



Volunteer Communications Policy

V2

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Policy reference sheet

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Policy component	Description	Check
1 Policy statement	This document is British Horse Society's policy for Volunteer Communications It sets out channels and use of communications for volunteers.	
2 Policy audience	Volunteers	
3 Review programme	Next review date is 28 February 2027 Policy will be reviewed and approved by the Policy Review Group	

Sign off	
Signed by	
Signature	
Date	

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 We want all communications made by volunteers, whether with members, the public, supporters or anyone who contacts BHS, to reflect the friendly, trusted and professional organisation we are. This policy is here to help you feel confident and supported when communicating on behalf of BHS.
- 1.2 If you're ever unsure about what you're sending or sharing, please just ask. Your Regional/National Manager, Departmental Coordinator or the Communications Team are always happy to help.

2. Principles

- 2.1 Please remember that anything shared on behalf of BHS may be seen publicly, so it should reflect our values and the standards we all work hard to maintain.
- 2.2 To maintain privacy, please understand that you may be sharing personal information when you send emails, arrange meetings, organise events or discuss issues affecting bridleways and off route routes. You must abide by BHS Data Protection policies and not share personal information without a clear understanding of when it is necessary to do so. If in doubt, keep things simple and check our BHS privacy notice for more information.
- 2.3 We must all follow GDPR rules around how personal data is stored and used. Misuse of personal data can lead to reputational damage and fines for the Society. If you are found to have misused personal data, it is possible that you could face legal action. If you're unsure about what this means, the Volunteer Support Team can offer advice and training.
- 2.4 Please don't share someone's personal contact details without their permission. If their details are already publicly available, it's better to share a link to them, rather than copying their information directly.
- 2.5 Any surveys or polls linked to your volunteer role should only be created with approval from the relevant BHS department(s), including Marketing & Communications, and should be linked to your BHS email address.
- 2.6 If you are issued with a BHS volunteer email account, you must use this for all activities that you carry out on behalf of the BHS.

3. Intentions

- 3.1 The intention of this policy is to give volunteers clear, supportive guidance on communicating safely, confidently and professionally on behalf of BHS.
- 3.2 This policy aims to help protect the reputation of BHS by ensuring that information shared externally is accurate, appropriate, and consistent with our standards, values, and strategic aims.
- 3.3 The policy intends to help keep volunteers, members and the public safe by supporting compliance with legal requirements, including data protection and copyright.
- 3.4 It is also intended to help volunteers feel confident about where to find support, how to communicate responsibly, and when to seek advice or escalate queries.

4. Scope

4.1 Email

- 4.1.1 Email is one of the most common ways we communicate, so we want messages to feel caring, clear and professional.
- 4.1.2 Regular BHS volunteers are provided with a BHS email address. This BHS email address must be used for all volunteer communications.
- 4.1.3 Make sure any information you share is accurate and in line with our standards and policies.
- 4.1.4 Emails should always be polite, respectful and friendly.
- 4.1.5 Use the blind carbon copy (BCC) when emailing groups of people to protect their privacy.
- 4.1.6 Sign off your emails by using your volunteer role title e.g. BHS Volunteer Access and Bridleways Officer (insert area).
- 4.1.7 Look after your online safety and avoid opening emails or clicking links unless you know and trust the source.

4.2 Social Media

- 4.2.1 Social media is a great way to reach a wide audience, but what we share reflects on BHS, so posts should be positive, helpful and consistent with our values.
- 4.2.2 Keep personal social media profiles separate from any you use in your volunteer role. You must not use the BHS logo, branding or your BHS volunteer role title in any of your personal profiles, posts or comments.
- 4.2.3 We encourage you to share positive BHS content, but please avoid posting, responding to, or engaging with negative discussions about BHS, whether publicly or in closed groups.
- 4.2.4 Remember that what you say or share online can represent both you and BHS.
- 4.2.5 Only post information you know is correct and in line with BHS policy. Even anonymous posts can be traced, so please think before you share. You should remember to be careful to manage what and with whom you are sharing and don't assume absolute privacy. Remember any posting on social media can be copied and reposted without an author's consent.
- 4.2.6 Posts and comments should be respectful and courteous.
- 4.2.7 If you see content that is offensive or disrespectful towards volunteers or BHS, please don't comment or engage, instead report it to the Volunteer Support Team.
- 4.2.8 Only use images/logos that follow BHS brand guidelines and always respect copyright.
- 4.2.9. Sensitive information, such as welfare concerns, must never be shared publicly.
- 4.2.10 Please don't share your personal contact details online.

4.3 External Press and Media

- 4.3.1 BHS is often approached by journalists and social media commentators. To make sure information is accurate and consistent, all press and media enquiries are handled by the Communications Team.
- 4.3.2 Volunteers should not speak to the media about any BHS matter without express permission from the Communications Team.
- 4.3.3 If you are approached by the media, please direct them to the Communications Team: 02476 840521 or pressenquiry@bhs.org.uk . Then let the team know who has contacted you.
- 4.3.4 For urgent out-of-hours enquiries, visit: www.bhs.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/press-enquiries
- 4.3.5 This does not affect your right to share information to relevant statutory bodies and BHS Whistleblowing policy.

4.4 Sharing Volunteering activities and achievements

- 4.4.1 If you'd like to share your volunteer activities or achievements with the media, or suggest a story idea, please contact your Regional/National Manager or the Communications Team.

5. Responsibility

- 5.1 Volunteers are responsible for making sure any communication on behalf of BHS is accurate, appropriate and in line with this policy.
- 5.2 Volunteers must take care to protect personal data and follow GDPR requirements.
- 5.3 Volunteers are responsible for seeking guidance from their Regional/National Manager, Departmental Coordinator, or the Communications Team if they are unsure about any communication, request for information, or online engagement.
- 5.4 BHS employees are responsible for providing volunteers with advice, clarification, and support to help them uphold the standards of this policy.
- 5.5 The Communications Team is responsible for managing media enquiries, and helping volunteers to share accurate, consistent information.
- 5.6 All volunteers share responsibility to help protect the reputation of BHS by communicating professionally and in line with our values.