



VOLUNTEERING FOR THE THAMES.

There are many ways to help the river by volunteering :

- Litter clean-ups along the river.
- Working for the Thames Path .
- Practical support for the riverside environment.
- Helping others to enjoy the river.
- Working as an assistant lock-keeper, for the RNLI or MVS.
- Arguing for the river's case in formal planning consultations.

Litter clean-ups.

Our partner charity, *Thames 21* organises regular litter clean-ups (www.thames21.org.uk) ; the Port of London Authority website (www.pla.co.uk) has a Cleaning the Thames link advertising litter clean-up activities and local groups often organise their own events.

Working for the Thames Path.

RTS has river wardens looking after all aspects of the river, including the Thames Path; for information on the tidal river contact Peter Finch,(sailor1057@aol.com) , non-tidal contact RTS Branch Chairmen. *Thames Path National Trail* volunteers monitor, maintain and improve the route (www.nationaltrails.co.uk , e – ntvolunteers@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

Practical support.

A number of organisations undertake work such as protecting river banks, removing excessive vegetation and invasive species, rewilding initiatives. *Thames Landscape Strategy* is active between Weybridge and Kew (www.thames-landscape-strategy.org.uk) ; RTS owns a section of river bank (Bondig Bank) near Marlow, contact john-skuse@hotmail.com. Other public spaces by the river have support groups which rely on volunteers.

Helping others.

For those with an active interest in boating there are organisations dependent on volunteers for their work in offering opportunities afloat for young, disabled and elderly people : *River Thames Boat Project*, based at Kingston (<https://thamesboatproject.org>), *Rivertime Boat Trust* , based at Henley and Marlow (<https://rivertimeboattrust.org.uk>), *Thames Sailability* , based at Shepperton (www.thamessailability.org.uk). There are many Sea Cadet and Sea Scout units based on or near the river , together with clubs for small boats, canoes/kayaks and paddle-boards that often need volunteer help.

Working for the EA, RNLI & MVS.

In the summer months the *Environment Agency* engages volunteer lock-keepers to help with the safe passage of boats and management of lock sites (thames.volunteers@environment-agency.gov.uk). The *Royal National Lifeboat Institution* has stations along the Thames at Teddington, Chiswick, Tower, Gravesend & Southend) with volunteer crews and support staff (<https://volunteering.rnli.org>).The *Maritime Volunteer Service* is a training and voluntary organisation with Thames bases at Putney (putneymaritime@gmail.com) , Kingston (kingstonmvs@gmail.com) & Gravesend ([chris-j-rogers@ Hotmail.co.uk](mailto:chris-j-rogers@Hotmail.co.uk)).

Arguing for the river's case.

Local activists are needed to watch for riverside developments and other issues that could adversely affect the riverscape or broader enjoyment of the Thames by others, by making relevant responses to planning and other consultations. This can usefully be done in conjunction with local RTS Branches, who may already be taking up a case or can offer advice on how best to proceed.

These are just some suggestions for volunteering opportunities along the river and RTS itself depends on volunteers to join branch committees, serve on the governing Council and represent us on outside bodies. Branch contacts, planning guidelines and links to other organisations and activities can be found on this site under The River Thames.

March 2023.