

	<b>Document Title</b>	Volunteers and Grievance Policy		
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## Sankey Canal Restoration Society

### Volunteers and Grievance Policy

#### 1. Statement Of Intent

The Society's 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.

#### 2. Volunteers Within The Society

Volunteers have an essential role in helping SCRS to achieve its objectives. All Volunteers have the ability to 'make a difference'; the Society is committed to involving all kinds of people and making sure that they all have a positive and rewarding experience.

The Society recognises and values the participation of individuals who volunteer their time, energy and skills of their own free will for the benefit of the organisation. The Society recognises the beneficial involvement of volunteers, partners and contractors working together. The Society does not currently have any employees.

#### 3. Management of the Society

The Society is a registered charity and its principal governing body is the Board of Trustees. Trustees are volunteers and therefore are within the scope of this Policy, however Trustees are also covered by statutory obligations set out by the Charity Commission of England and Wales.

The Society's principal governing document is its Constitution. Key clauses of the Constitution set out the charitable objectives of the organisation and the main powers that it may use in pursuit of its objectives.

The Society is managed by its volunteer Officers and Members of the Executive Committee who meet on a monthly basis to discuss the Society's business. The Executive Committee can set up Sub-Committees as and when it deems them necessary, for example to lead on specific tasks or to provide specialist advice.

Task or Work Party Leaders are responsible for discrete activities, for example maintenance of the canal or for organising an event, including leading teams of people and acting as the first point of contact for volunteers.

The Society has a policy of continually reviewing its objectives, activities and expenditure and it relies on its volunteers for feedback and assistance.

## **4. Restrictions on Volunteering**

### **4.1 Age Restrictions**

- As a general principle the Society seeks to avoid any age limits for volunteers, subject to complying with any limits set out in legislation. However insurance requirements require that:
  - Nobody under 18 years of age can work on what might be classed as 'a building site'.
  - Nobody under 18 years of age can work with motorised forestry, agricultural or other similar powered tools or equipment.

### **4.2 Children (persons under the age of 18)**

- Children should not be placed in a position of risk by the Society's activities. The Society requires the presence at all times of their parent, other close relative, guardian, criminal record-checked teacher or other appropriate professional adult. See P007 Safeguarding Policy.

### **4.3 Driving Restrictions**

- The Society does not own or operate any motor vehicles.
- Members who carry out activities on behalf of the Society are responsible for ensuring that:
  - They hold the appropriate driving licence entitlement
  - They drive with courtesy and care, including when operating on private land
  - Comply with current road traffic legislation
  - Their motor vehicle is taxed, insured and roadworthy

### **4.4 Health Considerations**

- The Society will seek to help all Volunteers to participate as fully as they can. See P006 Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Volunteers are encouraged to disclose details of any medical condition, disability or wellbeing matter that might affect their ability to participate in the Society's activities or require some assistance.
- Volunteers must operate at a comfortable pace within the limits of their physical and technical abilities, for example by taking regular breaks and staying hydrated.

## **5. Volunteer Opportunities**

The Society encourages people to become involved in a wide range of activities and tasks no matter what their background and experience. We welcome people's use of their existing skills and expertise and we support people who want to develop and have new experiences. Some examples of activities are listed below. Prospective volunteers should contact a Committee Member to discuss any opportunities.

### **5.1 Member Engagement**

- Running the membership function.
- Writing, publishing and distributing the membership magazine and committee meeting information.
- Arranging work parties and social events.
- Encouraging attendance at Committee Meetings and providing ideas and advice to the Society.

### **5.2 Marketing**

- Identifying stakeholders and opportunities to work with other like minded organisations.
- Promoting the Society's public image and aims by running the website and social media platforms.
- Delivering presentations to local and national audiences.

