

Health and Safety Policy

Rev:06/2015

1. The Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust's (BVCT) Health and Safety Policy comprises three parts:

- **Statement.** A general statement of the BVCT's commitment to the health and safety of its members and those affected by its work.
- **Organisation.** A description of the roles and responsibilities of the BVCT, its individual members and the organisations it works with.
- **Arrangements.** A summary of how health and safety measures are applied by BVCT.

Statement

Commitment to Safety

2. **BVCT as a minimum will comply with relevant legislation and other relevant requirements.**

Our aim is to ensure that our activities do not harm our employees, service users, contractors, the public or the environment. To achieve this aim, we adopt a comprehensive policy on the environment, safety and health that includes

General Responsibilities

3. The execution of this policy is the responsibility of the Board of BVCT. It will coordinate the participation of all its members and those organisations with which the BVCT cooperates.

When activities are organised in association with other bodies, some but not all responsibilities for health and safety and its supervision may pass to that organisation. Establishing clarity where responsibility lies is important.

Meeting this Commitment

4. BVCT, working independently or in conjunction with other conservation bodies, will strive to meet its commitment to health and safety and the environment by:

- Identifying and assessing hazards associated with its work and activities, and introducing measures to eliminate or reduce the risks arising from them.
- Adopting safe working practices.
- Making available appropriate instruction and, where necessary, training in the tasks to be undertaken.
- Providing supervision and first aid cover during activities to levels identified in a risk assessment
- Reporting any incidents as required and analysing information on them with a view to modifying methods of work if necessary.
- Taking informed advice on health and safety matters.
- Ensuring the provision of adequate insurance cover that meets the needs of the BVCT.

Documentation

5. This policy and all other documents relating to health and safety will be recorded and held by the Secretary to the Board.

6. This material will be made available to all members of BVCT who are exhorted to help ensure their own safety and that of others affected by the work.

Authorisation

7. This Policy Statement has been approved by the BVCT Board on 16th June 2015.

Organisation

Committee Responsibilities.

8. The Board of BVCT is responsible for the formulation of health and safety policy considering legal requirements and any rules or conditions arising from cooperation with other organisations such as national and local authorities, and formal conservation bodies.

9. The Board will keep this health and safety policy under regular review. The Board will also analyse reports of any incidents with a view to revising policy, responsibilities or arrangements as necessary.

Individual Responsibilities

10. Within the committee of BVCT, the chairman is overall responsible for implementation of health and safety policy. Delegated responsibilities are as follows:

- **Activity Organiser.** For every activity, e.g. guided walk, grant assisted project there will be a nominated organiser who will be deemed to be “the responsible person” for the event. All such organisers are responsible for correctly applying health and safety policy to their tasks.
- **Individual members.** All members have a principal duty of care to themselves which means they are not to undertake tasks for which they are not suited or with which they are unfamiliar. They also have a responsibility to correctly observe instructions and information briefed in detail at each activity session.

External Responsibilities

11. **Other bodies.** When BVCT funds work to be carried out by other organisations it is the responsibility of those organisations to:

- Agree the scope of work with BVCT.
- Carry out a Risk Assessment and make it known to BVCT.
- Ensure safety of tools they are using.
- Provide specialist support such as chain saw operation.
- As necessary, notify appropriately, residents, landowners and relevant authorities, that work is to take place.

12. **Landowners.** Site owners are responsible for health and safety on their properties. In many cases BVCT will be working with local authorities or formal conservation bodies on land which they own in which case there is no conflict of interest. In some cases, however, work will take place on private property which must be enabled by prior arrangement.

Arrangements

Background

13. BVCT considers that sound organisation and leadership are the foundations for good health and safety practices. Through its committee the BVCT therefore strives to be well organised to support conservation and access work in its area of benefit by:

- An agreed constitution.
- Management by a Board of Trustees.

- Provision of a website for the information of members and others, backed by use of e-mail as the principal means of communication. This Policy Statement is contained on the website.
- Maintenance of an up-to-date membership list.
- Adequate advance information for those participating in activities, including details of clothing and equipment needed.
- Good liaison with organisations responsible for or involved with conservation in the local area.

Activities and Risk Assessment

14. BVCT's activities currently fall into 6 main areas

- Indoor meetings, talks, presentations that may or may not involve the public.
- Guided walks or educational sessions on site.
- Providing funding for major projects carried out by other organisations.
- Outdoor wildlife surveys that may or may not involve the public.
- Manning stalls at public events
- Practical conservation tasks

15. All activities will be risk assessed in the following manner.

- Indoor meetings will have a generic risk assessment.
- On-site activities such as guided walks will be subject to individual risk assessment carried out to take account of the activity and site where it occurs. A nominated leader will be responsible for ensuring identified procedures are followed.
- The responsibility for projects funded by BVCT but carried out by another organisation rests with that other organisation. However, BVCT must ensure that all organisations it funds have appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure safe working arrangements before agreeing to fund.

16. In making risk assessments, reference will be made to:

- Latest HSE guidance and will be checked by a competent person.

17. Risk assessments will be recorded and retained for 6 years.

Safe Systems of Work

18. Guidance for standard procedures that are common to a number of activities will be written up as safe systems of work. Risk assessment for individual activities should refer to relevant safe systems of work. Departure from the safe system can be approved by a "competent person" if this is needed to improve safety for specific identified hazards but this should be recorded in the risk assessment.

First Aid

19. Basic first aid equipment will be made available for all on site activities BVCT organises. A trained first aider will be in attendance as deemed necessary in a risk assessment.

Tools and Equipment

20. Activity leaders are to ensure that any tools and equipment used are within the competence of participants on the day and are to brief them on their use and the risks associated with them.

21. Where specialist tools (such as power tools) are required, appropriate arrangements will be made with qualified practitioners.

Training

22. It is the BVCT's policy to progressively improve the skills of trustees and activity leaders, and volunteers by taking advantage of training courses.

23. The BVCT will support training that helps improve health and safety practices of other conservation groups working in the valley.

Insurance

24. BVCT will ensure insurance cover appropriate to its activities. The purpose of this is to provide:

- Public Liability cover up to £5m
- Personal Accident cover for members of the BVCT.

25. The Board will review the adequacy of insurance cover annually.

Attitude to Children and Vulnerable Adults

26. It is recognised there is potential conflict between the desire and regulations that promote equal opportunities, and health and safety regulations specifically aimed at ensuring the safety of children and vulnerable adults.

BVCT welcomes young people under 18 and vulnerable adults taking part in activities we organise or support but will always insist that their participation has been approved by an adult, and where specified in the advance information accompanied by an adult, who accepts responsibility for them. In cases of conflict BVCT will seek to put in place mechanisms to enable their participation but retains the right to limit their participation if it is considered this will increase risk to unacceptable levels to either themselves or anybody else.

Blackwater Valley Countryside Trust is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status.

Company registered in England No. 04898996. Registered Charity No. 1109424
Registered Office: Ash Lock Cottage, Government Road, Aldershot,
Hants, GU11 2P

GLOSSARY

A competent person

A competent person is someone who has sufficient training and experience or knowledge and other qualities that allow them to assist you properly. The level of competence required will depend on the complexity of the situation and the help you need.

Attributed to HSE statement

The Responsible person

Duties of the 'responsible person'

The responsible person is someone who has the duty of carrying out or arranging a risk assessment of their event.

They must also implement and maintain appropriate and adequate safety measures to minimise the risk to life.

If you are the responsible person you must make sure that:

- Risks are removed, reduced or managed to an acceptable level to protect against injury and loss of life.

Attributed to and adapted from Fire Industry Association guidelines