



Riverside Miniature Railway Club Volunteering Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Riverside Miniature Railway Club (RMRC) is a not-for-profit organisation which was formed to operate, develop and maintain Riverside Miniature Railway.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in RMRC. It is of relevance to volunteers of the organisation.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to ensure cohesion and consistency in the way that RMRC manages its officers and volunteers.
- 1.4 This policy is endorsed by the officers of RMRC and will be kept under review to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of RMRC and its volunteers.

2. Commitment

The organisation:

- 2.1 Values the unique and valuable contribution made by volunteers and is committed to working in ways which encourage and support volunteers.
- 2.2 Is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions which would benefit the organisation, volunteers, members, users of services and the wider community.

3. Statement of values and principles

The organisation:

- 3.1 Relies upon volunteers, exclusively, to carry out its core activities.
- 3.2 Appreciates that volunteering is enjoyable and can change and enrich the lives of individuals.
- 3.3 Recognises that volunteering has the capacity to build skills and confidence and contributes to individuals' personal development.
- 3.4 Respects volunteers in both listening to and learning from what they have to say; feedback from volunteers is always welcome.
- 3.5 Acknowledges volunteering is of wider benefit to society.
- 3.6 Values volunteering as an inclusive act of participation.
- 3.7 Recognises that volunteering has an important role to play in helping people who are excluded from society to participate and become active members of their communities.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 A volunteer is someone who, without expectation of financial compensation beyond the reimbursement of expenses, performs a task at the request of and on behalf of the organisation.
- 4.2 The definition of volunteering used by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations is:
'Volunteering is any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.
This can include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation and social action. Everyone has the right to volunteer and volunteering can have significant benefits for individuals'
- 4.3 The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. Although no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, **we do expect them to volunteer for a minimum of 8 sessions per year, either on or off site.** Likewise the organisation cannot be compelled to provide regular work, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken.
- 4.4 Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly and without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged- both what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

5. Recruitment and selection

- 5.1 The organisation is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion, political beliefs. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks.
- 5.2 The organisation implements a fair, effective and open system in the recruitment and selection of volunteers and treats all information collected in the process confidentially.
- 5.3 The organisation has designated Persons in Charge (PiC's) who have overall responsibility for the management and welfare of the organisation's volunteers on each day when the railway is operating. On development days tasks should be overseen by the development coordinator.
- 5.4 Volunteers have a clear and concise description of their role and tasks. These are established by the PiC after discussions with the volunteer. Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

6. Training and development

- 6.1 All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to RMRC's policies including the volunteering policy, health and safety policy and the safeguarding policy. These are available in the ticket office and on the members section of the website.

- 6.2 RMRC aims to be a small, friendly organisation, with few barriers to prevent volunteers from attaining any role. On-the-job training will be given for customer service roles and simpler railway related tasks such as train guard. We have formal training and assessment procedures for train drivers and tasks relating to steam locomotives, owing to the health and safety risks involved.
- 6.3 All training offered to volunteers will be relevant to their role in order to equip volunteers with the information and skills they need.
- 6.4 RMRC will try to identify roles and training appropriate for individual volunteers. Volunteers' training needs will be identified and training will be arranged and/or delivered by the designated persons.

7. Support and supervision

- 7.1 The organisation acknowledges the need for a clear, consistent organisational framework for voluntary involvement.
- 7.2 Each volunteer will have a designated member of staff, usually the PiC or Development Coordinator, to guide and advise them in their tasks if necessary. Volunteers will be informed of whom to approach for support and have regular access to that person.
- 7.3 The PiC or Development Coordinator will support volunteers and give day-to-day help on any issue related to the voluntary work.
- 7.4 Regular club meetings will be available for volunteers to discuss any problems or issues that may arise.
- 7.5 The frequency, duration and format of this support and supervision is agreed between the volunteer and his/her PiC.

