



Vacancy for a Chair for the John Bunyan Community Boat -

The John Bunyan Community Boat is seeking to fill a vacancy for the Chair. This is a leadership role; whilst some experience of handling boats on inland waterways would be useful, this is not essential.

About us

The John Bunyan Community Boat was launched on 3rd July 2013, and last year celebrated its 10 years of operation. The boat was launched to offer enjoyable river trips between the head of navigation at Kempston to Great Barford for local residents of Bedford and surrounding areas, and to promote the goals and raise funds for the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Trust (B&MKWT).

In 2022, the John Bunyan Community Boat was presented with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, and in 2023 the Operations team was awarded the Everyday Heroes Award for raising the profile of the town from the Bedford Independent. The John Bunyan Community Boat is a very visible and known "brand" in Bedford.

The John Bunyan Community Boat is owned by the B&MK Waterway Trust. It is operated as a social enterprise by a team of over 60 volunteers who plan, manage, crew and maintain the boat. The John Bunyan Community Boat Management Team (all volunteers) are responsible for the legal conduct of the business, developing and implementing a 3-year rolling Business Plan with associated policies, procedures, risk management and budgets. It is supported by two part-time contract staff, who manage bookings and rostering the crew.

The Management Team comprises the Chair, Commercial & Marketing Manager, Cabin Operations Manager, Boat Operations Manager, Training Manager, Volunteering Manager, Maintenance Manager, Finance Manager and IT Manager. The members of the team are competent, experienced and dedicated people, well in control of their areas of responsibility, and the role of the Chair is to maintain the steady course that has been achieved so far, and to provide guidance and direction, particularly in managing succession planning into the future.

The team meets monthly and reports formally twice a year to the Trust Board. The Chair is invited to attend the Trust Board's quarterly meetings. Experience suggests that managers need to spend around 5 hours per week on these roles throughout the cruising season. In addition, some time is required in the 'off-season' for season start-up and close-down activities. Managers may work with some assistants to share the workload, while retaining overall responsibility for their area of operations. The main

challenge for the organisation is recruiting and retaining managers and volunteers, and balancing crew supply and market demand for 'great river cruises for all'.

About the role

The Chair leads business planning and review, risk management, management team recruitment and support, organisational development, business reporting and Trust liaison. The Chair needs to be able to lead with confidence, use management data to inform business decisions, and communicate well with all stakeholders.

As the business is led and almost entirely delivered by volunteers, with minimal support from contract administrators and other suppliers, people-management skills are important and experience of working with volunteers is an advantage.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Chair monthly management team meetings

- Lead risk management and maintain the Risk Register

- Lead business planning and review and the preparation of a 3 year rolling Business Plan and Annual Plans

- Lead recruitment and appointment of Management team members to defined roles

- Provide support to help colleague volunteer managers deliver their roles

- Liaise with, and report on the business to, the Trust, volunteers and other stakeholders

- Provide or arrange cover for other Management team roles when required

The successful candidate will need to demonstrate stamina, imagination, evidence of meeting deadlines, empathy with the work of volunteers and a willingness to get involved and join in!

How to apply

Please submit a letter setting out your suitability for this role to Janet Goodland, Chair, B&MKWT People Group, at Volunteering@johnbunyanboat.org. If you would like to discuss the role further please contact us at the same address.

Applications are welcomed from both within and outside the existing Boat and Trust organisations.

