

Grand Union BID Earth Day Canal Clean Thursday 24 April and Tuesday 29 April 2025

Volunteer Briefing Document

Introducing the Grand Union BID

The Paddington Partnership is moving to create the Grand Union Business Improvement District (BID) this summer. The BID is an exciting opportunity to build London's principal hub of social value activity, as we unite businesses across Paddington, achieving a unique collective impact.

The Earth Day Canal Clean events taking place over 24 April and 29 April are the Grand Union BID's inaugural volunteering events and we are delighted that you can join us. By taking part in this canal clean event, you are building social capital and helping clear one of London's most important waterways.

Over the two dates, 300 employees from businesses across Paddington will take to the water armed with litter pickers to remove plastic waste from the canal and demonstrate their commitment to enhancing the local environment. We are delighted to be working in partnership with GoBoat London to deliver this event.

Volunteering opportunity

Volunteers will be in teams of eight (including a colleague who is the boat driver – the captain) and head out on electric GoBoats from Paddington Basin along the Grand Union and Regent's Canal. You will be equipped with litter pickers and rubbish sacks to remove litter from the waterway. Teams will be on the water for an hour, enjoying the outdoors and collecting as much litter as possible along the way.

Each team will be equipped with:

- Buoyancy aids for each member of the team¹
- Bin bags for collecting waste
- Litter pickers
- Hand sanitiser (on your return to the tow path)
- Safety card with key contact numbers and your responsibilities whilst on the boat

We ask you to supply your own gloves for this activity. Rubber gloves (i.e. washing up gloves) are ideal for this activity as they cope much better with getting wet than traditional fabric gardening gloves.

Please arrive promptly at the start of your volunteering session to sign in, receive a safety briefing and collect your litter picking equipment. This will help us to ensure that the day runs on time.

Before your team set off, your driver and colleagues will receive specific training from GoBoat staff and have time to practise driving a GoBoat on the water.

When you return to the tow path at the end of the activity:

- Please wait until your boat is moored and GoBoat crew instruct you it is safe to disembark
- Check that your boat is clean, ready for the next volunteer team
- Smile for a team photo with your litter haul!
- Return equipment to the plastic buckets on the tow path

¹ The wearing of buoyancy aids is optional and up to the individual colleague participating in this activity.

- Use the hand sanitiser provided
- Dispose of all rubbish collected in your bags into the large BIFFA style bin provided (staff will be on hand to help with this)

Key information about your volunteering

Day and time of volunteering	Please refer carefully to your email for confirmation of the date and time of your volunteering session. Each session will last for two hours (to include briefing, time on the water, team photos and litter disposal).
<p>Location: GoBoat London, Merchant Square, Paddington, W2 1AS</p> <p>Please meet at the GoBoat Kiosk in Merchant Square. This is directly on the canal, close to M&S Waterside. You can see the GoBoat pontoon in the image below.</p> 	
Transport and Directions (from Paddington station)	<p>From Paddington Station: Exit the back of Paddington train station by the entrance hall for the Hammersmith and City, Circle and District underground lines. With your back to the station, take a right as you exit the station and follow the canal. Cross over the first white footbridge. Continue to walk east along the canal, passing M&S Waterside. You will cross over a small bridge and just beyond is the GoBoat kiosk.</p>
Grand Union BID/The Paddington Partnership Contacts	<p>If there are questions on the day, please contact the Community Team using the details below:</p> <p>Claire Godwin – Partnerships Manager Claire_godwin@thisispaddington.com 07817 903 262</p> <p>Neri Gokyay – Community Programme Executive Neri_gokyay@thisispaddington.com 07507 800 251</p> <p>Please be aware that we will be very busy on the Earth Day events and answering calls may be difficult. We would encourage you to use WhatsApp to communicate with us.</p>

<p>What to wear</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress appropriately for the weather and the practical task you are undertaking, including wearing close-toed shoes with good grip. • Bring a waterproof coat with you, alongside plenty of water, sunglasses, a hat and sun screen if the sun makes an appearance! Please remember that the canal can be a wind tunnel and colder than surrounding areas, so layers are advised. • If you have company t-shirts that you can wear to give the group identity it would be fantastic. This is helpful in photographs to showcase who you are, as well as making you easy to identify when you arrive for your volunteering. • Avoid bringing unnecessary valuables that may get lost or damaged. There isn't anywhere secure to leave belongings and The Paddington Partnership/GoBoat cannot take responsibility for items left on the tow path.
<p>Instructions for rubbish collection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You will have a safety card in your boat and receive a full briefing about what rubbish to collect and how to do so safely. • Please only collect items which you can pick up by hand - plastic bags and bottles, glass (as long as you are wearing gloves) are all fine. Do not pick up anything larger which may damage the boats or yourselves. Ideally leave the wood / branches etc. in the water. These will all breakdown and rot over time. • We cannot dispose of large items and companies will be charged for anything lifted from the canal bigger than items listed above. • Please place rubbish into the plastic buckets and bags provided. The waste will then be disposed of in a dedicated bin at Merchant Square on your return. • Please ensure your boat is emptied before departing the event as we have teams heading out throughout the day.
<p>Photographs</p>	<p>A photographer will be present on site during your volunteering to capture the action. The photographs taken may be used on The Paddington Partnership, Canal & River Trust and GoBoat London websites and social media accounts and in printed publications.</p> <p>Photographs will be shared with participating companies to use on their websites, social media accounts and in internal communication. Please do tag us if you post about your volunteering.</p> <p>Please notify us if you do not wish to appear in the photos.</p>
<p>Refreshments</p>	<p>There are plenty of nearby cafes, bars, restaurants and delicious food trucks where you can buy refreshments. We do advise you bring water with you on the boat. Please do not drink alcohol before participating in this voluntary activity or whilst on the boat. GoBoat's conditions of license to operate means that consumption of alcohol is strictly forbidden.</p> <p>Ensure you always wash your hands before eating and drinking after having been on the boat and litter picking.</p>
<p>Toilets</p>	<p>Please note there are no toilet facilities at GoBoat London. There are public toilets on the ground floor of 5 Merchant Square (by Social Impact coffee). This is a short walk from the GoBoat kiosk, in the direction of Edgware Road.</p>