- Deploying or staffing an exhibition or sales stand at local, regional or national events.
- Researching, publicising and participating in guided walks along the canal.
- Keeping a photographic record of the canal, its wildlife and its restoration.
- Researching the canal's history and the communities it served.
- Recording, collating, digitising and presenting the Society's archives.
- Modernising existing and producing new publications about the canal.
- Leading events and campaigns to publicise the canal and its restoration.
- Encouraging and managing sponsorship opportunities, grant awards and donations.

### **5.3 Recreation**

- Encouraging respectful, shared use of the canal and its associated trails by different activity groups.
- Promoting the health and wellbeing benefits of outdoor activities.
- Working with stakeholders to promote sustainable activities on and off the water.

### **5.4 Fund Raising**

- Managing the Society's commercial activities including an online shop and at retail outlets.
- Reviewing other heritage outlets, sourcing products and expanding the range of merchandise.
- Organising and promoting fund-raising campaigns and activities.

### **5.5 Maintenance and Restoration**

- Helping to improve access to the canal and interpreting its heritage.
- General maintenance and housekeeping of the canal corridor.
- Canal, towpath and structures maintenance.
- Creating plans and projects for restoration and conservation activities.
- Canal surveying, design and engineering work.

### **5.6 Representing the Society**

- Attendance and participation at stakeholder functions and meetings.
- Organising site visits and meetings to promote any restoration proposals to stakeholders.
- Representing the Society on planning matters affecting the canal corridor.

### **5.7 Attendance at Events**

- Identifying and organising attendance at suitable events.
- Helping with the promotion, setting-up, operation or taking down of display stands and materials.
- Providing mutual support and assistance at events arranged by other like-minded groups.

### **5.8 Joining the SCRS Executive Committee**

- The long-term viability and success of the Society is dependent on an effective leadership body. Volunteers who have the enthusiasm, capability and capacity to lead the Society or support its projects are encouraged to consider joining the Executive Committee or one of its sub-committees.

## **6. Working as a Volunteer**

### **6.1 Applicable Policies and Procedures**

- Volunteers are required to follow the Society's policies and procedures.
- The appropriate Committee Member for membership matters, or the Task / Work Party Leader shall ensure that new volunteers are provided with appropriate information as part of their welcome and induction to the Society and to whatever activity is being undertaken.

- The Society will develop a database of Member skills and experience including training records to improve its ability to carry out activities safely and effectively.

## **6.2 Volunteer Conduct**

- Volunteers represent the Society in all of its activities; in person, on-line and in writing. Volunteers are expected to be courteous and to look and act professionally in their interactions with members of the public, the Society and other stakeholders.
- The Society welcomes the sharing of ideas and a healthy debate about its activities and it expects Volunteers to respect the opinions of other stakeholders. Any matters of concern (for example as expressed on social media platforms) should be notified to a member of the Executive Committee.
- The Society's Constitution explains the requirement for people to behave responsibly and (where appropriate) to maintain confidentiality. Also see P006 Equality and Diversity Policy and P007 Safeguarding Policy.

## **6.3 Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers**

- The Society recruits its Volunteers through a variety of informal channels, for example through on-line appeals and publicity, at events and at work parties. New members are invited to participate in all of the Society's activities and to indicate if they have a preference to be involved in a specific area.

## **6.4 Equal opportunities**

- The Society welcomes all Volunteers and is committed to the elimination of all forms of unlawful discrimination against individuals or groups within our organisation on the grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion and other protected characteristics as per the Equality Act 2010. We support equal opportunities in all of our activities. See P006 Equality and Diversity Policy.

## **6.5 Training and Personal Development**

- Training of volunteers is normally 'on the job' under the guidance of a suitably experienced existing volunteer / task leader. The Society encourages volunteers to identify any previous experience or qualifications, and to extend their skills or acquire new ones. Volunteers are encouraged to attend appropriate events and training sessions as may be deemed useful or necessary by the Society, within available resources.

