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Sankey Canal Restoration Society

Health and Safety Policy

1. Statement Of Intent

The Society's health and safety policy:

- Is valid from the Issue Date until such time as an updated version is published.
- Will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if required by changes to the Society's activities, to legislation or to best practice guidance.
- Applies to all SCRS Members and Non-Members who are carrying out activities for, or on behalf of the Society, paid or unpaid. The Society does not currently employ any staff.

The Society's intention is to:

- Prevent accidents and injuries to Members, Non-Members and Others.
- Promote good health and wellbeing.
- Manage health, safety and environmental risks when carrying out the Society's activities.
- Provide instructions, information and training (where appropriate).
- Ensure that suitable clothing, footwear and personal protective equipment is worn when necessary.
- Provide, maintain and securely store any tools, equipment, substances and materials.
- Ensure that activities are carried out in a safe and healthy working environment and that arrangements are in place in case of an emergency.
- Consult with Members on matters affecting their health, safety and wellbeing.

2. Responsibilities

The Chair of the Society has overall responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing matters.

Trustees, Executive Committee Members and task team leaders are accountable in law and therefore they have delegated responsibility to ensure that they:

- Understand and apply this policy to the Society's activities.
- Provide leadership by example and actively promote health, safety and wellbeing matters.
- Carry out risk assessments of the activities under their control.
- Protect Members, Non Members and Others by minimising any identified risks.
- Ensure a valid insurance policy is in place for volunteers engaged on the Society's activities.
- Act promptly in response to any health, safety and wellbeing matters that are brought to their attention.

Members of the Society must:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of Others.
- Co-operate with Trustees, Executive Committee Members and (where appropriate) Site Representatives from other organisations on matters of health and safety.
- Be aware of and follow any procedures or instructions about safe methods of work and emergency evacuations that apply to a venue or work location.

- Report to their team leader or a Site Representative any immediately unsafe tools, equipment, activities, fire risks and any other hazards or near misses.
- Report all health, safety and wellbeing concerns to a Trustee or Executive Committee Member as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- Ensure that they understand the task to be carried out, that they are competent, fit and able to carry out the task, that they know about any hazards and they know what to do in an emergency.
- Wear and use appropriate clothing, footwear and other personal protective equipment.
- Use correct methods of work and do not improvise by using methods, tools or equipment that have not been agreed.
- Adopt good housekeeping practices, for example by securing any trailing cables, disposing of rubbish promptly and keeping footpaths and escape routes clear.
- Take reasonable precautions to protect any working areas to avoid causing harm to people, wildlife and the environment.
- Co-operate with any inspections or investigations of venues, work sites, accidents or near-misses.
- Not take any hazardous tools, work equipment or substances to a venue or a site without prior agreement. Items must be kept securely stored. Any substances must be managed in accordance with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) to avoid causing harm to people, wildlife and the environment.
- Not use electrical tools and motorised powered equipment without prior agreement.
- Not intentionally or recklessly endanger themselves or Others (for example by not having a valid certificate of motor insurance or by being under the adverse influence of alcohol, drugs or medication), or interfere with or misuse anything provided for health and safety purposes.

3. Consultation

The Society welcomes ideas and suggestions for improving its standards of health, safety and wellbeing. Any Member or Non-Member can contact a Trustee or an Executive Committee Member (in confidence if necessary) and the Society will investigate and consider any matters raised and provide a response as soon as is reasonably practicable. The Society will consult with Members and provide information and training on relevant matters of health, safety and wellbeing.

4. Reporting Arrangements

All accidents, dangerous occurrences and near misses must be reported to an Executive Committee Member as soon as is reasonably practicable and no later than 24 hours after the event, to be recorded and reported by the Society as required by current legislation. The Society Chair will appoint an appropriate Trustee or Executive Committee Member to investigate the matter, identify the cause and take any necessary action to prevent a re-occurrence.

5. Fire Precautions, Emergency Procedures and First Aid

The Society does not currently own or lease any office or workshop accommodation. The Society leases a storage container from St Helens Borough Council at Sankey Valley Visitor Centre, Blackbrook and a storage container from Halton Borough Council at Spike Island Marina, Widnes.

Good housekeeping practices must be adopted at storage facilities, events, venues and work sites. For example do not smoke, avoid overloading electrical sockets, disconnect electronic equipment after charging the battery, turn off heaters, dispose of rubbish promptly and keep footpaths and escape routes clear.

Members should familiarise themselves with the first aid, fire and evacuation arrangements at venues and events managed by Others.

