treated with respect, consideration and openness. Volunteers are vital to the life of every cathedral and should receive support, training, encouragement, and appreciation of their contribution.

The cathedral's responsibilities include:

- **an appropriate induction programme. This should include providing in clear written form (e.g. in a welcome pack, handbook or code of conduct) the standards expected of volunteers with regard to cathedral ethos and outreach priorities, as well as key policies and procedures, such as health and safety, confidentiality, data protection, diversity etc.**
- **providing support from a team leader or designated staff member (contact details supplied) to enable volunteers to develop their role and assist them in achieving any personal goals**
- **providing ongoing training and enrichment opportunities to enable volunteers to undertake their roles effectively and develop their potential (this will include offering specialist training where appropriate)**
- **establishing clear two-way lines of communication for volunteers to ensure they feel part of the cathedral community. This should include updating them about their daily tasks, briefing them about any changes which will affect the performance of their duties on a short-term basis and providing opportunities for feedback**
- **ensuring adequate provision for the welfare of each volunteer, such as refreshments and breaks**
- **ensuring that the Chapter and members of staff recognise and understand the contribution of volunteers, and are clear about the parameters of volunteering**
- **organising services or other events to recognise and celebrate the contribution of volunteers**
- **being explicit about policies on expenses, discounts, and parking**
- **providing clear procedures and support in the event that any issues or difficulties arise**
- **ensuring that there is understanding of the extent of insurance cover when volunteers are on cathedral premises**



Bell ringers at Durham Cathedral



The Big Spring Clean on the riverbanks at Durham Cathedral

3. CATHEDRAL EXPECTATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are central members of any cathedral team and need to communicate clearly the cathedral's core values. It is also essential that all volunteers are reliable, punctual, flexible, and supportive of all cathedral goals, policies and procedures. Cathedral volunteers need to be aware of their importance as ambassadors for the cathedral.

It is vital that volunteers, especially those who interact with the public, are open minded and willing to engage with anyone, treating all visitors as guests, being attentive, helpful, caring and cheerful – even when things are busy. Some roles may be adaptable for those who struggle with social interaction for various reasons.

Volunteers are expected to:

- **embody the ethos and values of the cathedral**
- **maintain a positive, confident and approachable attitude**
- **welcome all who come with respect and openness and encourage everyone to explore the beauty, peace, inspiring worship and rich heritage which the cathedral offers**
- **be appropriate ambassadors in terms of attitudes, language, and behaviour towards visitors and each other, valuing diversity**
- **keep relevant personal data updated**
- **undergo safeguarding checks and training and follow procedures as required**
- **undertake orientation sessions and participate in ongoing training considered necessary for their role, throughout their time of service**
- **be appropriately dressed and (where applicable) wear identification badges and other signs of their role**
- **be reliable and punctual**
- **observe confidentiality and act with discretion**
- **follow cathedral rules and procedures and abide by relevant policies (including Health and Safety, Safeguarding, and Equality and Diversity), in relation to staff, volunteers and visitors**
- **comply with cathedral policy on computer use if their role requires it**
- **refrain from using personal mobile phones or digital devices whilst inside the cathedral**



Volunteers with brood frame bees at Manchester Cathedral

4. VOLUNTEER POLICIES AND HANDBOOKS

Cathedrals need to ensure that volunteers have access to a range of documents which will ensure that they understand the cathedral's vision, mission, and ethos and their role within this context; receive essential information about the purpose and practicalities of its daily routine; and can comply with the policies and procedures which govern the way their roles are to be interpreted and carried out. These elements may be laid out in a welcome pack, volunteer policy, volunteer handbook or code of conduct. Volunteers also need to receive clear role descriptions.

