

Volunteering at Wroxham Railway Heritage Trust

Thank you for your interest in volunteering at Wroxham Railway Heritage Trust.

The Wroxham Railway Heritage Trust is a registered charity (No. 1093170) that brings under one umbrella two fantastic railway heritage assets in Wroxham:

- Barton House Railway – a garden miniature railway, run on traditional railway practices, that is open to the public.
- Wroxham Signalbox – an original, restored signalbox, also open to the public, in its original setting next to a working railway line.

The Trust is a registered charity governed by three Trustees –Peter Bower, Richard Jones and Debbie Bartlett. The Trustees meet regularly and oversee the proper running of the charity. A link to the Trust constitution and other documents can be found on our website.

What it's like to be a volunteer

We (the Trust) really value our volunteers as without them the Trust would simply not exist. Volunteers can either help operate the Trust's activities or undertake maintenance, construction and upgrade work,

Whether you volunteer at Barton House Railway, or Wroxham Signalbox, we want you to have a fantastic experience and feel that you are having fun and making a difference.

Barton House Railway is run on formal railway rules and regulations – just as it would have been in the 1950s – this is one of our unique selling points.

Wroxham Signalbox is a magnificent example of railway architecture and has a full 50-lever frame. Very often people visiting have memories of this signalbox or similar boxes elsewhere so we always learn a lot when visitors come.

Whichever part of the Trust you volunteer with, we will make sure you understand and are comfortable with what you do. We ensure that you are suitably trained and appropriately supervised. To help you and ensure your safety we provide easy access to relevant information and timely briefings.

Volunteer roles

Barton House Railway (BHR)

There are a range of roles for volunteers. At BHR most young people start as porters, working their way up through guards, working the signals, ticket office roles, and learning the skills to become drivers or fully fledged signal staff.

We run a boat service to and from Wroxham Quay for visitors, so we need volunteers with skippering skills, or boat attendants to help with the trips.

We need all volunteers to be engaging, welcoming and friendly with our visitors, giving

them information, answering questions, and providing help and advice. There are some really important and interesting roles that focus on our visitors – helping them enjoy and get the best out of their visit.

Volunteers for Wroxham Signalbox will meet and greet visitors, talk them through the history of the box and demonstrate the signalling system. Many visitors who come bring their own recollections of the signalbox or other places they have worked on the railway, so it is great to hear those memories.

If you are taking on a role at BHR, then we do expect you to attend all of our runnings as far as possible, and we need to know in advance if you are not able to make any runnings.

We generally operate the BHR on the last Sunday of each month opening at 1pm and closing at 4.30pm. BHR volunteers are to be available no later than 12.30pm on running days. In addition, there is an evening running in September and a Santa Special.

We have about 4 training sessions a year that you are required to attend.

Uniforms are provided (cap, fleece and badge or tabard for catering staff) and are to be worn so visitors can identify staff and find who is there to help them.

Wroxham Signalbox

If you are volunteering at the Wroxham Signalbox, then our opening days are less regular but just as rewarding. We will work with you on our list of proposed opening dates to see what would work best.

Maintenance and Support Teams

Substantial **maintenance** and repair is necessary at the BHR (and to a lesser extent the Wroxham Signalbox). These may be considered behind the scenes activities but no less important than operating and staffing. There are also upgrades to the BHR railway infrastructure to improve reliability and ensure its fully working and available on open days. Furthermore, there are routine maintenance activities ranging from cleaning to signalling and track-points testing to engine servicing.

You can be involved in building work, mechanical and electrical topics such as making new track, creating new features or just keeping the place neat and tidy for our visitors pleasure. Maintenance and support work (Working Party) is generally undertaken on Thursdays however you can come on other days if this better suits our availability.

¹Something that may also be useful is for some support volunteers to be available on running days to help ensure its smooth running.

Health and safety

Health and safety at the Trust is very important, so we make sure you understand how to keep yourself and the public safe. At both the BHR and Wroxham Signal box you will have a formal rule book for your role.

¹ Volunteer introduction May 2025

The railway is a working environment, with sections where there is open water, and operating railway track, At the Wroxham Signalbox volunteer are mostly on their own (lone volunteers/workers) Accordingly, all have to follow the Trust's rules regarding health and safety.

Code of conduct and safeguarding

We will also explain our code of conduct making sure we are all working as a team, respecting each other while looking after your welfare. Being helpful and friendly to each other and the public who come to our runnings is paramount, creating a safe, enjoyable and positive working environment for everyone.

As Trustees, we take our responsibilities to run an effective, safe and positive organisation very seriously and have a comprehensive set of policies, rules and guidance to run the Trust effectively.

What you can expect as a volunteer

Our visitors love coming to BHR and love visiting Wroxham Signalbox. You can expect to feel part of a charity which is giving people a great family day out that doesn't break the bank, and sharing with them our enthusiasm for railways and signalling.

You can expect to learn new skills, try new experiences and learn about railways and signalling. We have had many of our young volunteers go on to careers in the railways. It can also help you complete Duke of Edinburgh awards and build up that all-important CV!

You can expect to find an excellent team working environment that's a safe place to come and take part in. Your views will matter and you will always be listened to and have the chance to influence changes.

You can expect to enjoy some social activities – we often have outings or more relaxed working parties.

To volunteer you will need to become a member of Wroxham Railway Heritage Trust, where you will also receive the regular Trust newsletter. BHR volunteers are also regularly updated with the Smokebox newsletter.

What next?

If this sounds something you would be interested in, then fill in the attached form. We will then get in contact with you to arrange a visit, a chat or a try-out shift.

This will give you a chance to see how it all works and then decide if it is something you would like to sign-up for.

If you don't want to commit to a full volunteer role, then you would be welcome at any of our working parties or helping with other behind the scenes activities.