Fire precautions must be adhered to when working indoors or outdoors. For example the burning of rubbish and waste products is not allowed, petrol driven equipment must not be used if ground / vegetation conditions are too dry and the refuelling of any equipment must be done in a well ventilated area in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

The Society encourages all Members to undertake a course of first aid training, for example by attending a training course provided by a community group.

Executive Committee Members are required to have a minimum of Basic First Aid training. Work Party Leaders are required to have a minimum of Emergency First Aid At Work training. The first aid standards are to be achieved within 12 months of joining the Committee (or sooner if required by legislation or the nature of the activities being undertaken) and appropriate training costs will be reimbursed by the Society.

6. Legal Notices

The Society will display any relevant notices and information relating to the storage or use of any hazardous substances or equipment. Members must familiarise themselves with the arrangements and ensure that they know what to do in case of an accident or environmental incident.

Members who attend venues and events managed by Others should familiarise themselves with any notices displayed in accordance with current legislation, for example First Aid and evacuation arrangements, Health and Safety At Work Act 1974 and Employers Liability Insurance.

7. Construction (Design and Management Regulations) 2015

The Society is not currently undertaking any significant site works but the CDM Regulations could apply to some of the Society's activities, for example to the maintenance of structures. See Policy P005.

8. Hazardous Activities

The Society's activities include the holding of meetings at various locations, attendance at meetings with stakeholders (on site or at indoor venues managed by Others), erecting and running publicity stands at events, conducting site walkovers and the carrying out of minor maintenance and housekeeping tasks along the Sankey Canal corridor. The risks posed by these activities are low to moderate but reasonable precautions must always be taken to avoid causing harm to people, animals / wildlife, third party assets and the environment.

List of hazardous activities and guidance within this policy:

- a) Display Screen Equipment
- b) Manual Handling
- c) Working At Height
- d) Confined Spaces
- e) Powered Tools, Equipment, Machinery and Plant

8a. Display Screen Equipment

The Society does not currently own or operate any electronic equipment such as computers, laptops, tablets and smartphones. However some Members might choose to use their own electronic equipment to assist with the Society's activities.

Members are encouraged to follow the provisions of the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992: www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/index.htm#article

Display Screen Equipment should be used correctly to avoid causing fatigue and repetitive eye or hand strain injuries. Users of Display Screen Equipment are advised to:

- Practice good posture and adjust your desk / working area to suit your requirements. Sit back in your chair and keep both neck and back in a straight line. Thighs should be supported on the chair, parallel to the floor. Feet to be flat on the floor (or on a footrest if required to relieve pressure on the thighs).
- Vary your routine and take breaks by alternating screen work with non-screen activities, e.g. by moving around the room or making telephone calls.
- Exercise your body from time to time. Shrug your shoulders, stretch your neck, stretch your legs and avoid sitting in the same position all day long.
- Minimise eye strain by preventing glare and reflections on the screen; adjust the angle of the screen, the viewing distance, the room lighting and use the brightness and contrast controls on the device.
- Regularly clean the screen and check that the characters do not flicker and that the screen is not cracked.
- Exercise your eyes; regularly look away from the screen and blink a few times (particularly contact lens wearers who are more susceptible to visual discomfort due to the drying of the lens).
- When using a keyboard keep a soft touch on the keys and do not overstretch your fingers. Do not rest your wrists on the edge of the keyboard or desk, or bend your hands up at the wrist whilst keying in.

8b. Manual Handling

Members might undertake manual handling activities at home, at an event or on site. Manual Handling is any transporting or supporting of a load (including stretching, lifting, carrying, moving, putting down, pushing, pulling or moving), by hand or by bodily force.

Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992: www.hse.gov.uk/msd/backpain/employers/mhor.htm

There are several factors that can affect manual handling activities; the load, the task, the environment (including the weather) and the individual. An individual's ability to transport or support a load will depend on personal factors for example physique, mental attitude, age and health. Pregnant women must pay particular attention to manual handling activities and must not lift, push, pull or carry heavy loads.

There are some simple steps you can take before and during the moving of a load. Know your limits and ask for help if needed!

