

# **South Oxford Community Association**

## **Policy on Volunteering**

South Oxford Community Association welcomes volunteers and is dependent on them for the management of the Community in Lake Street.

### **Management Committee**

Anyone expressing an interest in volunteering to become a new member of the Management Committee should be invited to attend a monthly committee meeting as an observer and be given as much information as possible about the Association.

Management Committee members are elected annually at the Community Association AGM in accordance with the constitution. When a person is elected to the Management Committee, they become a trustee of a registered charity (charity number 304351). New trustees must be given a copy of the Association's constitution and all trustees must sign a declaration of acceptance and willingness to act as a charity trustee of the Association before they can act as a member of the Management Committee.

Members of the Management Committee work together as a team to run the Association. Some members of the committee are elected at the AGM to do specific jobs, such as secretary, treasurer or chair but all the trustees have a duty to understand their responsibilities and should be familiar with the Charity Commission booklet 'The Essential Trustee – What You Need To Know'. This should be given to new trustees in advance of their first meeting along with copies of the Association's policy documents, minutes of previous meetings and a copy of the recent accounts and current budget. An experienced member of the committee will be assigned to any new trustee to act as a mentor and ensure that the current business is fully explained.

### **Duties and Responsibilities**

**In summary the Management Committee members as trustees must:**

- ensure that the Association complies with charity law and the requirements of the Charity Commission and complies with any other laws affecting the activities of the Association e.g. Health & Safety and Employment legislation.
- be familiar with the rules and objects of the constitution and abide by them.
- act with integrity and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of charity funds or assets. Where trustees are required to make a decision that affects the personal interests of one of the trustees that person should not be present at any discussion or vote on the matter.
- ensure that the charity is and will remain solvent by keeping informed of the Association's activities and financial position.
- use funds wisely, and only to further the purposes and interests of the Association
- avoid undertaking activities that might place the Association's property, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk and take special care when investing funds.
- exercise reasonable care and skill as trustees, using personal knowledge and experience to ensure that the Association is well-run and efficient.

- get external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the Association, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.

To fulfil these responsibilities properly, members of the Management Committee should make sure that they keep up to date with what the Association is doing and in practice this means attending regular Management Committee meetings.

### **Personal Liability of Trustees**

Good management of the Association is essential: Management Committee members could be held personally and individually responsible in theory if the Association incurs debts and losses however if members have acted in good faith, worked within the constitution and taken appropriate professional advice where necessary they will be protected by Clause 20 of the constitution and by insurance.

### **Other Volunteers**

SOCA actively welcomes and encourages volunteers. Volunteers may already be members of the Association or they may come from the wider community. There are various ways in which volunteers help at the Community Centre:

Delivering newsletters and publicity flyers for events

Decorating

Gardening

Spring cleaning

Helping run or organise a community event at the Centre

Helping with a community café or Artweek

Using specialist knowledge to speak at an event or contribute to specific issue

All volunteers will receive an appropriate degree of training (usually talking the work through with someone). In addition, SOCA policies covering Health and Safety, Child Protection and Equality and Diversity apply to our volunteers and will be covered in training.

### **Inappropriate behaviour**

If the behaviour of a volunteer is considered to be inappropriate by staff, centre users or committee, it should be reported immediately to the Administrator who may, with the agreement of an officer of the management committee, ask the volunteer to leave the building immediately. A range of alternative actions may be applied; a quiet word may be sufficient, but further steps will follow the staff disciplinary process. If the volunteer is a member of the Association the procedures set out in the constitution may be invoked and this may lead to suspension of membership.

### **Volunteer Expenses**

Volunteers are not paid for the work they do and make a gift of their valuable time – they are certainly not expected to give their money too! Volunteers should always be reimbursed for expenses they incur working for SOCA and a culture of not claiming genuine expenses should not be encouraged as it could deter people on a low income from volunteering. These expenses include the cost of childcare where necessary to attend meetings, travel expenses, and postage and telephone costs if working from home.

These expenses must be reasonable and supported by a receipt and the Committee should approve any claim over £20.

Volunteers may spend their own money on behalf of the Association for instance making major purchases on line for equipment or doing the shopping for an event These are not strictly speaking volunteer expenses and will have been agreed in advance, and any single item of expenditure over £20 being authorised by the Committee. The expense will be reimbursed on production of a receipt.

### **Further information**

This document is intended to provide guidance only. In addition to the documents already referred to the following websites provide more information and the administrator will help with internet access if necessary

The Charity Commission - [www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk)  
Community Matters - [www.communitymatters.org.uk](http://www.communitymatters.org.uk)

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This policy was adopted by Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2009; reviewed on 8 June 2015; reviewed on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016

Signed by Chair: .....BOB PRICE .....Date: 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016