



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 employed staff. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the interests of both the charity and all its volunteers are clearly understood and are adequately met.

The policy applies to those people volunteering directly for the WSRA or its trading subsidiaries. This might be in management as a Trustee and/or Director or in the office or at an event organised by the WSRA or one of its trading subsidiaries.

Additionally, those volunteers that work on the restoration of a WSRA asset, such as a Locomotive or Coach will be working for WSR plc in most cases. As such they will need to be registered on the HOPS system and hold a valid staff ID card. They may also be required to participate in training run by the WSR plc and obey all rules of the WSR plc as it applies to their role.

Volunteer Policy Principles

This Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- We will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisation or event 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 all 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 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
- Welcoming visitors and providing information about the work of the WSRA at a variety of locations.
- Marshalling at WSRA organised events.

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 should contact the WSRA Office in the first instance to discuss previous experience and interests and possible roles. The Office will provide an **Application Form**. The Office will subsequently facilitate appropriate introductions to the relevant Trustee and thereafter in respect of those wishing to work on heritage restoration programmes both will liaise, if appropriate, with the relevant WSR plc department heads.

Volunteer Obligations

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

- Commit to our **Over Arching Code of Conduct** 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 all our Policies, Procedures and 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 (see **Social Media Policy P4**).
- Not to make any comments to the media that are not first approved by the Chairman or board of Trustees 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.

Renewal of staff IDs can only be through the West Somerset Railway PLC.

Working Arrangements and Insurance

The WSR PLC is the responsible body for the Safety Management System (SMS) 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.

All volunteers must sign on in the appropriate signing in point (generally using a tablet computer) before starting work in any West Somerset Railway premises and must sign off at the end of each session. In doing so, volunteers are confirming that they comply with the requirements set by the WSR PLC for working on the West Somerset Railway, and that they are fit to work on that day.

For events organised by the WSRA there may be separate sign on arrangements made.

Insurance is normally effected by the WSR joint policy.

Support and Supervision

The WSRA provides support and supervision in all the areas of activity 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 a volunteer's involvement with the WSRA remains at all times the WSRA's property and copyright.

This will not be used or passed to a third party without the express permission of the Board of trustees of the WSRA. It may be shared with other organisations within the WSR family.

The WSRA will ensure that all data relating to the personal information of volunteers is dealt with in accordance with the WSRA's Data Protection Policies 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 wellbeing of all staff, volunteers, and visitors to the Railway. The WSRA has a number of Trustees who are DBS certified 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 to the designated Safeguarding Trustee or to the WSRA Chairman.

Smoking, Alcohol and Substance Abuse.

All the West Somerset Railway's buildings, working areas and working sites are smoke free (this 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 supervisor has any concerns about the behaviour or work ethic by a volunteer, their compliance with the **Over Arching WSRA Code of Conduct**, this policy, safety, or any other relevant requirements, this should be discussed in the first instance and if it is safe to do so, with the volunteer. Where appropriate additional training should be provided. If the issues cannot be resolved, the WSRA 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. (See WSRA **Disciplinary Policy P13**)

When a volunteer has a concern about the work that they are being asked to undertake, this should be discussed with the relevant supervisor in the first place. If this does not result in a satisfactory outcome, the volunteer should raise the concern with any Trustee.

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