## **6.6 Health and Safety**

- The Society's main aims are 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.
- All volunteers must take note of and follow the Society's policies:
  - P002 Health and Safety Policy
  - P003 Working On or Near Water Policy
  - P004 Lone Working Policy
  - And for those carrying out maintenance or construction work, P005 Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015

## **6.7 Insurance**

- All volunteers are covered by the society's Public Liability Insurance policy whilst carrying out site activities on behalf of the Society (see Restrictions on Volunteering, section 4).

## **6.8 Timesheets and Registers of Attendance**

- Timesheets are not required to be completed but the Society may require Volunteers to sign a register of attendance, for example at a Work Party site or at an event. This can be for insurance purposes and also in support of any grant funding applications made by the Society.

## **6.9 Expenses**

- The Society greatly values the support of its Volunteers in achieving its charitable aims and no regular payments are made for labour, services or travelling.
- The Society's Treasurer will normally purchase any goods or services that are required.
- Volunteers are entitled to make a claim for a reasonably incurred expense (for example a training course fee, an entry charge to an event, or for a product from a supplier that the Society does not have an account with), subject to:
  - The estimated or actual expense value being agreed in advance with the Executive Committee.
  - The expense being incurred in furthering the Society's aims.
  - Any claim being submitted in a timely manner and evidenced by a receipt or other information as may be required for accounting purposes.
- Expenses incurred during an emergency (for example to make safe the Society's assets or to ensure that a stranded Volunteer is able to travel home) must be notified to the Executive Committee as soon as is reasonably practicable.

## **6.10 Membership of the Society**

- There is no requirement for a Volunteer to be a Member of the Society but membership is encouraged and recommended so that the Society can grow and prosper. A healthy level of membership provides the Society with credibility when negotiating with stakeholders and making funding applications.
- Members are entitled to vote on the Society's business at the Annual General Meeting.

## **6.11 Mutual Respect and Commitment**

- The Society shall commit to meet the reasonable expectations of Volunteers so that they have a safe working environment, they are treated with dignity and respect, they know how to make a positive contribution, they are supported and trained as necessary and they are appreciated.
- The Society expects its Volunteers to act fairly and reasonably and to carry out any activities safely and in a way that reflects the values of the organisation.

## **7. Grievance Procedure**

### **7.1 Principles**

- A Volunteer might have a difference of opinion, a concern or a grievance about the Society or its activities. Discussing such matters is healthy for the organisation and is to be encouraged. If the matter cannot be resolved informally there is a formal mechanism for dealing with it fairly and sensitively. The Society will endeavour to maintain confidentiality and resolve any grievance within a reasonable period of time, proportionate to the nature and complexity of the matter(s) raised.

### **7.2 Definition of Bullying**

- Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. It can include the use of personal strength or the power to coerce through fear or intimidation, not necessarily from someone in a position of authority. May be physical, verbal or non-verbal and can include electronic communications.

### **7.3 Definition of Harassment**

- Any unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. A single incident can amount to harassment. A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended recipient. Also includes treating someone less favourably because they have submitted or refused to submit to such behaviour in the past.

### **7.4 Grievance Raised By A Volunteer**

- Most grievances are best resolved by a Volunteer discussing them on an informal basis with their activity leader or an Executive Committee Member. It is useful to write down the key points so that there is a clear understanding of the situation. Any matters should be raised as early as possible so that timely action can be taken.
- If the grievance is not appropriate for an informal discussion or the Volunteer feels that the grievance has not been appropriately heard or dealt with, the Volunteer should notify an Executive Committee Member or a Trustee in writing (keeping to the facts and avoiding insulting language), who will then be responsible for investigating the matter with the relevant parties and reaching a successful outcome in writing within a stated, reasonable period of time.
- If the Volunteer feels that the grievance has not been appropriately heard or dealt with by the relevant Committee Member or Trustee, the matter can be notified in writing to the Chair of the Trustees. The Chair will investigate the matter with the relevant parties and reach a final conclusion in writing within a stated, reasonable period of time.

- End -