moor trees

creating native woodland

Moor Trees Volunteering Policy

1 Purpose and scope

1.1 This policy has been developed to outline Moor Trees' commitment to volunteering and the practices we will implement.

1.2 The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) defines volunteering as *"any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual. This can include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation."*

1.3 Moor Trees offers a range of volunteering opportunities to support the charity to achieve its aims and is striving to improve our policies and procedures. This policy outlines our guidelines and expectations of our staff and volunteers.

2 Moor Trees vision for volunteering

2.1 Moor Trees aims to inspire our volunteers to share in our vision for a nature-rich Dartmoor and enable them to make a meaningful contribution towards realising it. We will welcome everyone equally into the Moor Trees community and respect everyone we work with. Moor Trees will be understanding of limitations on people's time and ability by offering flexible and accommodating volunteering opportunities. We will value and recognise the contributions volunteers have made and support them to learn and develop while supporting the charity to achieve its aims.

3 Our commitment to volunteering

3.1 Moor Trees recognises that people give their time to support us for a wide range of reasons, including health and wellbeing, nature connection, or to learn and develop skills. We want to support our community of volunteers to feel that any contribution is valued and an important part of our ongoing work. Volunteers will be supported through instruction and training, where appropriate, to become confident in making a fulfilling contribution to our work.

3.2 Moor Trees offers a range of weekly volunteering opportunities as we have a 'seed to site' approach to growing trees and planting thriving woodlands. Moor Trees runs regular events at both of our tree nurseries and on sites around Dartmoor and the surrounding area. Our work also needs a wide range of support including events, promotion and fundraising. We recognise that volunteering needs to be flexible, and any contribution is valued. We will work to reduce barriers to volunteering and provide as many opportunities as we can.

3.3 Moor Trees will provide a welcoming, friendly and safe environment to volunteer in. We also recognise that volunteering is a choice and will not place any demands for time or periods of volunteering.

4 Moor Trees responsibilities

4.1 Moor Trees aims to provide a welcoming, fun, and friendly environment while also being a safe and caring place to volunteer. The Operations Manager has lead responsibility for our volunteering programme(s), which will include:

4.1.1 Overseeing the planning of the volunteer events diary.

4.1.2 Providing additional support to the team for induction and planning volunteer sessions. All sessions will be planned, taking into account the differing needs and welfare of volunteers attending.

4.1.3 Hosting regular volunteer feedback sessions and be the first point of contact for any grievances or complaints by volunteers about staff and other volunteers. All contributions and comments will be openly received and given due respect and consideration against business needs.

4.1.4 Ensuring there is a named point of contact for enquiries about each session or specific programme of activity, e.g. our weekly Community Tree Nursery volunteering sessions.

4.1.5 Overseeing and supervising the completion of risk assessments, health and safety and welfare of the tasks or sessions.

4.1.6 Keeping volunteers updated with any changes to company policies and procedures and sharing the annually updated Volunteer Information Pack.

4.2 The Chief Executive will consider volunteers and volunteering in all business and strategic planning. They will make sure that volunteering supports and contributes to realising our aims.

5 Our expectations of volunteers

5.1 Moor Trees is a community of volunteers based on a shared goal and mutual respect. While we have no formal requirements for volunteering, we do hope volunteers respect others, communicate their needs and help us to work towards our goals. We expect:

- **Commitment,** but we understand that people have other responsibilities
- **Strong desire** to help us achieve our aims
- **Openness** to a range of roles, learning new skills or potentially sharing experiences with others
- **Willingness** to work on own or part of a team – always supervised
- **Respect** for everyone regardless of background or ability

- **Responsibility** for your own welfare at all locations and in all weather conditions.

