

Essex Waterways Navigation Trust

Job Description

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICER

Employer - Essex Waterways Navigation Trust or its subsidiary Essex Waterways Ltd. Staff are currently employed by Essex Waterways Ltd, but may transfer to the parent Trust during 2027.

Location - The Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation, Paper Mill Lock Office

Reports To - General Manager

Responsible For - Volunteers and community volunteers engaged in projects and events.

Overall Purpose of the Role

The Community Engagement Officer is responsible for developing and delivering a comprehensive programme of education, community engagement, volunteering, and outreach activities across the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation. The role will raise awareness of the Navigation, foster community stewardship, encourage responsible use of the waterway, and strengthen relationships with schools, community groups, partner organisations, and statutory agencies.

Based at Paper Mill Lock, and via outreach activities, the postholder will also support customer-facing operations, visitor enquiries, bookings, administrative functions, and volunteer coordination to ensure the safe and efficient operation of the Navigation.

Key Responsibilities

Education

Develop relationships with schools throughout Chelmsford, Maldon and surrounding areas.

Design and refine educational visits and activities for school groups, incorporating water-based, land-based and walking activities.

Lead school visits and educational sessions on the Navigation.

Deliver presentations and workshops in schools promoting water safety, environmental awareness, respect for wildlife and responsible use of waterways

Community Engagement and Outreach

Design, organise and deliver a programme of community engagement activities and events.

Establish and maintain relationships with local community groups, charities, youth organisations and voluntary sector partners.

Promote community participation in Navigation activities and events.

Increase awareness of the Navigation and its heritage, recreational opportunities and environmental value.

Develop initiatives that encourage stewardship and responsible behaviour by all waterway users.

Volunteer Development

Recruit, induct, support and coordinate volunteers.

Develop and manage a team of regular volunteers to assist with events, educational activities, conservation work and community projects.

Co-ordinate a volunteer rota.

Promote volunteering opportunities throughout the local community.

Partnership Working

Build effective relationships with local authorities, schools, emergency services, environmental organisations and community groups.

Work collaboratively with organisations including local councils, the Environment Agency, Fire and Rescue Service, Police, angling clubs and other waterway partners.

Coordinate joint safety awareness events and community initiatives.

Represent Essex Waterways at meetings, forums and community events.

Promote the profile and reputation of the organisation through partnership working.

Environmental and Community Projects

Organise litter picks, conservation events and environmental improvement projects.

Promote awareness of wildlife habitats and environmental responsibilities.

Develop activities focused on conservation, including tree, habitat and willow management awareness.

Explore opportunities for planting sessions, habitat improvement projects and heritage interpretation activities.

Encourage responsible and considerate behaviour amongst all Navigation users.

Work with user groups to develop and promote a shared code of conduct for the Navigation.

Liaise with angling clubs, paddlesports groups, walkers, boaters and other stakeholders to encourage positive shared use of the waterway.

Visitor Services and Administration

Answer and deal with telephone enquiries, resolving where possible or referring appropriately.

Provide administration and reception cover when required.

Monitor and respond to email enquiries.

Maintain accurate records of community engagement activities.

Prepare reports for submission to grant providers.

Assist the General Manager as required.

Health, Safety and Safeguarding

Ensure all community activities are delivered safely and in accordance with organisational procedures.

Undertake risk assessments for events, school visits and community activities.

Promote safeguarding, equality, diversity and inclusion in all activities.

Deliver water safety awareness campaigns and educational programmes.

Ensure compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation and policies.