A RAILWAY OWNED BY THE COMMUNITY FOR THE COMMUNITY

A Community Benefit Society (No 8486)

AVCR VOLUNTEERING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Alford Valley Community Railway (AVCR) volunteering exists to involve more people more effectively in volunteering to help solve real problems and enrich communities.
It does this by**:**

- Working with volunteers involving organisations to improve the diversity and quality of volunteer placements.
- Providing potential volunteers with the means to access volunteering opportunities.
- Helping people who might otherwise have found themselves excluded to take part in their communities.

AVCR is committed to involving volunteers directly within the organisation to:

- Contribute to the delivery of our services.
- Make sure we are responsive to the needs of our users.
- Provide different skills and perspectives.
- Offer opportunities for participation by people who might otherwise be excluded.

This Volunteer Policy sets out the principles and practice by which AVCR will involve volunteers:

1. PRINCIPLES

- Recognise that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to service users and committee members.
- Will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the volunteer centre's work.
- Expect that committee members, at all levels, will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them.
- Recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.
- Will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers.
- Recognise that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts.
- Will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities to ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible.

2. RECRUITMENT

Recruitment of volunteers will generally be from all sections of the community, and will be in line with AVCR's Equal Opportunities Policy.

People interested in becoming volunteers with AVCR will be invited for an informal talk with Board members. Further to this information sharing opportunity, volunteers will undertake an on-site induction covering such topics as trackside safety, PPE etc.

All Station volunteers will be asked to complete a simple registration form and to supply two references. Where applicants are not placed in the role applied for, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles.

Volunteers with AVCR are likely to come into contact with vulnerable people and/or be in a position of trust. All volunteers will therefore be asked to provide information about any criminal convictions via a self-disclosure form that is completed prior to commencing volunteering. A risk assessment is carried out for each volunteering role and for some roles a Disclosure check may be necessary. These checks will be arranged by AVCR. This information will be dealt with in the strictest confidence and will not necessarily prejudice the person being accepted for voluntary work.

Any volunteers under the age of 16 will require Parent/Guardian consent and in accordance with the AVCR Safeguarding Policy said Parent/Guardian will have to be in attendance.

3. VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

Volunteers will receive a role description and volunteer agreement containing full information about their chosen area of work, together with a clear idea of the role responsibilities and the volunteers' responsibilities to AVCR.

4. INDUCTION & TRAINING

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

5. SUPPORT

Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person who will provide regular support. Support sessions will provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue about the development of the volunteering role and any advice and guidance as required should an issue arise.

6. THE VOLUNTEERS VOICE

Volunteers will be consulted in decisions which affect them. AVCR is committed to open dialogue with all volunteers.

7. RECORDS

Minimum details will be kept on volunteers. This will include the registration form, references, placement details, crisis contact, correspondence and any other relevant information in accordance with AVCR Privacy policy.

8. EXPENSES

AVCR will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable volunteers to claim out of pocket expenses.

9. INSURANCE

Volunteers will be covered by AVCR insurance while carrying out agreed duties.

10. HEALTH & SAFETY

AVCR will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure all volunteers health, safety and welfare while at work in accordance with the AVCR Safety Management System.

11. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteers and Board members will work in accordance with AVCR's Equal Opportunities Policy to prevent discrimination on any grounds.

12. FEEDBACK

When volunteers move on from their role at AVCR they are willing to provide feedback on the volunteering experience.

On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other opportunities.

13. MONITORING & EVALUATION

AVCR will systematically monitor and evaluate its use of volunteers with reference to this Volunteer Policy. This Policy will be reviewed annually.