6 Volunteering opportunities with Moor Trees

6.1 In recognition of the range of roles and tasks, the charity has defined the core types of volunteering we offer:

Regular Volunteer	Someone who attends our tree nurseries and/or Sunday sessions on a frequent basis.
Experienced volunteer	Someone who has been volunteering for a full year (or a minimum number of sessions, e.g. 20) and has ideally attended a range of different events. Experienced volunteers may be able to take on additional responsibility within reason, but these tasks will be clearly defined and training provided.
Time-limited volunteer	Someone who will respond to a particular need identified by the charity. Tasks could include one-off or project-based activities. This could also be a Duke of Edinburgh placement.
Ad hoc	Someone who may attend a session at irregular or infrequent intervals.

6.2 Trustees are volunteers, but the entirety of this policy does not apply to trustees, who are subject to selection, induction and training processes overseen by the Board of Trustees in line with governance best practice and the Charity Governance Code.

This policy does not cover:

- Informal volunteering: those individuals who support our mission through responding to a campaign, fundraising for our cause, or by taking action for nature where they live, learn or work. Informal volunteering is carried out by individuals acting under their own initiative, and individual action of this kind does not fall within the scope of this policy.
- Employer-supported volunteers or community service/rehabilitation placements, which are managed through and by other agencies.
- Trainees who are not volunteers and are covered by a separate policy under employment contracts.
- Anyone undertaking student placements or school work experience who are covered by separate agreements with external organisations and the charity.

7 Volunteer recruitment process

7.1 All individuals interested in volunteering for Moor Trees will complete a volunteer registration form before joining us. This is to make sure we can keep volunteers safe while volunteering with us and to be able to plan sessions. The form is accessed through the volunteering page on our website. We are also able to provide paper copies if required.

7.2 Moor Trees will run several volunteering open days throughout the year, where individuals can come along and visit our tree nursery and ask any questions or discuss

the suitability of our sessions. These will be advertised on our website, on Eventbrite page and on our social media channels.

7.3 Moor Trees will aim to publish all volunteering events through Eventbrite, social media and our website at least a month in advance, where possible. These will be communicated to volunteers in monthly e-news bulletins and verbally. Signs and information may also be displayed on notice boards in the nurseries

8 Volunteer induction and training

8.1 All volunteers will be given a site induction when volunteering at one of Moor Trees' nurseries or arriving at one of our 'outdoor' sites. When volunteering at a tree planting, seed collecting, or woodland health monitoring event, everyone will be given a site induction and toolbox talk style induction to enable them to take part in the session in a safe and fulfilling way. Staff leading the session will monitor and mentor or buddy up new volunteers with an experienced volunteer or work as a larger group.

8.2 An information pack with relevant volunteering information will be distributed electronically to all new volunteers (printed copies are available on request).

8.3 Staff will be supportive and encouraging in helping volunteers feel comfortable with attending a volunteer session, tasks and becoming part of the Moor Trees community.

8.4 Staff will offer feedback and guidance in a non-critical and supportive way for any tasks being carried out.

8.5 Where appropriate, Moor Trees will offer training opportunities relevant to the role, to help develop volunteers and be able to further support Moor Trees.

9 Communication with volunteers

9.1 Moor Trees will maintain a database of contact details for our registered volunteers in order to provide ad hoc information and updates on our volunteering programme, achievements, policies and procedures and general updates about the work of the charity.

9.2 Volunteers can opt out from receiving a monthly e-newsletter from the charity.

9.3 Moor Trees will ensure that everyone has a chance to give regular feedback about their experience through online surveys and the running of regular volunteer feedback sessions.

9.4 Formal and informal routes of giving feedback will be clearly set out in the volunteer information pack.

9.5 Staff will be given support and training, identified through an appraisal system, in engaging and supporting volunteers

9.6 Staff will pass on relevant news verbally to volunteers. Signs and information may also be displayed on notice boards in the nurseries.

9.7 Moor Trees will keep in touch via phone or email about changes to events or unforeseen cancellations. Moor Trees has a cancellation procedure in place that will be used for decision making in the event of a possible cancellation.

10 Creating a safe environment

10.1 Moor Trees will provide a welcoming and supporting community of staff and volunteers who will aim to be as supportive as possible of volunteer involvement.

