

THE BEATRICE CHARITY

Information for groups

We hope that this information will make your trip on Beatrice even more rewarding. It covers:

1. Contacting the charity
2. Joining Arrangements
3. Boat Facilities
4. Conduct of Parties
5. Safety, with Risk Assessment

The narrowboat Beatrice is operated by volunteers, a qualified skipper with trained crew members. They are responsible for the boat and its safe handling. Groups are responsible for their own catering, and the conduct of parties from school and other organisations must be properly supervised by their staff. We are delighted if passengers want to help with working the locks, but they must be supervised by a crew member. Children must also be supervised by a teacher or supporter.

The maximum number of passengers we can accommodate is 12. For schools this number includes both children and staff. The limit is stipulated in our licence agreement and in our insurance cover. This includes a maximum of three using wheelchairs.

1) Contacting the Charity

To ask for a booking please go to the website www.beatricecharity.org and click on the "Book a Trip" heading at the top of the Home Page. To contact the Booking Officer about a trip please either ring 01538 710566 or email booking@beatricecharity.org. If you need to cancel or postpone a trip please let us know as early as possible, before we have to incur expense. The Beatrice Charity reserves the right to invoice users for a no-show or a cancellation on the morning of the run.

You can also contact our Chairman on the same number or email contactus@beatricecharity.org if you want to discuss any other matter.

2) Joining Arrangements

Due to a shortage of water, the Canal and River Trust, the body that manages our canals, has decided to close the stretch of the Caldon Canal below Hazelhurst Locks, where we normally base and operate our boat, until the situation improves.

Therefore, from Saturday 24th May, until further notice, all Beatrice's trips will instead start and finish at the CRT Wharf at Park Lane Endon.

The postcode for the Wharf is ST9 9JA, but please be aware this covers a wide rural area. From the main A53 road at Endon, turn right coming from the Stoke direction, or left coming from Leek. The entrance to the Wharf is about 300m (330 yards) along Park Lane. After crossing a railway bridge you will see the entrance track in front of a cottage on the right hand side, before you cross the canal bridge.

Parking is limited at the Wharf so, private parties especially, please arrive in as few vehicles as possible. Take care when manoeuvring as the car park is on the canal bank close to the water. Please do not block other vehicles or access to the facilities. Our crew will be on hand to offer guidance.

Cruises normally start between 10:00 and 10:30. On arrival you can arrange the route with the Skipper depending on when you wish to get back to Cheddleton and on which direction you wish to go. If you expect to arrive later than 10:30 please inform the Booking Officer.

3) Boat Facilities

Catering - the Charity does not provide food or drink, but we have a kettle, a small fridge, and a small microwave. You are welcome to bring your own food and drink on board (we have mugs, some plates and cutlery). The water supply is in a large tank and, while perfectly good for hot drinks, you may wish to bring bottled drinking water.

The toilet is large and suitable for people with disabilities but, not being on mains sewerage, it uses a macerator. Please do not put any cloth or other material down the toilet as it will stop the toilet from working. Sorting this out is time consuming and very unpleasant. There is a fold down shelf.

Rubbish – we do not have access to rubbish bins, so please take yours home with you.

The electric lift from the fore-deck to the cabin is suitable for most wheelchairs but not for very large electric ones. Three people in wheelchairs can be accommodated in the cabin, but this may reduce the overall capacity. The lift will only be used when the boat is stopped and securely moored. Please let the Booking Officer know if you expect to seat wheelchair passengers in the cabin (and how many, if possible).

The First Aid Box - as well as the usual contents, has a defibrillator and a trauma kit.

4) Conduct of Parties

For the benefit of all passengers, group leaders are asked to manage their children (and adults), and the boat will be stopped and the party spoken to if a party is disruptive. If improvement is not forthcoming the skipper may terminate the trip and ask the party to make its own way back to its transport, or that the party be collected. The skipper will make a written report to the Chairman, who, if appropriate, will write to the organisation asking for improved behaviour, at the risk of losing future bookings. All school and care staff supporting passengers will be assumed to have appropriate DBS clearance.

5) Safety - Beatrice holds the appropriate Safety Certificate.

See the Risk Assessment below.