Documents supplied to volunteers need to cover:

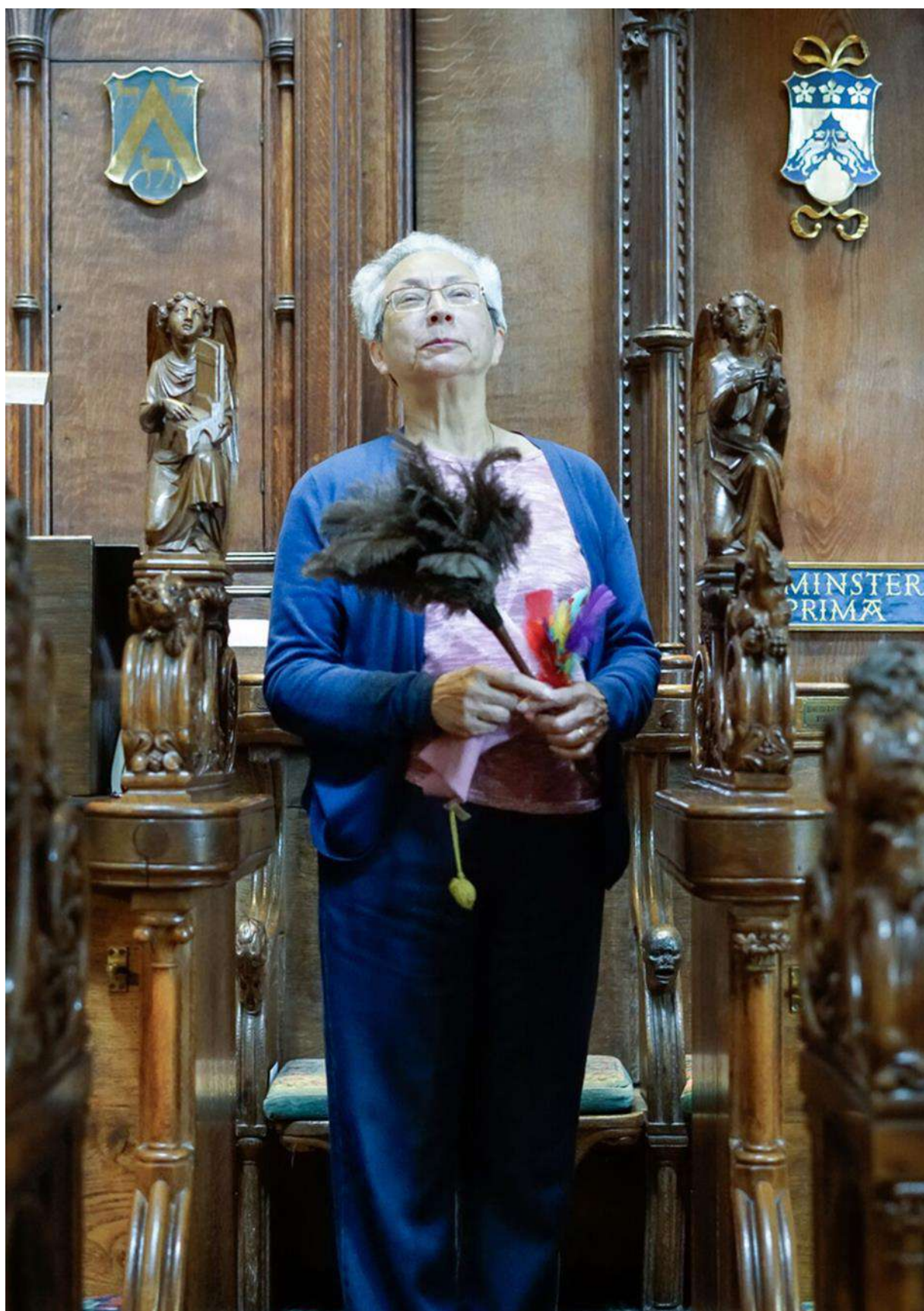
- **the core values, mission, and vision of the cathedral and its role as a place of worship, spirituality, and rich shared heritage, and a focal point for the region and diocese**
- **thanks and appreciation for the contribution of volunteers**
- **the cathedral's commitment to volunteers**
- **the cathedral's expectations of volunteers**
- **a brief outline of the organisational structure including the roles of volunteers, chapter and the committees that support chapter**
- **role description and information relevant to that role**
- **provision of a safe and supportive volunteering environment:**
 - **health and safety, including risk assessments, accident and incident reporting, and insurance**
 - **emergency procedures**
 - **accessing first aid (including mental health needs)**
 - **safeguarding, including procedures for lost children and vulnerable adults**
 - **raising concerns and whistleblowing**
 - **problem solving procedures**
 - **moving on and alumni groups**