10.2 Moor Trees will put in place measures to reduce the likelihood of its volunteers suffering from physical, financial and emotional harm, arising from their volunteering. This will be achieved through the organisation's Data Protection, Safeguarding and Health and Safety policies and related activities. This includes risk assessments, safeguarding activities, insurance appropriate to the role, and adequate expense reimbursement and confidentiality arrangements.

10.3 Moor Trees will advise volunteers of suitable clothing and items to bring with them on volunteering days. Where specialist equipment is necessary, this will be provided by the charity and maintained with routine checks.

10.4 Moor Trees staff are trained in Emergency Outdoor First Aid. First Aid kits are available in the Moor Trees office, Community Tree Nurseries, Moor Trees vehicle and at outdoor activities. If the volunteer requires immediate medical attention, they will be accompanied either by a member of staff or other volunteer to the local Minor Injuries Unit or Accident and Emergency department.

10.5 Where possible, investments will be made to make Moor Trees' nursery sites more welcoming and comfortable for all volunteers. Due to the nature of the sites and work, it is not always possible to be fully accessible.

10.6 Consideration will be given at our outdoor sites to provide adequate shelter and facilities. When working in remote locations, this is not always possible, under these circumstances Moor Trees will notify volunteers in advance if lavatories and a sturdy shelter are not available.

10.7 We encourage and support opportunities for volunteers to socialise with other Moor Trees staff and volunteers to build stronger connections with and within the organisation.

11 Recognition and reward

11.1 The contribution of people volunteering for the charity will be recognised in Moor Trees' Annual Report, reports to our funders and supporters and other relevant

publications including our website, newsletters and our social media channels. Moor Trees will provide a welcoming and supporting community of staff and volunteers who will aim to be as supportive as possible of volunteer involvement.

11.2 All Moor Trees staff are encouraged to regularly recognise the contribution of volunteers informally through verbal and written thanks and praise.

11.3 Records will be kept of individuals' volunteering contribution in order to track years of service and number of volunteering sessions completed in an operating year. This information may be used to acknowledge or give awards for key milestones and achievements by individuals or groups of volunteers.

12 Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses

12.1 Moor Trees will reimburse reasonable expenses incurred while volunteering. Volunteers should discuss as part of their induction the type of out-of-pocket expenses that are eligible to be claimed. This includes:

- travel (including to and from the place of volunteering);
- meals and refreshments if representing the charity at events and fairs where lunch is not provided, or the period of time exceeds four hours;
- equipment, such as protective clothing (subject to prior written agreement with the Operations Manager);
- administration costs such as postage or phone calls.

See the current Volunteering with Moor Trees Information Pack for current rates.

13 Problem-solving and complaints procedures for volunteers

13.1 Moor Trees hopes that all volunteers share our intentions for creating a respectful, friendly and welcoming environment for everyone. Moor Trees aims for everyone volunteering for the charity to have a positive experience and benefit from the opportunity of supporting us to achieve our aims. However, we understand that problems may arise. Volunteers might experience the following:

- struggling to do a particular task or activity
- finding themselves doing too much and feeling overwhelmed
- not getting on with others
- being unhappy with things the organisation is doing or not doing.

The charity also wants to avoid more serious problems, which could include:

- bullying or harassment
- sharing confidential data
- fraud or stealing funds
- being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

If something does go wrong Moor Trees follows this process to resolve the problem.

13.2 Our process is usually led by the individual supervising the volunteer and can be escalated to the Operations Manager if not successfully resolved. If this is not appropriate, the Chief Executive will lead the process which is as follows:

1. Investigate the problem – we will talk to the volunteer(s) and staff involved to find out the facts.

2. Take action – we will explain to the volunteer what the problem is and the impact it has had. Together, we will decide what the volunteer would like to happen and how to attempt to solve the problem. We will agree when and how to review progress.

