



Volunteer scheme development

Build a volunteer programme that works for everyone.

The challenge

Volunteers are at the heart of many community organisations. They bring energy, skills and local knowledge that can transform services and strengthen communities.

However, creating a volunteer programme that is safe, sustainable and rewarding requires careful planning. Clear policies, defined roles and strong governance are essential to protect both volunteers and the organisation.

Cambridgeshire ACRE supports organisations to design volunteer schemes that are well structured, practical and built to last. Whether you are setting up a new programme or strengthening an existing one, we can help you create a framework that supports volunteers while ensuring your organisation meets its responsibilities.

How we can support you

We provide practical support to design, review and strengthen volunteer programmes. Our support can include:

- Designing or strengthening volunteer schemes
- Developing volunteer policies, procedures and role descriptions
- Creating recruitment, induction, training and supervision arrangements
- Advising on safeguarding, insurance and risk management
- Supporting volunteer recognition and retention
- Providing practical templates and governance guidance

Support can be tailored to organisations of all sizes, from small volunteer-led groups to larger charities and partnerships introducing volunteer roles.

Why Cambridgeshire ACRE

Cambridgeshire ACRE understands the realities of working with volunteers and the importance of balancing good governance with flexibility and community spirit.

As a trusted rural infrastructure organisation, we bring practical experience in community development, partnership working and organisational governance. Our aim is to help you create a volunteer scheme that works in practice and supports volunteers to make a real difference.

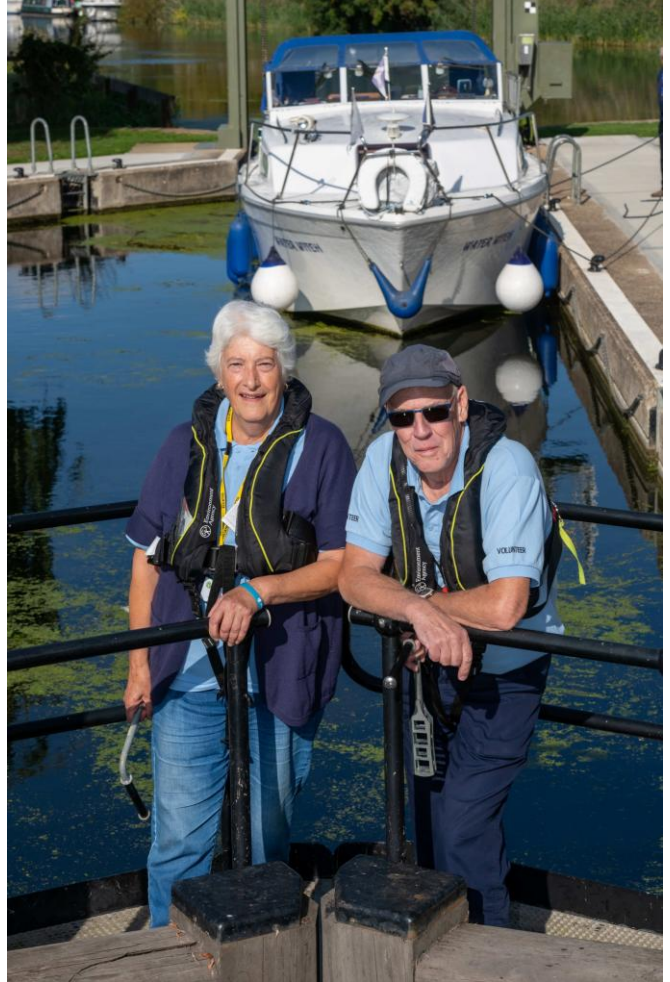
Case study: Anglian Waterways Volunteers

Cambridgeshire ACRE manages the Anglian Waterways Volunteers scheme in partnership with the Environment Agency, supporting volunteers to assist boaters on the River Great Ouse and surrounding waterways.

Since the programme began in 2016, Cambridgeshire ACRE has been responsible for developing and managing the volunteer framework. This includes recruitment, training, safeguarding procedures, insurance arrangements, risk assessments and ongoing supervision.

Volunteers support boaters at locks, helping them navigate safely while also providing reassurance and local knowledge to visitors using the waterways. In 2025 the scheme included **36 volunteers delivering more than 1,200 hours of support across over 200 volunteer shifts.**

Cambridgeshire ACRE manages the day-to-day operation of the programme, including rotas, equipment, volunteer communication and monitoring. This experience gives us a strong understanding of what it takes to create volunteer programmes that are safe, well managed and rewarding for everyone involved.



Start a conversation

If you are thinking about developing a volunteer scheme, or would like to strengthen an existing programme, we would be happy to discuss how we can help.

Cambridgeshire ACRE members receive 10 per cent discount on consultancy fees.

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