



West Somerset Railway Association

The Railway Station, Bishops Lydeard TA4 3 BX

Overarching Code of Conduct (includes Policy B1)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The way we do things and the way we relate and respond to one another lies at the core of how we work together. Having a common and effective culture lies at the heart of how we will build a sustainable and viable charity. The West Somerset Railway Association wishes to operate to a common set of values and behaviours, and irrespective of our status, volunteer, employed staff or trustee, in a management role or not, meet what is set out in this Code of Conduct in all we do. This will ensure that by working well together we will deliver the best possible outcomes for our members and beneficiaries.
- 1.2 To pursue the objects of the WSRA we must act within company and charity law and in concert with other organisations associated with the West Somerset Railway, and the other communities of which we are part, including the West Somerset Railway as a whole, the Somerset community, heritage railways, and the charity sector, our members, railway staff, volunteers and supporters.
- 1.3 In doing this we should be seen to set values and lead standards of behaviour. Others have trusted us with positions of responsibility and we should live up to that trust in all that we do, whether that be private or public conversations, documents or more modern methods such as social media. We should ask ourselves whether anything we do, be it directly as a Trustee or Director, member of staff or volunteer or when apparently acting personally, is, and will be seen as, in the best interests of the WSRA and our communities.

2 OUR VALUES

- 2.1 We have developed a set of values which we will use to describe how we will work, both collectively and individually. These are:
 - **Collaborative** – we will be stronger when we work together for a common purpose
 - **Respectful** – we treat everyone with respect, and we expect them to treat us accordingly
 - **Safe** - we place health and safety at the core of all we do – we promote a strong safety culture
 - **Trusted to deliver** – we understand that our future depends on doing what we say we will do and when we say we will do it
 - **Sustainable** – we must place the long term at the heart of our approach

3 OUR BEHAVIOURS

3.1 For each of these values we have identified associated behaviours, these are summarised below :

- **Collaborative :**

- We recognise that we depend on each other, and need to help each other to deliver
- We will communicate clearly and openly with each other
- Where there is conflict we will work together to bring about the best solution
- We will not be openly critical of individuals or groupings, but deal with concerns internally in a collaborative manner

- **Respectful :**

- We will consider how and what we say to each other, and how it said and understand what the impact can be on how others feel and act
- We will be fair and consistent in our dealings with all those we encounter, and will show appreciation for the contribution that our teammates make
- We will encourage and support diversity, equality and inclusion and will ensure neither discrimination nor denigration of others occurs
- We will be transparent, open and honest in our decision making, and those with managerial responsibility will listen, and respond fairly and openly

- **Safe :**

- We will understand the risks that apply to the work we undertake, explain them to those exposed, and take action to control and mitigate these risks
- We will place safety at the heart of all we do and will consider safety at the commencement, during and on completion of all our undertakings
- We will measure our performance, behaviour and compliance and when the evidence shows it is necessary we will modify practices and behaviour
- When we see something that is not right, we will not walk by and leave it be, but we will take action

- **Trusted to deliver:**

- We will do what we say we will do, achieving our outcomes in a timely manner and with a right first-time approach
- When we encounter problems we cannot solve we will make sure that those who depend on us have been made aware of the challenges
- We will focus on the quality of our work and continually understand how it can impact people now and in the future.
- We will always look for ways to improve how we deliver what is needed

- **Sustainable:**

- We will continually take a creative approach to planning and development so we achieve our cost, operation and sustainability goals
- We will spend all money as if it was our own and speak up if money is being wasted
- We will develop our plans and procedures for the long term, not pursue the short term

4 RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 It is the RESPONSIBILITY of trustees / board members to:

- Act within the Articles of Association and the law – being aware of the contents of the organisation’s governing document and the law as it applies to the WSRA.
- Act in the best interest of the WSRA as a whole – considering what is best for the organisation and its beneficiaries and avoiding bringing the WSRA into disrepute.
- Manage conflicts of interest effectively – registering, declaring and resolving conflicts of interest. Not gaining materially or financially from any association or connection with the WSRA unless specifically authorised to do so.
- Respect confidentiality both in conversations with individuals or groups, in person or modern means such as social media – understanding what confidentiality means in practice for the WSRA, such as avoiding sharing board conversations with outsiders until a decision has been reached and limiting discussion of decisions made to the accounts in the public minutes.
- Have a sound and up-to-date knowledge of the WSRA and its environment – understanding how the WSRA works and the environment within which it operates, particularly its relationship with the other members of the WSR “railway family.”
- Attend meetings and other appointments or give apologies – considering other ways of engaging with the organisation if unable to attend trustee meetings.
- Prepare fully for meetings and all work for the WSRA – reading papers, querying anything not fully understood and thinking through issues in good time before meeting. Actively engage in discussion, both face-to-face and by e-methods, debate and voting in meetings – contributing positively, listening carefully, challenging sensitively and avoiding conflict or belittling other member’s views.
- Work considerately and respectfully with all – respecting diversity, different roles and boundaries, and avoiding giving offence.
- Act jointly and accept majority decisions – making decisions collectively and standing by them publicly once made.

