



SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Volunteering policy

Our commitment

Everyone who works for Sussex Ornithological Society (SOS) in any capacity is a volunteer. Some volunteers are more visible than others but all volunteers are valued equally whether serving refreshments at indoor meetings, conducting bird surveys or acting as a member of Council or on one of our Committees. The success of SOS is reliant upon the incredible commitment of time and energy given freely by our volunteers.

SOS is committed to supporting our volunteers so that together we can further the Objects of the Society to engage, inspire, and educate about birds, and support the recording, study and conservation of wild birds in the county.

For volunteer opportunities please refer to our website, however there are always ways to get involved so if you don't see anything immediately, please get in touch with the Chair of either the Membership and Publicity Committee or Scientific Committee, named on our website.

Codes of conduct

SOS volunteers choose to give their time and energy to SOS and volunteers can expect to undertake their volunteering activities with dignity and respect, and without harassment or discrimination. This policy should be read in conjunction with the SOS Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy which all volunteers should adhere to.

All SOS data handled while volunteering should be treated as confidential and subject to the terms of the Society's Privacy policy.

Any volunteer engaging with fieldwork such as running birdwatching outings or undertaking bird survey work should follow the Birdwatcher's Code, which is available on the SOS website.

SOS reserves the right to ask any volunteer to leave if they do not comply with the Society's rules or policies.

SOS rules

Those volunteering for official positions on Council or either of the Society's Committees will be subject to election by members at the AGM in April, and re-election in subsequent years for some positions where appropriate. In some circumstances members can be co-opted onto Council or a Committee part way through the year, and then be subject to the election process at the next AGM.

Some Council positions carry a term of five years, however a volunteer may end their involvement sooner if necessary, ideally giving a period of notice to allow for recruitment of a replacement.

Membership of SOS

While there are great benefits to being a member of SOS, membership is mandatory only for Members of Council or Committee Members.

Recruitment of volunteers

All volunteering opportunities are advertised on the SOS website, and in the members' newsletter. In addition, we use volunteering vacancy boards such as Reach, geographic volunteering bureaus and universities when there is a need to extend our search further afield to meet a specific need or to reach those in diverse communities.

Recruitment activities will take place in full compliance with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

In certain circumstances we may request references for some roles.

Support and supervision

Volunteers will be assigned a named contact person for supervision and support. It should be recognised that all involved with SOS are volunteers and the named contact will be providing their time and support around other commitments.

Problem-Solving

SOS recognises that problems do sometimes arise and we aim to identify and resolve these at the earliest opportunity. Volunteers who have a problem of any kind should discuss it in the first instance with their named contact person.

Expenses & Insurance

SOS will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable volunteers to claim out of pocket expenses.

SOS ensures that activities undertaken by SOS volunteers are fully insured.

Information and training

Volunteers will receive full information about their chosen area of work and will be given a clear idea of their responsibilities to Sussex Ornithological Society.

An induction and training in specific tasks, software or methods will also be given, as required. As part of the induction volunteers are given a Volunteer Pack of information which includes any other policies or documents referred to herein, the name and details of the named contact, and the mechanism for claiming any expenses.

Volunteers will be consulted with about any decisions which affect them.

References

Volunteers have a right to request a reference for any voluntary work they have undertaken. Requests should be made in the first instance to the Secretary of Council who will supply a reference following appropriate consultation.

Policy review

This policy will be reviewed by SOS Council every two years.

Signed



Date 9 September 2025

Print name Clare Buckle

SOS Chair of Council

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