

## **St Anne's Orthodox Christian Church Volunteer policy**

### **Introduction**

1. This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in the parishes and communities of the Archdiocese of Orthodox Churches of Russian Tradition in Western Europe in the UK (hereinafter referred to as 'the Archdiocese UK'). It is of relevance to all within this parish, including volunteers, staff, members, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility.
2. This policy is endorsed by the Ruling Archbishop of the Archdiocese, and all the clergy and parish advisory councils of the Archdiocese in the UK and will be reviewed every year, to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of the Archdiocese UK, its parishes, communities and its volunteers.

### **Commitment**

3. The Archdiocese in the UK acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways to the life of the Church, that their contribution is unique, and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves.
4. The Archdiocese in the UK values the essential contribution made by all its volunteers, clergy as well as lay people, and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.
5. The Archdiocese in the UK recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering effectively and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

### **Definitions**

6. Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who are, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.
7. A parish is an entity that is a member of the Archdiocese of Orthodox Churches of Russian Tradition in Western Europe in the UK that has a decree from the Ruling Archbishop appointing it as such. It should operate a parish constitution, an associated parish property trust (with a Charity Commission registration, and a bank account).
8. A community is a more informal entity within the Archdiocese in the UK, without all of the above defining features. All communities, however, are associated with a designated parish, who will operate this volunteer policy on their behalf.

### **Statement of values and principles**

9. The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. 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.
10. 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 Archdiocese in the UK.

### **Volunteer Co-ordination**

11. The nominated post holder with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the Archdiocese in the UK is the Parish Advisory Council of the parish or community, elected and appointed their statutes. The parish advisory councils will identify a person (possibly the welfare officer) is responsible for the management and welfare of the organisation's volunteers

### **Recruitment and selection**

12. The organisation 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 including children, according to the law of the UK. 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 Archdiocese in the UK in terms of recruitment and selection.
13. The Archdiocese in the UK is an Orthodox Christian body, including its parishes, and therefore some of its volunteer activities are limited to Orthodox Christians, and some to men. In particular, the roles of clergy in major orders are required by church tradition to be male and Orthodox Christians.
14. Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the Archdiocese or referred to the nearest Volunteer Centre.
15. All volunteers will be asked to produce two references and will be invited to attend an informal interview. If the volunteer will be carrying out activities with vulnerable groups (children and/or adults) there may be other safer recruitment procedures carried out including asking a volunteer to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check. More detailed information will be made available specific to legislative requirements and to the particular volunteer position.
16. Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, which will be subsequently reviewed every year. The task description will be prepared in conjunction with the volunteer and the designated person referred to above.
17. New volunteers will be properly inducted into the organisation.
18. Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

### **Training & Development**

19. All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the relevant policies of the Archdiocese in the UK, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, safeguarding vulnerable groups and equal opportunities.
20. The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the Archdiocese in the UK 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.

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

### **Support, Supervision and Recognition**

22. Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.
23. 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, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated officer referred to above.
24. Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the wider staff of the Archdiocese UK, at pastoral or parish meetings etc.

### **Expenses**

25. The Archdiocese in the UK recognises that the reimbursement of expenses incurred in traveling to and from the place of volunteering or in the course of volunteering is important from an equal opportunities point of view. This is necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to voluntary opportunities.
26. The volunteers in each parish or communities are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure, where that parish or community has sufficient funds. What can be reclaimed from the parishes and communities within the Archdiocese in the UK and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.
27. The Archdiocese in the UK will ensure a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which are the same for volunteers, staff, etc. and are as approved by the Inland Revenue.
28. It is the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

### **Insurance**

29. Each parish in the Archdiocese in the UK will maintain liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.
30. The Archdiocese in the UK and its parishes and communities do not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage

### **Confidentiality**

31. The parishes and communities of Archdiocese in the UK will advise the volunteer on their confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the organisation relating to the volunteer.

### **Settling Differences**

32. The parishes and communities of the Archdiocese in the UK aim to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. They seek to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted

upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the guidelines for settling differences.

33. The designated officer referred to above is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct at the parish level and these should be referred to him/her. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the parish or community to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the wider grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) of the Archdiocese in the UK will be referred to the Dean (unless that person is involved in the dispute) or thereafter the Archdiocesan Council. If a volunteer's behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, they may be asked to change their role, or to leave the volunteering role within the parish or community. This does not require the person to leave the parish or community, merely the volunteering role.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

34. The parishes and communities of the Archdiocese in the UK 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

35. The Archdiocese in the UK 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

Signed and approved by

Very Reverend Dr Timothy Curtis, Rector

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Date 18/03/22