8. Expenses

- 8.1 RMRC are grateful to our volunteers for providing their time and to those who choose to meet incidental expenses from their own resources. Without your generosity the railway may not be able to operate.
- 8.2 If a volunteer wishes to be reimbursed for expenses, **ALL** proposed expenses must be cleared with the treasurer **BEFORE** purchase.
- 8.3 Please note that in all cases of unauthorised expenses, reimbursement will be at the discretion of the committee and that said committee have the right to refuse reimbursement if they feel that the purchase was unnecessary.
- 8.4 RMRC runs as 'not for profit' This means that the club is unable to reimburse members for any travel expenses made in relation to club activity, without prior agreement of the committee.

9. Conditions of service

- 9.1 The organisation's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.
- 9.2 The organisation does not insure the personal possessions of volunteers against loss or damage.

- 9.3 The organisation recognises that volunteers may cease their involvement at any time. An opportunity will be given to try and to ascertain why a volunteer is leaving, share any learning points and establish whether they may want to be involved again in the future.

10. Security and confidentiality

- 10.1 The organisation will advise volunteers of the need for confidentiality where they have access to sensitive information.
- 10.2 The designated officer will hold a record of names and addresses of all registered volunteers for the purposes of security and health and safety.
- 10.3 There may be instances where additional information may be kept such as training undertaken or for the purpose of equal opportunities monitoring. These records can be seen by volunteers at any time.
- 10.4 This information and all other personal data is subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and 2018 GDPR law and will be treated in the strictest confidence. Volunteers are informed of their rights, under data protection legislation, to have access to personal data

11. Settling differences

- 11.1 The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The organisation seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly, and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the organisation's guidelines for settling differences.
- 11.2 The officers are responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be reported to one or all of them. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained and acted upon as quickly as possible. The organisation will endeavour to resolve the problem in an informal manner.
- 11.3 For more serious issues which cannot be resolved informally, the committee will follow the Club's disciplinary procedure, which may involve formal written warnings or cancellation of membership if the committee deem it appropriate.

12. Social Media

- 12.1 The officers recognise that social media is a useful form of communication within the club, however group discussions should remain positive and not defamatory. Members should be mindful that not all members have access to social media, and therefore any grievances or discussions which may affect club policy should be reserved for General Meetings or raised formally to the officers for appropriate distribution.
- 12.2 Members must not make inappropriate use of social media that can pose risks to our confidential and proprietary information and reputation, and can jeopardise our compliance with legal obligations.
- 12.3 Members should desist from using any form of social media to be threatening, abusive, invade another members privacy, cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety.

13. Rights and Responsibilities

13.1 The organisation recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is expected of them
- have clearly specified guidelines of support
- be shown appreciation
- have safe working conditions
- be insured
- know what their rights and responsibilities are if something goes wrong
- be reimbursed for expenses in line with clause 8.2
- be trained
- be free from discrimination
- have the opportunity for personal development
- ensure that you and all others working with and dealing with the organisation are free from discrimination on grounds of race, colour, ethnic orientation, nationality, political beliefs, religion, physical or mental disability, class, age, gender, sexual orientation marital or parental status
- refuse to carry out any request they consider to be unreasonable.

And in return it expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a way which reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- work within agreed guidelines and remits
- respect the work of the organisation and its members and not bring it into disrepute
- to: comply with the organisation's Health & Safety and Data Protection (GDPR) policies

14. Smoking, Vaping and Mobile Phones

14.1 Smoking

- Volunteers should not smoke or vape whilst carrying out a role. Volunteers may smoke during their break, but this must be away from passengers

14.2 Mobile Phones

- Volunteers must give due attention to the task they are performing so as not to endanger themselves or others or to cause loss or damage to tools, equipment and facilities. This includes avoiding distraction by phones, cameras, radios or other items not necessary to the task being undertaken.

This policy was approved by the officers of RMR
This policy be monitored and reviewed biennially.

Signed:

I E Hewlett

Ivan Hewlett – Chairman

Policy written by Michaela Hewlett

Reviewed November 2022