The following information should be provided to volunteers with visitor-facing roles:

- how to provide an open and positive welcome to all aspects of the cathedral, including worship
- knowing how to respond to those needing pastoral care, those displaying challenging behaviour, and those seeking financial/practical support
- applying photography policy



Textile conservators, Durham Cathedral



June, Team Leader Holy Dusters, volunteer at Salisbury Cathedral

CONCLUSION

This new volunteer framework provides a national set of standards, expectations for practice, and a range of sample documents and other resources which together offer support and guidance for those responsible for volunteer management in each cathedral. It is designed to support implementation of good practice in volunteering in all contexts and to ensure maximum support for volunteers as they carry out their vital roles.

The AEC is also providing an online training module for volunteers which has been created to help all volunteers, old and new, review and develop their roles. It encourages volunteers to consider the range of needs and expectations which visitors may bring and to be open-minded and inclusive in their welcome.

Due to Covid-19 and the steps taken by the government to manage the impact of the pandemic, many volunteers have spent long periods away from their cathedrals and may be hesitant about returning. Others will be keen to return. Cathedrals will also need to recruit and train new volunteers. By adopting and implementing the framework, cathedrals will help ensure that all volunteers know they are appreciated and supported in the valuable work they do.



Welcoming visitors back to Chichester Cathedral, August 2020

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE DOCUMENTS

Taking on Volunteers

- Application Checklist
- Application Form
- Code of Conduct
- Induction Form
- Reference Request
- Reference Form
- Volunteer Agreement
- Volunteer Handbook
- Volunteer Policy

Training

- Training Feedback Form
- Welcome

Role Descriptions

- 26 Sample Role Descriptions

Miscellaneous

- Complaints policy
- Corporate Letter of Agreement
- Corporate Volunteer Evaluation Form
- Deed of Assignment of Copyright
- Dementia – An Approach
- Dress Code
- Disruptive Visitors
- Exit Form
- Health & Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Statement
- Standing Down
- Support Worker Form
- When to Say No

APPENDIX B: RESOURCES

ONLINE RESOURCES

Church of England

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/community-action/managing-volunteers>

Church of England Safer Recruitment Guidance:

https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/safeguarding%20safer_recruitment_practice_guidance_2016.pdf

Faithfully Volunteering Pack (*Greater Merseyside ChangeUp Consortium*)

https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/603eb0893e402/content/pages/documents/faithfully_volunteering_pack-1-31711241882.pdf

Arts and Heritage

<https://gem.org.uk/resource/useful-volunteer-management-resources-for-heritage-professionals/>

Association of Volunteer Managers (AVM):

<https://volunteermanagers.org.uk/>

NCVO

<https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/studyzone/good-practice-in-volunteer-management>

Energize Inc.

<https://www.energizeinc.com/>

Volunteer Plain Talk by Meridian Swift

<https://volunteerplaintalk.com/>

Local volunteer centre for advocacy and recruitment, training etc.

Example from County Durham:

<https://www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk/>

Third Sector

<https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/top-tips-achieving-excellence-volunteer-management/volunteering/article/1396973>

Citizens Information Board - Easy Introduction to Managing Volunteers:

<https://www.lumi.org.uk/assets/resources-toolkits/managing-and-recruiting-volunteers/Managing-Volunteers-08.pdf>

PRINTED RESOURCES:

The Complete Volunteer Management Handbook, 3rd edition. Steve McCurley, Rick Lynch and Rob Jackson, Directory of Social Change 2012.

The Disruptive Volunteer Manager, a step-by-step guide to reframing, redefining, reshaping and reimagining volunteer management. Meridian Swift 2019.

Volunteer Management for Churches and Large Events, A Handbook for Volunteer Coordinators. Bryan Yeager 2012

From the Top Down, the executive role in successful volunteer involvement (UK edition). Susan J Ellis and Rob Jackson, Energize Inc 2015.

Keeping Volunteers, a guide to retaining good people. Steve McCurley and Rick Lynch, Directory of Social Change 2016

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Seeking volunteers for Durham Cathedral museum