3. Explore possible solutions – we will be flexible and open to doing things in a different way. Volunteers will be reminded of the range of tasks and activities, boundaries and what is expected from individuals who volunteer for Moor Trees. We will offer more support and training and if necessary, look at alternative tasks to carry out. If the volunteering opportunities available are not meeting the volunteer's expectation we will discuss other ways they might be able to support the charity. A timeframe will be agreed for trying out any new tasks, approaches or behaviour.

If the problem does not improve it may be necessary to try another solution or outline what will happen if the problem is not resolved. For more serious problems, Moor Trees might need to ask the volunteer to no longer volunteer with us.

Moor Trees will take into consideration reasons why problems occur to provide an opportunity for the charity to learn and explore ways we can do things better.

14 Volunteer dismissal

14.1 In the event of a serious breach of conduct (13.1) it may be necessary to dismiss a volunteer.

Moor Trees staff will have initiated (if appropriate) a problem-solving process. If the issue cannot be resolved a time and place will be agreed to meet with the volunteer to discuss the reasons for their dismissal. Volunteers can have somebody with them at this meeting. The staff member will explain why they are being asked to leave and will follow up in writing

14.2 Moor Trees might also need to ask a volunteer(s) to leave because of changes to our range of activities, for example, because we have ceased doing something for financial or strategic reasons.

15 Complaints against Moor Trees staff

15.1 Volunteers can make complaints against members of staff if they feel they have due cause, using the same process above. This will then be treated within the framework of Moor Trees' Grievance policy.

If a volunteer has tried to solve a problem or concern informally by talking to the individual supervising the volunteer or escalated to the Operations Manager if it is not successfully resolved. If they are not satisfied, then a formal complaint can be made in writing. Any complaint in writing should be submitted to the CEO or an appointed Trustee.

15.2 Volunteers who are unsatisfied with the outcome of any formal complaint, would be entitled to appeal. The appeal must be made in writing, stating the grounds of the appeal, and sent to the next level of management within five working days of being notified of the decision. If there is no management level above, the appeal should be sent to the Chair of Trustees or designated trustee, who may appoint another person to hear the appeal on their behalf.

15.3 Moor Trees will make reasonable efforts for the appeal to be heard by a different person to the person who conducted the grievance meeting.

16 Working with partners

16.1 Moor Trees works with a range of partners to help us achieve our aims. Where partnership projects are set up, responsibility for volunteers will be clarified in the memorandum of understanding or other partnership agreements. Typically, volunteers will be the responsibility of the host or lead partner and will be registered as such.

16.2 Moor Trees will communicate with its volunteers if on occasion, they are volunteering under the responsibility of our partners and therefore required to follow their risk assessments, protocols and other matters as outlined in the memorandum of understanding or partnership agreement.

16.3 Volunteer details will not be shared between partners without explicit prior consent.

17 Volunteering and the law

17.1 Volunteers have fewer rights and less legal protection than paid staff, because relevant legislation – such as the Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Rights Act 1996 – does not apply to volunteers. Moor Trees aims to treat everyone with fairness and respect. We recognise that volunteers are not employees and must avoid the creation of an accidental contract to avoid breaching a number of regulations, including the National Minimum Wage Act. This policy and other associated policies will ensure this does not happen. However, Moor Trees recognises that we have a duty of care to volunteers.

17.2 **Equality Act 2010:** Volunteers are not protected under equalities legislation. However, Moor Trees has internal policies in place that ensure that everyone working or volunteering with Moor Trees is treated fairly and with respect, regardless of background or ability. We will share these policies with volunteers and ask that volunteers follow the principles of respect in them.

17.3 **Criminal Records Checks**: It is not necessary to carry out a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check on people volunteering for Moor Trees as our services are not delivered to or with children or vulnerable adults. Moor Trees staff and contractors (when working with volunteers) are DBS checked.