The Charity has been successfully running cruises for over 40 years. The Charity will, so far as is reasonably practicable, ensure that passengers are not exposed to risks to their health and safety whilst boarding, disembarking or on-board Beatrice. Passengers, guided if appropriate by their group leaders, are expected to:

- take reasonable care to avoid injury to themselves and to others and to co-operate with the Charity in meeting those requirements
- ensure that they do not interfere with or misuse anything provided for their health and safety
- move about calmly within the boat and avoid unbalancing it by having too many people on one side
- comply with any reasonable request by the Charity with regard to health, safety, environment and welfare
- wear shoes and coats suitable for wet and muddy conditions when using the towing path.

There are certain rules that must be observed to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience:

- in the event of an accident all passengers should remain calm, if possible remain seated, and always follow the instructions given by the crew
- children helping with locks must wear the buoyancy aid given to them
- if instructed to do so, passengers should use the emergency exits which are situated at the front and rear of the boat. In extreme circumstances the roof hatch forward of the toilets may be needed, using the brass folding footholds positioned under it
- in the event of a fire passengers should raise the alarm, move to the end of the boat and, when safe to do so, leave by one of the exits. The crew will use one of the fire extinguishers, situated at the front of the cabin, at the rear, by the sink, and outside the toilet door
- no one should run on the towing path, or ride on the cabin roof
- all parts of the of your body must be kept within the boat, and in particular

- do not touch lock walls or bridge walls/roofs
- or grasp hold of branches
- should someone fall in the water you should alert the crew, who will put the engine into neutral and will instruct the person to stand up. In normal cruising the water is shallow enough for most people to touch the bottom
- in deeper water, or in a lock, a life ring or rope (located on the forward and rear hatches) will be thrown by the crew but other passengers must not dive into the water or attempt to pull the person from the water
- the crew will help the person to the canal side where s/he can more easily be lifted from the water.

Helping with the locks

If one or two children are helping with the locks, then they must be helped by both a Beatrice volunteer and a carer or member of school staff. This is because children must be supervised at all times and crew members must interact with children only under supervision.

Help in an emergency

The crew is responsible for summoning assistance in the event of an emergency. Passengers may be asked to provide mobile phones if the service/s used by the crew prove out of reception range. At the start of the run the leader of the group will be asked for contact number to summon assistance for passengers in, for instance, getting back home. A map showing what3words references to key road access points to the canal is kept on the boat.

Risk Assessment

Note that the assessed levels of risk shown below are based on 45 years' operation. Levels used are:

- **Very Low** (of which there are nine)
- **Low, Medium, High, Very High** (all none).

BUT if guidance given below is not followed, by crew, or by passengers, then the level of risk is increased.

Activity	To offer day cruises along the canal system, normally in Staffordshire, to parties of both children and adults, many of whom may be disabled.
Beatrice	is purpose built to facilitate the stated activity and is certified to the required safety standards currently in place. The boat is owned and operated by the Charity.
Beatrice	is operated by a qualified skipper who is an agent of the Charity. The skipper is assisted by crew members. All persons who work on Beatrice have been properly trained.
Group Leader	is the person taking responsibility for the conduct of members of a party. This may be a teacher for a school party or a parent for family groups.
Who is at Risk?	Crews and passengers. The maximum load is 12 persons plus Beatrice personnel.

What are the Risks?

Falling into water; injury from lock walls and gates or from low bridges or other overhead hazards; injury whilst operating lock mechanism; injury in the kitchen area from hot water; boat sinking or catching fire; danger from hazardous substances; danger from electrical sockets; danger that children are out of control; and risk of falling from the lift when in operation or of catching a foot under the moving lift platform.

Control to Minimise Risk

Safety instructions are included in the website and a safety briefing is given by the skipper before/as the boat leaves the mooring.

The risks identified by the Charity are:

1) Falling into water – assessed risk VERY LOW

No passengers will embark/disembark until cleared to do so by the skipper, and they will use the exit/entrance as directed. No passenger will walk down the exterior of the boat or enter the roof area. No passengers are permitted on the aft deck or the galley, unless specifically authorised by the skipper, or any area of the boat outside the rails. Buoyancy aids are available on board and will be worn by passengers at the discretion of the group leader or as ordered by the skipper. When helping with the locks all children will wear buoyancy aids and will have one-to-one supervision, either by a crew member or by a group member (teaching or care staff or family) who is observed by a crew member.

