

# **Scottish Working People's History Trust (SWPHT)**

## **Volunteer Policy**

### **Introduction**

Founded in 1991, the Scottish Working Peoples History Trust's early aims were to rescue documentary records and photographs relating to Scotland's traditional industries and ensure these records were saved and deposited in local or national libraries, museums and archives.

Over the years the Trust has also conducted more than 300 oral history interviews to gather the recollections of the lives of working men and women employed in a range of occupations including miners, journalists, librarians, Leith seamen, railway workers, Borders farmworkers, textile millworkers, gunpowder workers, Co-operative Society workers, blacksmiths and shipyard workers. The Trust has published edited collections of some of these interviews and is in the process of transcribing more recordings for publication, digitising some recordings and making full interviews available to a wider audience.

The SWPHT Volunteer Policy aims to:

- acknowledge the significant contribution made by volunteers to our work
- recognise the roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers
- establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers
- ensure the ongoing quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the work carried out by our volunteers.

### **The importance of volunteers to the SWPHT and volunteer roles**

Most of the Trust's work is carried out by volunteers. Volunteers ensure the Trust is able to deliver our mission and charitable activities. Volunteers enable the Trust to carry out work that would not otherwise be possible and contribute specialist skills and knowledge to our activities.

There are currently a number of volunteer roles in the Trust. These are:

- Trustees – leading and managing the Trust, ensuring the Trust fulfils its mission and working at all times in the best interests of the Trust
- Volunteer Researchers carrying out oral history interviews, transcribing, summarising and indexing interviews, obtaining copyright clearance for Trust oral history interviews, maintaining listings of Trust interviews, preparing material for publication
- Website Designer and Administrator – keeping the Trust's website engaging and the content up to date.

### **Volunteer Policy**

This Volunteer Policy sets out the broad principles of volunteering with the Trust. The Trust is committed to:

- Ensuring the fair and equal treatment of all our volunteers

- Matching volunteers with suitable activities
- Working with our volunteers to define and agree tasks so that everyone is sure of their respective roles and responsibilities
- Ensuring each volunteer has a named contact in the Trust (usually the Secretary or Treasurer) to guide and advise them in their tasks, providing necessary and on-going support, so that volunteers can be effective in their role.

### **Becoming a volunteer with the SWPHT**

All potential volunteers will be asked to complete a volunteer's registration form and to take part in an informal interview. The Trust will require to assess the proposed volunteer's experience and skills.

Volunteers will be matched where possible with an interest they may have.

Most volunteers contribute to the Trust's oral history recording activities. Volunteers may be involved in some of the following activities:

- Identifying potential interviewees, conducting recorded oral history interviews and creating summaries and verbatim transcripts of the recorded interviews
- Creating summaries and verbatim transcripts of interviews that have previously been recorded
- Obtaining copyright clearance for Trust Interviews and maintaining listings of Trust interviews.

Additionally, the Trust depends on the skills of volunteers to maintain the Trust's website and to keep the website content engaging and current.

Volunteer Researchers may also come forward with a proposal for a new oral history project to record a group of interviewees that they have already identified, or have a desire to record: perhaps a particular trade, industrial concern or local business with whom they have connections.

The Trust will offer support in getting started on any recording project, by scoping out the theme or industry to be covered, agreeing a proposed number of interviews, setting the criteria and the need for the project eg by determining if the chosen industry has already been the subject of an oral history project in the past and may already be well represented in Scotland's audio archives or if it will be filling a gap in our oral record. Volunteers may wish to discuss the questions they propose to ask interviewees or require assistance drawing up questions.

The Trust will assist the volunteer in publicising an appeal for contributors, through the Trust's website and newsletter, and may be able to assist with the costs of publicity fliers, local newspaper adverts or other local publicity initiatives as agreed with the Secretary and/or Treasurer.

### **Guidance, support and training**

All volunteers will have an induction to their volunteering role which will involve an overview of the Trust's relevant policies and procedures. Following Induction and mutual agreement of the volunteering role and activities to be undertaken, volunteers

will be assigned a named contact, normally the Secretary or Treasurer of the Trust, who they can call on for on-going support and to discuss any issues and concerns.

Volunteers will be able to access learning and development opportunities which are relevant to their volunteering role throughout their time working with Trust. If required the Trust will support the volunteer's training in oral history recording, for example attendance at a one day training course.

## **Expenses**

Volunteers will be able to claim reasonable expenses incurred while volunteering with the Trust. Volunteers should discuss any planned expenditure prior to incurring expenses to ensure that they will be covered by the Trust.

Volunteers should make the most cost effective travel arrangements possible. The Trust is not able to pay a mileage rate for private car use but is able to reimburse volunteers for actual petrol costs for journeys carried out as part their volunteering role.

The Trust will assist with the loan of digital voice recording equipment and will be able to meet appropriate expenses incurred in the recording project such as travel to an oral history contributor's home to carry out an interview, the purchase of digital memory cards and batteries for the digital voice recorder.

Volunteers will be protected by the Trust's liability insurance.

## **Guiding principles for volunteers**

The Trust requires volunteers to comply with the Trust's Data Protection Policy and the ethical and legal best practice as set out in full in the Oral History Society's published Guidelines

<http://www.ohs.org.uk/advice/ethical-and-legal/>

In summary:

Ethical considerations apply throughout the course of the volunteering project from the first contact with an interviewee to preserving, sharing and disseminating the results of interviews. The following principles or 'duties' have been identified

- a duty of confidentiality (though not necessarily anonymity) towards informants and participants
- a duty to protect participants from harm, by not disclosing sensitive information
- a duty to treat participants as intelligent beings, able to make their own decisions on how the information they provide can be used, shared and made public (through informed consent).
- a duty to inform participants how information and data obtained will be used, processed, shared, disposed of, prior to obtaining consent.

Approved by SWPHT, 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022