4.2 It is the RESPONSIBILITY of employed staff to:

- Have a sound and up-to-date knowledge of the WSRA and its environment – understanding how the WSRA works, their role within it and the environment within which it operates.
- Respect confidentiality both in conversations with individuals or groups, in person or modern means such as social media – understanding what confidentiality means in practice for the WSRA, such as avoiding sharing information with

outsiders and limiting discussion of decisions made to the accounts in the public minutes.

- Carry out reasonable management instructions given by the Trustees, working considerately and respectfully with all.

5 COMMUNICATIONS

5.1 Everyone is REMINDED of the harm that has been done to the Railway by the history of conflict between WSR organisations, and by negative publicity generated through social or other media.

As a charity the WSRA must be aware of reputational risk/damage

5.2 Statements by any Trustee / Board member/ member of staff/ advisor may be interpreted as statements by the organisation. For those reasons, public communications, including internal and external Press Releases, articles, postings and the like, will be agreed where possible and issued in accordance with agreed procedures.

5.3 Trustees/Board members/staff/advisors/volunteers agree that so long as they are in office/post they will not publish individually any material that damages the reputation or standing of the WSRA nor another West Somerset Railway organisation, another HRA member, the HRA itself or their respective managements, employees and volunteers, save to the extent that such material represents the collective, minuted decision of the WSRA Board.

5.4 Also, for these reasons, Trustees / Board members/ staff/ advisors / volunteers are specifically reminded to AVOID:

- Public comment (by whatever means) detrimental to any West Somerset Railway body, or any directors/employees/volunteers of that body or other persons associated with that body.
- Negative comments about any West Somerset Railway body or individual in face-to-face communication with individuals or groups.

6 COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT

6.1 In most cases compliance with the Code of Conduct is really about being aware that in our day to day activities we are able to answer the following questions :

- Is what I am doing consistent with the Code of Contact, and am I following the values and behaviours ?
- Is what I am doing legal ?
- Does it meet our requirements to treat everyone equally with respect to diversity, equality and inclusion ?
- Does what I am doing comply with our policies ?
- Am I behaving in line with the way I would wish to be treated myself ?
- Would I be comfortable if what I am doing was made public ?

If your answers are 'yes' that should be fine, if any are 'no', or even 'maybe', then think again. It may be sensible to talk to others and get their advice so you can better answer the questions

- 6.2 We should also actively question how others interact with us. If we feel behaviours are not meeting the Code, we should all feel safe to point that out and explain what we think is expected. It is important that this is done in a way that itself meets the Code, that is that is fair and polite, that helps people to achieve better behaviours, and that the person receiving the feedback should accept in the spirit it has been given. If the comment or advice is given in a way which is not respectful and constructive, then it will almost certainly be entirely unproductive.
- 6.3 Most of the time matters can be settled informally and quickly. But sometimes behaviours and actions demonstrate a more significant concern with respect to our Code of Conduct. If we are to meet the standard we have set, it is necessary to recognise such concerns and be empowered to take action. Such behaviours may arise from day to day interactions, may have built up over some time, or may have been disclosed by investigations or other reviews.

7 INVESTIGATION OF CONCERNS

- 7.1 We understand that it is not always easy to raise concerns, as it can be seen as being negative to colleagues. Raising such concerns needs to be seen in the spirit of continual improvement and is aimed at securing a better adoption of the Code of Conduct. Concerns should be raised through the formal process for raising concerns.
- 7.2 Where concerns have been picked up from investigations and reviews then developing better compliance can be simpler, but it is important that investigation are seen as exercises in business improvement, not about the allocation of blame.
- 7.3 When a formal concern has been raised, our aim is to deal with it quickly and consistently. The focus is on establishing facts and placing these in context. It is about gaining a rounded understanding. At every stage, members of staff or volunteers will be informed and will be encouraged to put forward their views and interpretation. We will apply the 'felt fair' approach to any investigation we conduct.

8 SANCTIONS

- 8.1 The WSRA will apply a proportionate and tiered approach to actions to be taken when concerns have been raised. This approach will depend on the severity of the failure to comply with the Code of Conduct and the impact that such a failure has had.

- 8.2 In most cases any action taken is unlikely to be more than a discussion between any person who has not met the requirements of the Code and their 'line management'. This covers a continuum from a simple comment to a more formal discussion. It should be a two way conversation to ensure both parties have a common understanding. Properly done it will be very effective.

Trustees, Board members, staff advisors and volunteers are expected to honour both the CONTENT and the SPIRIT of this code.

I have received and will abide by a copy of this code

Signed:.....

Name:.....

Date:.....

Code/Policy Authors	Diana Ricketts-Tanner Trustee Original Policy B1 and Code, Jacquie Green-General Manager Policy B1
Date confirmed by WSRA Board	22 nd June 2026
Date implemented	From 26 th June 2026
Review Interval	1 Year
Next Review Due	June 2027