**Riverside Naturally**

**Volunteer Policy**

**Introduction**

Riverside Naturally are keen to promote the benefits of local action in enhancing spaces for nature. Volunteers help us achieve this aim by bringing their skills, experience and our community together to make a difference to the Riverside area, its wildlife and people.

Riverside Naturally (RN) was formed in 2019 by a group of people in the Riverside area of Stirling who are concerned about the degradation of the natural environment and keen to promote the benefits of local action in enhancing spaces for nature. It is registered with the Scottish Charity Regulator and is managed by a group of 8 trustees. Volunteers can learn more about Riverside naturally by visiting www.riversidenaturally.org .

Recent projects have included:

* maintaining the community orchard
* developing two woodland gardens
* creating an area of restorative kindness ( ARK)
* planting a wildflower meadow
* RN has carried out a tree audit and produced a guide and map of trees in the area

**Volunteers will benefit by:**

* learning about the environment and nature of the local area
* joining in RN's efforts to make Riverside a better place for people by making it a better place for nature.
* meeting a friendly, inclusive and diverse group who are always willing to learn from others and share from our own learning.
* improvements to well-being, physical and mental health from being in the outdoors are well documented and volunteering with RN is one way to take advantage of that opportunity

**Support you will receive.**

* Inductions
* Notice of regular and ad hoc volunteering activities
* Risk assessments
* Check in at start and end of volunteering
* Invitations to social events
* Reasonable out of pocket expenses can be provided

Volunteers will be supported by a named trustee who will ensure that appropriate training is given where applicable so that tasks undertaken by volunteers can be carried out in a safe and constructive fashion. RN is GDPR compliant and volunteer's details will be safely stored and only used to maintain contact as detailed in RN's privacy policy a copy of which can be obtained on request.

Riverside Naturally has public liability insurance in place and volunteers will be covered in the event of an accident suffered while volunteering. Safety of volunteers is a prime concern and all steps will be taken to make sure that volunteers enjoy their opportunity in a safe, protective and enjoyable way.

**Recruitment and Selection**

* Volunteer trustees are elected by the membership or co-opted by the board of trustees.
* All potential volunteers will be asked to complete a volunteer’s application/registration form.
* Tasks will be agreed according to the abilities and interests of volunteers, however the responsibility for the management of medical conditions and for deciding on which tasks can be undertaken safely remains with the volunteer and not Riverside Naturally.
* Where there is specific training required this will be highlighted as part of the recruitment process.
* Riverside Naturally expects volunteers to comply with existing policies and procedures.
* Where volunteers have commitments which mean that they cannot attend their normal volunteering, they should advise their named contact to ensure that we can arrange alternative cover.
* Volunteers are encouraged to access learning and development opportunities which are relevant to their volunteering role.
* Safety of volunteers is paramount. Volunteering will take place as a group activity. Lone working is not part of RN volunteering.

**By adopting this policy Riverside Naturally aims to:**

* highlight and acknowledge the value of the contribution made by volunteers
* recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers
* confirm the organisation’s commitment to involving volunteers in its work
* establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers and
* ensure the ongoing quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the work carried out by volunteers

**Trustees will aim to ensure that:**

* the tasks to be performed by volunteers will be clearly defined, so that all everyone is sure of their respective roles and responsibilities
* RN will comply with the Data Protection Act in the use of data held on all volunteers
* volunteers will be provided with opportunities to share ideas/concerns with a named contact
* all existing and future policies will be checked as to how they affect volunteers

Riverside Naturally works in public spaces and recognises that individuals may, for example, take the initiative to remove invasive plants or ‘weeds’ from those spaces outwith organised volunteering sessions. However any personal action such as this which is not organised directly by Riverside Naturally cannot be considered as volunteering and Riverside Naturally cannot accept any liability for these actions. This includes any individual actions undertaken by trustees and other volunteers that are not designated Riverside Naturally volunteering sessions, such as where people agree to grow plants or care for plants in their own homes and gardens for later planting by Riverside Naturally.

**Problem Solving and managing difficult situations**Where a concern is highlighted – either by a volunteer or about a volunteer, this will be dealt with by discussion between the volunteer and the trustee named below. All such discussions will be treated in confidence and action taken to resolve the issues when necessary.

**Responsibility** Overall responsibility for the implementations, monitoring and review of the policy and procedures lies with Pat Morrissey 07436 112 146 email: pat@pmorrissey.co.uk

Implementation and adherence to this policy is the responsibility of all trustees and other volunteers within the organisation.

[April 2022] [Date it is due for review]