17.4 **Health and Safety:** Moor Trees has a duty of care towards its volunteers and an obligation to protect them under section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. Moor Trees will take reasonable steps to reduce the likelihood and potential seriousness of injury to volunteers by providing volunteers with information about our Health and Safety policy, sharing information about the tasks and activities being carried out, providing training to volunteers appropriate to the task, providing volunteers with safety clothing or equipment suitable for the task and supervising volunteers closely.

Moor Trees carries out a risk assessment for every volunteering activity to look at hazards and risks. We have an overall risk assessment for each of our volunteering programmes and maintain a dynamic approach to assessing unexpected risks on the day or for individual tasks. We take a proactive approach to the health and safety of our volunteers, and they are included in our Health and Safety Policy and procedures.

Moor Trees will notify volunteers at a site induction at the beginning of a session of any risks that have been identified and precautions that have been taken to lower the potential risk. In the event of an accident or injury, volunteers should notify a member of Moor Trees staff immediately who will take appropriate action.

17.5 **Safeguarding:** Moor Trees' safeguarding policies and procedures are in place to prevent volunteers from causing harm to others, such as our staff, other volunteers, our partners or customers. We also aim to protect our volunteers from other people in the organisation and other people outside our organisation causing harm that is noticed when volunteering. Moor Trees has a duty of care towards children and adults at risk of neglect and abuse, including when they are volunteers.

17.6 **Confidentiality:** Volunteers may come into contact with and use confidential information, which will be either personal or sensitive personal. Personal information that may be encountered includes name, address, date of birth, email address, photographs, IP address (the unique digital address attributed to a digital device), location data, online behaviours (traced through 'cookies') and profiling and analytics data. Sensitive personal information includes race, religion, political opinion, trade union membership, sexual orientation, sex life, gender identity, health information, biometric data and genetic data.

As part of the volunteering induction, it will be explained what information can and cannot be accessed, relevant to the task. Guidance will also be given guidance on what can and cannot be shared.

Occasions may arise where a volunteer feels they need to breach confidentiality. Confidential or sensitive information relating to an individual may be divulged where there is a risk of danger to the individual, another volunteer or employee, or the public at large, or where it is against the law to withhold it. In these circumstances, information may be divulged to external agencies, e.g. police or social services, on a need-to-know basis. Where a volunteer feels confidentiality should be breached, they should raise the matter immediately with a member of Moor Trees staff.

17.7 **Data Protection legislation:** The General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) apply to volunteer records, and volunteer data must be collected and processed in line with GDPR. Moor Trees is responsible for the consequences of any data breaches committed by volunteers who are processing or handling personal data on our behalf, and our GDPR policy and guidance will be provided to reflect this.

The best practice for data protection is to ensure that information shared is kept confidential and do not discuss personal information with anyone who does not need to know.

17.8 **Copyright:** Moor Trees requests that volunteers assign (transfer) copyright to the charity for the copying, distribution, performance or display in public, broadcasting or adaptation. Alternatively, a licence may be agreed upon in which copyright stays with the individual volunteer, but the organisation can use the work within agreed limits. Copyright covers works including (this list is not exhaustive):

- original literary works (anything that is written, spoken or sung, eg articles, leaflets, computer programs and databases, as well as novels and lyrics for songs)
- original dramatic works, musical works, artistic works
- published editions of works (the layout of a publication)
- sound recordings in any form
- films, including videos
- broadcasts.

18 Monitoring and review

18.1 Moor Trees will monitor our volunteering programme to understand its impact on our outputs and outcomes and understand how we are meeting our equality, diversity and inclusion commitments.

18.2 Moor Trees will carry out volunteer satisfaction surveys that ask specific questions about the experience of inclusivity within Moor Trees and may gather demographic information to help understand how individuals are accessing and engaging with the charity.

18.3 Complaints and issues will be logged and analysed on an annual basis to identify any trends. This will feed into planning for the volunteer programme.

18.4 Moor Trees will regularly give opportunities for feedback and use this to improve our volunteer experience.

18.5 This policy will be reviewed every three years, unless there is a legislative change, significant incident or change in our operations.