



West Somerset Railway Association

The Railway Station, Bishops Lydeard TA4 3 BX

WSRA POLICY No P15: Volunteer Policy

Purpose and scope

The WSRA values volunteers for the diverse skills and experience they bring to the charity. It recognises that volunteers should be seen as complementary and additional to the staff group. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the interests of both the charity and the volunteers are clearly understood and are adequately met.

Volunteer Policy Principles

This Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- We will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisation and that systems are in place for them to contribute to our work.
- We do not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.
- We expect that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.
- We recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.

Definition and Role of Volunteers in the WSRA

The definition of a WSRA volunteer is any person aged 18 years or over undertaking voluntary work which is defined as an activity that is carried out unpaid on the West Somerset Railway with the aim of benefitting the West Somerset Railway Association (WSRA).

The WSRA offers opportunities for volunteers in many different roles, including:

- Contributing to the delivery of the Associations community programmes including educational and well-being walks
- Helping with WSRA support services such as Information Technology, Asset Archiving, Public Relations, Membership Administration and Fundraising
- Organising and delivering fundraising events
- Volunteering on the restoration of the WSRA's heritage assets
- Welcoming visitors and providing information about the work of the WSRA at a variety of locations.

Recruitment and Selection

The WSRA welcomes new volunteers and will always adopt a positive recruitment strategy. Often no previous experience is needed, and appropriate induction, training and supervision will be given.

All potential new volunteers wishing to work on heritage restoration programme should contact the General manager to discuss previous experience and interests and possible roles.

Volunteer Obligations

The WSRA values volunteers and treats them with dignity and respect and in return expects volunteers to:

- Commit to our aims and values and be a positive advocate of the WSRA.
- Aim for high standards of efficiency, reliability, and quality in volunteering, giving the best of your skills and abilities.
- Treat everyone you meet through your role with dignity and respect, understanding that no form of harassment, bullying or discrimination will be tolerated.
- Support and act in accordance with our Policies, Procedures, Guidelines including all aspects of our Health and Safety, Finance, Data Protection and Safeguarding (if you are not sure of any policy or procedure, please ask).
- To understand that a railway is a dangerous place, act responsibly and to attend safety briefings and training sessions when requested.
- To be prepared to carry a WSR PLC ID card if the role requires it for safety and insurance purposes.
- To be accountable for their behaviour and be open to feedback.
- To dress appropriately taking into consideration the responsibilities and the role undertaken
- Not to post defamatory remarks or details of any incidents/accidents involving the WSRA or the West Somerset Railway onto social media or any websites.
- Not to make any comments to the media that are not first approved by the Chairman or General Manager of the WSRA.
- Let the WSRA know if there are changes in your personal circumstances that may affect your volunteering.

Induction and Training

All volunteers will be given Training appropriate to the role in which they are working.

New volunteers may be required to attend an induction course run by an appropriate person, and to hold a WSR PLC staff ID card. This to ensure appropriate understanding of the safety issues related to working on the West Somerset Railway, and to ensure that the WSRA's volunteers are properly insured when working on the railway.

Volunteers transferring from other departments/WSR organisations must advise the WSR PLC HR department of the transfer.

All volunteers who work on heritage restoration at Williton are required to hold a Personal Track Safety (PTS) certificate issued by the WSR PLC. This is a mandatory requirement. Renewal of IDs must be through the West Somerset Railway PLC.

All volunteer's paperwork must be forwarded by the appropriate person to the WSR PLC Personnel Department at Minehead and will be held by them as well as by the WSRA.

Working Arrangements and Insurance

- The WSR PLC is the responsible body for safety on the West Somerset Railway. Therefore all WSRA volunteers working on the railway **MUST** hold a valid WSR PLC ID card and allow their personal information to be shared between the organisations.
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (also referred to as HSWA, the HSW Act, the 1974 Act, or HASAWA) is the primary piece of legislation covering occupational health and safety and includes relevant information for staff working alone. Working alone places staff at additional risk, as, in the event of an incident or occurrence, no one is immediately available to render assistance.
- All volunteers must sign on in the appropriate signing in book before starting work and must sign off at the end of each session.
- In doing so, volunteers are confirming that they comply with the requirements held by the WSR PLC for working on the West Somerset Railway, and that they are fit to work on that day.

Support and Supervision

The WSRA provides support and supervision in all the areas of activity on the WSR for which it is responsible. If WSRA volunteers are working alone, they should notify the appropriate person in charge of the place of work at the beginning and end of each work session.

The WSRA will treat all volunteers with respect and dignity and will deal with volunteers' concerns in a sympathetic manner.

Volunteer Expenses

Generally payments are not made for travel to and from the railway. In some circumstances, payments for out of pocket expenses may be claimed and this is clearly outlined in our **Expenses Policy P10**.

Data Protection, Copyright and Confidentiality

All written material created and held on paper or electronically which was acquired during your involvement with the WSRA remains at all times the WSRA's property and copyright.

This should not be used or passed to a third party without the express permission of the General Manager.

The Association will ensure that all data relating to the personal information of volunteers is dealt with in accordance with the WSRA's Data Protection Policy and the law. Personal information held on volunteers will not be passed on or sold to third parties. Volunteers can request access to their personal information held by the WSRA at any time.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults.

The Association is committed to Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, and the well-being of all staff, volunteers, and visitors to the Railway.

The WSRA has a number of Trustees who are DBS qualified and from whom advice can be sought and to whom concerns can be brought.

Volunteers are expected to behave appropriately, and all reasonable steps should be taken to avoid unsupervised access to a child or vulnerable adult.

For more Information please refer to our Safe Guarding Policy P12 and refer any concerns, in the first instance to your supervisor, or refer to the WSRA Chairman or General Manager.

Smoking, Alcohol and Substance Abuse.

All the West Somerset Railway's buildings, working areas and working sites are smoke free (includes the use of electronic cigarettes).

Volunteering whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be accepted.

Dealing with Problems.

If any volunteer or the relevant volunteer coordinator has any concerns about the behaviour or work ethic by a volunteer, their compliance with this policy, safety, or any other relevant requirements, this should be discussed with the volunteer and additional training provided if required. If the issues cannot be resolved, the Association reserves the right, after proper consideration of the views of the volunteer, to restrict the work he/she can undertake or to terminate their involvement with the WSRA.

When a volunteer has a concern about the work that they are being asked to undertake, this should be discussed with the relevant coordinator in the first place. If this does not result in a satisfactory outcome, the volunteer should raise the concern with any Trustee. This policy sits within the framework of policies and instructions issued by the WSRA.

Additionally, provisions of the WSR PLC's Staff Handbook and Rule Book apply to all volunteers on the railway, and nothing in this policy document is intended to conflict with these.

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