

**Swansea Canal Society**



**Cymdeithas Camlas Abertawe**

## **Volunteering Policy**

### **Introduction**

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and is relevant to all volunteers and committee members within the organisation.

It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the management of volunteers.

### **Our commitments**

We recognise volunteers are an integral part of the Swansea Canal Society group. Their contribution supports the society's mission and aims of developing, maintaining and using the canal through the renovation activities. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the organisation, its customers and the volunteers themselves.

We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from under-represented groups such as youth, people with a disability, older people and people from black and minority ethnic communities. We recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and will seek to ensure adequate resources are available for the development and support of volunteering.

We recognise that people have a right to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering and can contribute in many ways. We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

### **Who is a volunteer?**

Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of our organisation, unpaid and of their own free choice.

The Welsh Government Volunteering Policy (2015) defines volunteering as activity Which

- is undertaken freely, by choice
- is undertaken to be of public/community benefit
- is not undertaken for financial gain

Volunteers may be involved on a one off, short term or on a longer term, regular basis. They may be involved:

- on our board of management as trustees
- in community engagement to raise awareness of our work
- in one off events and promotional activities
- helping with fundraising, administration and
- property and canal maintenance

Volunteers are valued for:

- bringing additional skills and new perspectives to the organisations
- enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in our approach
- championing our cause within the wider community
- enhancing the quality of our work and of client experience
- promoting the wellbeing of users of services, staff, local communities and themselves.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

All volunteers will be supported by the designated leader(s) of the canoeing and kayaking group. They have the responsibility for the development and co-ordination of voluntary activity within the organisation, including volunteering policies and procedures and the welfare of volunteers. All volunteers will be provided with guidance, support and supervision where required.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the organisation to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits.

However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

The organisation expects volunteers:

- to be reliable and honest
- to uphold the organisation's values and comply with organisational policies
- to make the most of opportunities given, e.g., for training
- to contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- to carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Volunteers can expect:

- to have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- to receive adequate support and training
- to be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- to be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- to receive out of pocket expenses
- to have opportunities for personal development
- to be recognised and appreciated
- to be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- to know what to do if something goes wrong

## **Recruitment and selection**

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted, in English and in Welsh, so as to attract interest from different sectors of the community. Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate.

Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, including written role descriptions which set out the nature and purpose of the volunteering role, key tasks, skills required and benefits. A risk assessment will be undertaken on all volunteer roles.

Recruitment will usually involve an informal discussion to match interests and skills and capability. The process will be defined and consistent for any given role - for example the recruitment process for trustees, regular volunteers and for volunteers for one-off events will be tailored in each case and may differ from one another. Where people are not able to be taken on as a volunteer they will be informed as to why.

## **Induction and training**

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

## **Support and supervision**

Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include telephone support, group meetings or one to one review.

## **Recognition**

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation's wider staff, at staff meetings etc. Formal recognition of the contribution of volunteers is expressed through annual

reports, website articles, social media, and during Volunteers' Week award celebrations.

### **Dealing with problems**

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly. We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty.

Complaints will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially with a focus on resolving complaints in order to support the wellbeing of volunteers.

### **Expenses**

Volunteers will be reimbursed for any expenses incurred where purchasing of items for the organisation occurs.

### **Moving on**

Volunteers who have remained with the organisation for at least 3 months will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options, and maybe asked for feedback of their volunteering experience with the society.

**Date approved**.....

**Date of next review**.....

**Person responsible**.....

### **Disclaimer**

The information provided in this sheet is intended for guidance only. It is not substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon.