

EAST LANCASHIRE RAILWAY – VOLUNTEERS’ CHARTER

The Charter aims to promote transparency, accountabilities, and the strengthening of relationships between the ELLR Co and ELRPS.

The Charter sets out the key principles on which volunteering is organised and how effective relationships between the ELLR Company, paid staff and volunteers are built. The Charter has been developed jointly by ELLR Co (the East Lancashire Light Railway Co) and ELRPS (East Lancashire Railway Preservation Society) and endorsed through consultation with: the East Lancashire Light Railway Company; the East Lancashire Railway Preservation Society; paid staff and volunteers.

The Charter’s starting point is that volunteering plays an essential role in the success of the Heritage Railway. Volunteering helps link the Railway to local communities, promotes community cohesion and plays an important role in the delivery of key leisure type services. Volunteering is also good for the volunteer. It helps improve health, wellbeing and social interaction and provides opportunities for individuals to acquire skills and knowledge that can enhance career development or employment prospects.

The Charter demonstrates the value and importance that both organisations place on voluntary activity and the time, skills and commitment given by volunteers.

The Charter recognises that voluntary action is a shared common value of team working to promote harmonious and mutually rewarding work between paid staff and volunteers. Through this Charter there is greater clarity of roles and responsibilities. This leads to good procedures, clarity of respective roles, mutual trust and support.

The Charter sets out the key principles to help underpin good relations in the workplace.

These principles should be used as a corporate guide to develop more detailed policies and procedures which reflect departmental needs and circumstances as required. Development work should always be done, wherever possible, between the ELLR Co and ELRPS in the first instance.

Definitions

Paid Work - is any activity that is undertaken at the direction of an employer to an employee and is financially and regularly rewarded.

Volunteering - is freely undertaken and not for financial gain. It involves the commitment of time, energy and skill for the benefit of the Heritage Railway and ultimately local communities.

ELR Draft Charter Principles

ELLR Co Responsibilities

- ELLR Co, as an employer, is responsible for ensuring that all staff, including volunteers, are fit for the work they are being asked to do and for their health and safety at work.
- ELLR Co will provide a Person Specification and Role Description of the work which a volunteer is expected to carry out.
- While volunteers should not normally receive, or expect, financial rewards for their activities they should receive reasonable out of pocket expenses or in kind allowances where considered appropriate.
- When volunteers cannot be resourced to meet the needs of the business, appropriately qualified paid staff will be utilised on a needs only basis.
- Effective structures should be put in place to support and develop volunteers and the activities they undertake. These should be fully considered when services are planned and developed.
- Volunteers and paid staff should be provided with opportunities to contribute to the development of their work area, policies and procedures.
- Volunteers, like paid staff, should be able to carry out their duties in a safe, secure and healthy environment that is free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, violence and discrimination.
- All paid workers and volunteers should have access to appropriate training and development.
- All paid workers and volunteers should show consideration and be prepared to compromise occasionally if it is in everybody's best interests and seek to resolve any conflicts or disputes quickly before they escalate.
- The Company's staff Discipline and Grievance Procedures should be used to address any problems between the Company, paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteers' Responsibilities

- All volunteering is undertaken by choice and all individuals should have the right to volunteer or not to volunteer. However, all working volunteers should provide a level of commitment that the chosen activity requires.
- Like paid staff, volunteers act as ambassadors whilst working on the Railway and should, at all times, seek to protect the reputation of the Railway by not saying, writing, using social media nor doing anything that would impact negatively on the ELR's reputation.
- Volunteers have a duty to comply with the Company's Rule Book, Safety Management System and all the organisation's policies e.g. racial discrimination, sexual harassment, affirmative action, disability discrimination etc.
- Volunteers should commit to attend all training and development courses and customer care training as part of achieving a competent level of 'core' skills.

- Where clothing or personal protective equipment is provided by the volunteer it should be appropriate for the tasks undertaken. Other clothing for customer facing duties should be appropriate to the railways fifties and early sixties image.
- Volunteers should carry out their duties in accordance with their issued Person Specification and Role Description. If they are unsure about carrying out any aspect of the role volunteers should seek advice from their supervisor.
- When you are dealing with work colleagues, customers or people that you are trying to help it is important that you show respect to all those with whom you come into contact whilst performing your duties. Treating people as you would like to be treated yourself is a good basic philosophy to follow.
- Volunteers should show consideration and be prepared to compromise occasionally if it is in everybody's best interests and seek to resolve any conflicts or disputes quickly before they escalate.
- Volunteers should take good care of their health and report an ailment that would impair their ability to perform their duties to their supervisor immediately. Also remember that drink and drugs are prohibited whilst working on the Railway. Their use and their after effects can not only impair your ability to carry out your role but they can have serious legal implications for you, the volunteer, and the Company.
- As a volunteer you should make sure that, where applicable, you inform your Head of Department of your availability to work and carry out your rostered duties. If you do need to take time off make sure you discuss it with your roster clerk or supervisor first so that he/she has time to find a replacement to cover your shift if need be.
- If you choose to stop volunteering inform your Head of Department why you are leaving and when you intend to leave.

The Volunteers' Charter is **not** intended to be a legally binding contract between the Company and volunteer and may be reviewed at any time at the discretion of the ELLR Co and ELRPS. Neither of the ELLR Co and ELRPS intends an employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

Feedback

As in all organisations, feedback from paid staff and volunteers is encouraged and it is an important source of information to look for improvements right across the Railway.

Any feedback provided either by an active working volunteer or when a volunteer leaves the ELR will be treated in confidence.

END

16th December 2016