



**West Somerset Railway Heritage
Trust**
Registered Charity No. 265564



The Role of Volunteers and Volunteer Policy

Definition and Role of Volunteers

- 1) The definition of a volunteer is any person 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 Railway. In certain circumstances, payments for travel or out of pocket expenses, may be paid; these payments must be approved by the WSRHT Board.
- 2) The West Somerset Railway Heritage Trust (WSRHT) offer opportunities for volunteers in several roles, including:
 - Contributing to the delivery of the Trust's learning and education programme, including the outreach programs.
 - Helping with Trust support services such as Information Technology, Asset Archiving, Public Relations and Fundraising.
 - Volunteering on the restoration of the Trust's historic carriages at Williton;
 - Welcoming visitors to the Trust's museums at Blue Anchor and Bishops Lydeard;
 - Welcoming visitors and working on Gauge Junction, the model railway at Bishops Lydeard.
 - Welcoming visitors during galas and other special events, showing visitors around restored carriages and providing information about the work of the Trust at a variety of locations.

Recruitment and Selection

- 1) All potential volunteers are required to be approved by the PLC before they can work West Somerset Railway for the Trust. The Trust welcomes new volunteers and should always adopt a positive recruitment strategy. No previous experience is needed, and appropriate training and supervision should be given.
- 2) All potential new volunteers wishing to work on heritage carriage restoration programme should contact the Chairman, the Carriage Restoration Programme Co-Ordinator or through info@wsrht.co.uk to discuss previous experience and interests and possible roles in the Trust's Carriage Restoration Programme.
- 3) All potential new volunteers wishing to work in the Trust Museums (One Museum, 2 Sites - Blue Anchor and Bishops Lydeard) should contact any member of the WSRHT team. They should help to put a potential volunteer in touch with the appropriate person.

Guidance to Volunteers

- 1) The Trust expects volunteers to:

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- Commit to our aims and values and be a positive advocate of the Trust.
- Aim for high standards of efficiency, reliability, and quality in your 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 the Trust's Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Management Decisions 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).
- Be accountable for your behavior and be open to feedback.
- Attend briefing and training sessions when requested.
- To dress appropriately taking into consideration your responsibilities and the role you should be undertaking.
- Not to post defamatory remarks or details of any incidents/accidents involving the Trust onto social media or any websites.
- Not to make any comments to the media that are not first approved by the Chairman of the Trust.
- Let the Trust know if there are changes in your personal circumstances that may affect your volunteering.

Induction and Training

- 1) All volunteers will be given Training appropriate to the role in which they are working.
- 2) New volunteers will be required to attend an induction course run by an appropriate person, and to have a 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 Trust's volunteers are properly insured when working on the railway.
- 3) Volunteers transferring from other departments/WSR organisations must provide details showing that their Identity Card (ID) is current.
- 4) All volunteers who work on carriage 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.
- 5) Volunteers at the Trust's Museum, the Trust's Model Railway or Stewarding the Sleeping Car and at Galas, are not required to attend a PTS course, although this is recommended.
- 6) All volunteer's paperwork must be forwarded by the appropriate person to the WSR PLC Personnel Department at Minehead.

Working Arrangements and Insurance

- 1) 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.

- 2) All volunteers must sign on in the appropriate signing in book before starting work and must sign off at the end of each session.
- 3) In doing so, volunteers are confirming that they comply with the requirements held by the Trust for working on the West Somerset Railway, and that they are fit to work on that day.
- 4) Each volunteer is then covered in respect of Employer's Liability by the insurance policy held by the West Somerset Railway PLC.

Support and Supervision

- 1) The Trust provides support and supervision in all the areas of activity on the WSR for which it is responsible.
- 2) If Trust 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.
- 3) Opening of the museum and the model railway is to be agreed with the volunteers on duty, or appropriate members of Station Staff. Unless otherwise agreed the volunteer on duty should be responsible for opening and closing the museum and ensuring its security.
- 4) The Trust will treat all volunteers with respect and dignity and will deal with volunteers' concerns in a sympathetic manner.

Expenses

- 1) Expenses are not normally paid to volunteers. If, exceptionally, a volunteer is required to travel to a place away from the West Somerset Railway on Trust activities, and wishes expenses to be repaid, approval should be sought in advance from the Chairman/Vice Chairman, or in their absence the Treasurer.

Copyright and Confidentiality

- 1) All written material created and held on paper or electronically which was acquired during your involvement with the Trust is the Trust's property and copyright.
- 2) This should not be used or passed to a third party without the express permission of the Chairman.
- 3) The Trust will ensure that all data relating the personal information on volunteers is dealt with in accordance with the PLC Data Protection Policy. Personal information held on volunteers will not be passed on or sold to third parties.
- 4) Volunteers can request access to their personal information at any time; for further details please see the WSRHT Privacy Statement and Policy on the WSRHT Web site.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults.

- 1) The Trust is committed to Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults, and the well-being of all staff, volunteers, and visitors to the Trust.
- 2) The Trust has a number of volunteers who are DBS qualified and from whom advice can be sought and to whom concerns can be brought.

- 3) Volunteers are expected to behave appropriately, and all reasonable steps should be taken to avoid unsupervised access to a child or vulnerable adult.
- 4) If you have any concerns, please speak in the first instance to your supervisor, or refer to the Trust's Chairman/Vice Chairman. There are 5 Rs of safeguarding, these are:
 - Recognise,
 - Respond,
 - Report,
 - Record, and
 - Refer.
- 5) The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (SVGA) 2006 legislation was passed to help avoid harm, or risk of harm, by preventing people who are deemed unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults from gaining access to them through their work. The Independent Safeguarding Authority was established because of this Act.

Smoking, Alcohol and Substance Abuse.

- 1) All the Trust's buildings, working areas and working sites are smoke free (includes the use of electronic cigarettes).
- 2) Volunteers whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be accepted, as per the WSR PLC policy.

Dealing with Problems.

- 1) If any volunteer or the relevant volunteer coordinator has any concerns about the behavior 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 Trust 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 Trust.
- 2) When a volunteer has a concern about the work that he or she is being asked to undertake, this should be discussed with the relevant volunteer 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 West Somerset Railway PLC for the guidance of all those working on the railway, regardless of their affiliation to groups. Relevant provisions of the Staff Handbook and the railway's Rule Book apply to all volunteers, and nothing in this policy document is intended to conflict with these.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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Version No	Date Approved	Revision
0.1	Nov 2017	First Issue of document
		Review Date: April 2020
0.2	August 2022	Policy Reviewed. Draft for Approval
0.3	September 2022	WSRHT Board Approved. Next Revision due Sept. 2025.

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