WILTS & BERKS CANAL TRUST

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen

Restoring 70 miles of canal and towpath
for the benefit of local communities, wildlife and leisure

Branch Chair - West Vale Branch

Reporting to: The Chief Operating Officer (COO)

Background

Based on a 50-year history of volunteer work in the branches along the canal line, the Trust is at an important development stage as it seeks to speed up the reinstatement of the canal.

The 40,000 annual hours of volunteer work is now complemented with four defined strategic programmes, each with a vision and plan. Public support and, most importantly, the support of the local councils is growing rapidly. Social media following has tripled over the last three years and with our amazing volunteers in five branches, practical regeneration is gathering pace.

The branches are supported by a strong support organisation with teams of specialists including engineers, a comms team, finance, program steering teams, policy development and systems teams. The trust aims to work collaboratively with local stakeholders and councils to the benefit of communities and the environment.

The West Vale branch section has the Wiltshire-Oxfordshire border as its western limit (where the canal crossed the River Cole) and extends some 12km to Uffington Gorse wood, just east of the village of Uffington. The line of the canal is through the Vale of the White Horse skirting the villages of Bourton, Shrivenham, Longcot and Uffington.

Purpose of West Vale Branch Chair role

- To manage canal restoration and community engagement projects within the Trust's West Vale territory
- To develop branch activities, attracting new volunteers and expanding the local organization.
- To lead the branch organization to ensure volunteers are working in an enjoyable and organised culture, backed up by excellent H&S standards.
- Chair of branch meetings and branch bank account signatory.
- Decision-maker for the planning and priority of volunteer projects.
- To represent the branch activities to directors and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Major tasks and activities

- Creating a clear organizational framework, recruiting branch volunteers and developing branch leadership
- Motivating the branch volunteers to participate in restoration, community and ecology projects.

- Appointing branch leaders including branch secretary, treasurer, project managers, social media coordinators and other support staff so volunteers work within an organized team environment, reducing the pressure on any one person.
- Appointing work party organizers and safety coordinators in collaboration with OpsCom
- With WPO, ensure volunteer works comply with authorized Health and Safety policy and procedures.
- Reviewing volunteer projects so activity is planned and prioritized.
- Attending the monthly SLT meetings to present the Branch Report
- Keeping members, the SLT and COO informed about branch progress and issues.
- With the branch treasurer, ensuring financial records are maintained in accordance with Trust policies and procedures.

Internal interfaces

- members of the board, CEO and COO
- the branch members
- other branch chairs
- steering group chair
- the Trust's Health & Safety team
- the Trust's Head of Accounts

External interfaces (along with other SLT and branch members)

- Parish Councils
- Local Authority officers
- Local public amenity groups or utility companies
- External Consultants/Contractors (where appointed)

Budget responsibility

The budgetary responsibility associated with this role is based on Branch expenditure limits agreed within the Executive in its annual budgeting process and in budgets for projects.

Resources required

- Most of the head office and functional meetings take place over Google Meet so reliable home computing facilities, including good internet access, make trust interface easier.
- Word processing, spreadsheet, PowerPoint, and printer.
- Mobile phone.

Time commitment

It is anticipated that the role requires 8 to 10 hours per week.