Passengers walking between the boat and their transport, if properly controlled, are in very little danger from falling into the water. Beatrice holds sufficient buoyancy aids for a party of 12, if the group leader wishes to use them.

2) Injury from lock walls and gates or from low bridges or other overhead hazards – assessed risk VERY LOW

Group leaders are to ensure that passengers in their care do not put limbs or heads outside the external lines of the boat when passing through locks or bridges or passing close to moored boats.

3) Injury from operating lock mechanism – assessed risk VERY LOW

Locks will be operated by the team. When appropriate, passengers may help with locks but only at the discretion of the skipper (advised if appropriate by a group leader) if s/he deems it to be safe for them to do so.

With regard to this risk:

- **there should, at most, be only two children operating the paddles, both accompanied by an adult, one a member of the crew, the other a member of the group (e.g. parent or teaching staff)**
- **children are not allowed to lower the mechanical lock paddles (they may lower the hydraulic paddles)**
- **the lead teacher in any school group must assess the suitability of a child or children who they may allow to operate the lock mechanism, and the member of school staff allocated to the lock must closely supervise the child or children chosen for this task.**

4) Injury in the kitchen area from hot water – assessed risk VERY LOW

The kitchen is out of bounds to children. Group leaders may use the kitchen facilities at their own risk. Normal care should be exercised in using the electric kettle. There is a safe microwave.

5) Boat sinking or catching fire – assessed risk VERY LOW

The safe operation of the boat is the responsibility of the skipper. S/he ensures that all team members are briefed and competent to assist, especially in lock operation and in emergency response to potential hazards. The boat carries fire-fighting equipment and a First Aid kit.

The boat has exits at both front and rear and there is a roof hatch with foothold fittings near the rear of the saloon (which can be opened from either inside or outside). In the event of an emergency, the skipper and crew will direct evacuation and group leaders will be responsible for those in their care. In the event of a fire the team will operate the fire extinguishers.

- **Smoking is not allowed inside the boat and crew members are not allowed to smoke or vape within sight of children**
- **There is no gas supply on the boat.**

6) Danger from hazardous substances – assessed risk VERY LOW

Hazardous materials for operating the boat (e.g. diesel, grease, oil) are stored in locked lockers external to the cabin. Domestic cleaning materials are kept in a designated box in a locker in the galley area. This area is out of bounds to children (group leaders may use the galley facilities at their own risk). The only cleaning materials used are

commercially available products that are normally found in the home (bleach in particular is not kept on the boat). All substances used within the cabin are identified as safe in the boat's COSHH register.

7) Danger from electrical sockets – assessed risk VERY LOW

Electrical sockets in the cabin are protected with socket covers.

8) Danger that children are out of control – assessed risk VERY LOW

It is the group leader's responsibility to ensure that there are sufficient adults for the number of children in the party, **and it is the responsibility of these adults to manage the children safely.**

9) Danger of accident on lift – assessed risk VERY LOW

The following factors contribute to the safety of the lift operation:

- operation is by key which is under the control of the designated crew members – normally taken from the ignition or in exceptional circumstances from the break glass key safe
- wheel chairs should be firmly locked when on the lift
- passengers using the lift, whilst not being in a wheel chair, should be accompanied on the lift by a crew member or one of the teaching or care staff
- wheel chair users using the lift should, if possible, be accompanied on the lift by a crew member or one of the teaching or care staff. If this is not possible the crew member operating the lift must position themselves directly by the lift
- the lift has a crush control mechanism
- the edges of the lift are clearly marked by yellow and black hazard tape.
- the lift is normally only operated when the boat is moored and stationary
- the lift is inspected and serviced periodically by an authorised engineer.

The boat carries a First Aid Box, which, as well as the usual contents, has a trauma kit. The boat also carries a defibrillator

Risk assessment display and review

This risk assessment is displayed in the cabin of Beatrice, with its date of adoption and the date of next review; review is an annual exercise undertaken by the committee before the start of each season.

Approved 16 April 2025