**Churches Together in England**

**Volunteer Management Policy**

**Introduction**

Churches Together in England is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, whose objectives (“the Objects”) are defined as the advancement of the Christian Religion in accordance with its statement of faith, the relief of poverty and the advancement of education and any other purposes which are charitable according to the law of England and Wales.

The charity seeks (within its general objectives) to be a visible sign of the churches’ commitment to one another, in obedience to our Lord’s Prayer “that they may all be one. As you, Father are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me”. (John 17:21).

Churches Together in England is the national ecumenical instrument supporting and encouraging churches from a wide range of traditions to work together in unity.

This policy is made in accordance with CTE’s vision and mission, to enable members of CTE’s member churches and Bodies in Association to take a full part in its mission and unity work and activities.

**Definition**

Volunteers are people who are, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the organisation. CTE’s volunteers include

* Trustees, who are responsible for the strategic direction and oversight of the organisation.
* Forum Moderator and Deputy Forum Moderator, who are responsible for conducting the three-yearly Forum.
* Chair of the Charities and Networks in Association Group, who chairs this important group and represents them at a variety of meetings and events.
* Other volunteers with particular skills.

CTE does not normally use interns or any other office-based volunteers.

**Values and principles**

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by CTEto draw as widely as possible on the membership of its diverse member churches. It is not a substitute for paid employment; the role of volunteers complements, but does not replace the role of paid staff.

CTE will take appropriate steps to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff. However, since CTE has a very small staff, it may be necessary in exceptional circumstances, e.g. staff sickness, for trustees to support paid staff in a more operational capacity.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise the organisation cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, 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.

**Volunteer Co-ordination**

The General Secretary has overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the organisation and for the management and welfare of the CTE’s volunteers.

All volunteers, other than trustees, will have a designated member of staff for support and supervision.

**Recruitment and selection**

The diversity of its member churches is one of CTE’s great strengths and one of the purposes of its use of volunteers is to embody this throughout the organisation. CTE is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, political beliefs or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups.

The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the organisation in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise role description. The role description will be prepared in conjunction with the volunteer and their designated staff person. New volunteers will be properly inducted into the organisation and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

**Training & Development**

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the organisation's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, safeguarding vulnerable adults and equal opportunities.

The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the organisation in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to see that this training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.

Training in the supervision of volunteers will be provided for all those who have direct responsibility for volunteers.

**Support and Supervision**

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation's wider staff, at staff meetings etc.

**Expenses**

CTE expects to reimburse expenses incurred in travelling to and from the place of volunteering or in the course of volunteering. It may be necessary to reimburse other expenses, e.g. childcare, to ensure that all individuals have access to voluntary opportunities

CTE’s volunteers are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. What can be reclaimed from the organisation and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.

It is the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

**Insurance**

CTE’s liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.

The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage

**Confidentiality**

CTE will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the organisation relating to the volunteer.

**Settling Differences**

CTE aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The organisation seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly. If differences arise, it looks for a positive and amicable solution based on its guidelines for settling differences.

The volunteers’ designated officer is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to him/her. Support will be provided by the organisation to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the organisation's wider grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to. If a volunteer’s behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, they may be asked to change their role, or to leave the organisation.

**Rights and Responsibilities**

CTE recognises the rights of volunteers to:

* know what is (and what is not) expected of them
* have adequate support in their volunteering
* receive appreciation
* volunteer in a safe environment
* be insured
* know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
* receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses
* receive appropriate training
* be free from discrimination
* be offered the opportunity for personal development

CTE expects volunteers to:

* be reliable
* be honest
* respect confidentiality
* make the most of training and support opportunities
* carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
* carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
* respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
* comply with the organisation's policies

Approved by Board of Trustees of Churches Together in England

Signed

Dated

Reference Minute