- Avoid the need for manual handling, so far as is reasonably practicable – for example by re-positioning or storing a product in a convenient location or by ordering smaller / lighter quantities of a product.
- Consider the risk of injury that could arise from any manual handling task that cannot be avoided.
- Reduce the risk of strain or injury – for example take the minimum quantity of merchandise to an event, break the load down, use a trolley to move the load, make several trips or obtain help from other people.
- Ensure the person handling the load is fit and able to carry out the task.
- Plan the lift and carefully consider whether additional lifting aids are needed.
- Wherever possible, reduce the height and distance of the lift.
- Identify your route and remove any trip or slip hazards or protruding obstructions.
- Wear suitable clothing (including gloves and safety boots if required).
- Ensure that you have a good grip on the load and do a test lift before starting to move the load.
- Members should participate in any risk assessment process and use a good manual handling technique whenever they are carrying out such tasks.

8c. Working at Height

The purpose of The Work At Height Regulations 2005 is to prevent death and serious injury to people caused by a slip, trip or fall from height (for example from a ladder, platform, walkway, wall, roof, ledge, vehicle or quayside). It includes falling through a fragile covering (for example a flat roof, ceiling or chamber lid), and falling in to an enclosed space (for example a cellar, well, chamber, storage tank or excavation):

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/the-law.htm>

Anyone who is in control of or is carrying out any work at height must make sure that the activity is properly planned, managed and carried out by an experienced and competent person. This includes using the right type of equipment and putting the appropriate protection measures in place, taking account of the physical environment, weather conditions and the people who will be most affected by the activity.

- Carry out as much work at ground level as is possible.
- Wear clothing, safety footwear and personal protective equipment appropriate to the task.
- Ensure that any equipment is suitable, stable in use and strong enough for the task, is regularly maintained and is inspected prior to each use.
- Provide safe access to and from the working area for people, equipment and materials – be aware of the dangers of utility apparatus being in close proximity (for example live cables and pressurised pipes).
- Do not attempt to cross over or step on to fragile, loose, slippery or unknown surfaces.
- Do not overload or overreach when working at height. Break tasks down and use platforms instead of ladders whenever possible.
- Provide protection from objects that might fall, such as tools and materials.
- Protect the working area and practice good housekeeping to avoid trip and slip hazards – **Do not remove safety barriers or leave unprotected edges, chambers, excavations or protruding obstructions.**
- Identify emergency evacuation and rescue procedures.
- Do not operate, remove or interfere with any apparatus belonging to a third party without their consent (for example sluice valves, chamber covers, fencing / barriers and signage).

8d. Confined Spaces

The Society does not currently intend to carry out any inspections or construction works involving confined spaces.

A confined space means any substantially enclosed area with limited access where there is a risk of serious injury or death from hazardous substances or dangerous conditions. Some confined spaces are easy to identify such as storage tanks, silos, sewer chambers and drainage pipes. Others may be less obvious, such as open-topped tanks, ducting, narrow and deep chambers or poorly ventilated rooms.

Dangers can arise in confined spaces because of a lack of oxygen (for example gas, fumes or vapour), or a risk of inundation (for example liquids, powders and solid materials), fire and explosions (for example flammable vapours, excess oxygen, residues and dust) and hot or cold conditions leading to a dangerous change in body temperature). Some of these conditions might already be present but some might arise from the activity being carried out (for example sparks from tools or gases from solvents) or because of changes in the environment (for example rainwater overflowing in to a chamber).

Emergency escape or rescue from a confined space is difficult (for example via a manhole or a vertical ladder). **Never enter in to a confined space alone.** Any activities in a confined space will require a safe method of entry and emergency rescue to be put in place by a competent person(s).

8e. Powered Tools, Equipment, Machinery and Plant

Individuals must not use any powered tools, equipment, machinery or plant unless they are suitably trained, experienced and competent (with a valid in-date qualification where appropriate). The Society is entitled to request proof of individual competence and to maintain any records as are deemed necessary.

The Society must confirm that its insurance policy is valid and it has the consent of the property / land owner to use the powered tool, equipment or machinery or plant **prior to any work taking place on site**. This includes for any transport and site access arrangements.

In no circumstances must work be carried out in the vicinity of overhead or underground utility services without first checking with the pipeline or cable operator.

Any powered tools, equipment, machinery and plant must be:

- Appropriate for the task being undertaken
- Stored safely (including when in use, for example not to be left running and unattended)
- Inspected prior to each use
- Regularly maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's requirements
- A record kept of its use and of any defects
- Any defective items must be clearly identified and stored safely out of use

Note that the Society does not currently own any plant or machinery.

These requirements also apply when services are provided by Others (whether hired in or not). Additionally the Society will need to assure itself that the appropriate insurance and consents are in place if it is intended that these are to be obtained by Others.

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