



VOLUNTEER LEADER POLICY

The Walrus Cruise is registered charity number 1045288, and our mission statement is:

The Charity's objectives are to advance the Christian faith, in particular among young people, and to advance their education and training by providing and assisting in the provision of adventurous sailing activities, such as on the Norfolk Broads.

The first proper Walrus Cruise took place in 1924 (after 2 years on a Hull trawler) and we are a founding member of the Standing Conference of Christian Sailing Cruises (SCCSC) in which the various Cruises endeavour to support each other and disseminate good practice. We are also a Royal Yachting Association (RYA) Training Centre and are inspected by them each year to ensure we maintain the high standards they require.

The Leadership Team consists entirely of volunteers, including the Trustees, none of whom is paid any form of remuneration or has a contract of employment. In line with our mission, The Walrus Cruise greatly values the vital contribution of all our volunteers in order to:

- ensure we meet the needs of the young people in a safe and secure environment
- provide them with valuable new skills and perspectives
- assist them to explore and develop their faith
- increase our contact with the Christian community we serve

Principles

This Volunteer Leader Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- The Walrus Cruise endeavours to properly integrate volunteers into the organisational structure and create mechanisms for them to contribute to The Walrus Cruise's work
- The Walrus Cruise recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs in order for them to do their work effectively
- The Walrus Cruise expects that all volunteers will work positively with each other to achieve our objectives

Recruitment

Prospective volunteer Leaders are usually found from those who have been Crew in previous years or through contacts of the current Leadership Team. Whilst the recommendation of a member of the Leadership Team through either route is of great value, to fulfil our legal responsibilities prospective volunteers are required to make a formal application via a Google Form. This includes questions about their experience with young

people and sailing, plus their personal faith journey. At least one or two references from people outside The Walrus Cruise are taken up.

This assists us to find out what each volunteer would like to do, their skills, suitability and how best their potential might be realised. However, in all cases the decision of the Commodore is final.

Volunteer agreements

As part of the Application Form all volunteers must make a declaration that they:

- *have read all the policies on <https://www.walruscruise.org/policies> and will comply with them*
- *will comply with all reasonable requests of the Commodore or his appointed representative(s)*
- *assume responsibility for their safety (and those placed in their care) and will adhere to safety instructions*
- *understand that there is an element of risk in any sailing activity and accidents can happen*
- *can swim 50 metres*

Similarly, each Leader is sent a Leader Joining Form before the relevant cruise. This includes a declaration that the Leader must sign:

I have read the Safeguarding Policy, Safety Policy and Statement of Faith of the Walrus Cruise and accept and will abide by them. I have also received an example copy of the Boat Handbook, which contains additional information about the operating procedures of the Cruise. I understand the duties of a Skipper/Team Member as appropriate (Safety Policy sections 4.3 & 4.4) and, so far as is reasonably practicable, will ensure that any boat in my care is always manoeuvred in as safe a manner as possible. Under no circumstances will anyone under my supervision be permitted to interfere with the safe operation of any boat, to throw water, etc. or to behave in any other unsafe manner. I agree to comply with any reasonable requests of the Commodore or his appointed representative(s).

Both declarations are voluntary agreements between the volunteer Leader and the Trustees of The Walrus Cruise. They are not intended to create any form of contract of employment.

Because of the nature of living on board with young people, including minors, all volunteers are required to undertake the RYA Safe & Fun Course about safeguarding and to provide an enhanced DBS disclosure.

Operational procedures and volunteer input

Detailed information regarding our operational procedures is provided in The Walrus Cruise's Handbook a copy of which is provided to each boat. This is updated for every cruise and sent to the volunteer Leaders taking part. It includes an explanation of the roles and responsibilities of each volunteer Leader position, how each position relates to the others and lines of communication.

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning The Walrus Cruise and its work. The entire volunteer Leadership Team is invited to meet for our AGM, review of the last year and formulation of plans for the next one. This usually takes place in February.

Before the start of each cruise, the Leadership Team for that event meets to inform and discuss how it will proceed. Each day, the Leaders meet in what is called 'Skippers & Mates' to review the previous day and to plan the current one. At the end of the cruise there is a volunteer Leaders' review meeting to discuss the overall success of the cruise and whether improvements might be possible the next time.

In each of these types of meetings, the opinions and comments of volunteer Leaders are listened to and respected. The Trustees also meet (physically and/or virtually) to further discuss strategy and other matters between cruises. However, in all cases the decision of the Commodore is final.

Health and safety

The SCCSC has written a Safety Policy of recommended best practice, the relevant parts of which have been adopted by The Walrus Cruise. It is available on the website, included in the Boat Handbooks and provided to all volunteer Leaders. A comprehensive Risk Benefit Analysis has also been undertaken. This has been approved by the RYA, is available on the website and is reviewed regularly.

Before taking part in one of the cruises, each volunteer Leader is sent a Leader Joining Form which includes questions regarding their medical history. Copies of these are kept in a sealed envelope in each Boat Handbook so that they are available in case of emergency... in which case they must be provided to the emergency workers, taken to the hospital etc.

Continual Professional Development (CPD)

The ethos and structure of The Walrus Cruise is specifically arranged to encourage Continual Professional Development right from the level of the youngest Crew member through to the Leaders. The aim is for those with higher knowledge, skills and experience to teach and guide those on the boat with them. This is the case in both the sailing and the spiritual programmes.

So, for instance, a Bosun Crew member might teach younger Crew member how to tie a reef knot, or a Midshipman Crew member might lead a morning Bible Study having received guidance from a Leader. In addition, each evening session of 'Logs & Shanties' involves all participants in the cruise and includes a section of RYA sailing theory.

Thus, by the time a Crew member is invited to apply to become a volunteer Leader it is expected that they will have built up a bank of relevant skills for sailing and/or leading the Bible Studies etc. When there are suitable people, a '1924' cruise is also run, which is a training cruise for 19 - 24 year olds.

Further CPD for volunteers is encouraged and a boat Skipper will be observing the Mate (junior volunteer Leader) and encouraging and guiding them to take their skills to the next level. Similarly, the Chief Instructor is a Senior Keelboat Instructor and observes and guides all the yacht Leaders.

The Walrus Cruise can train people up to RYA Keelboat Seamanship level. We also aim to support volunteers to achieve advanced skills, such as Keelboat Instructor, through going on courses at RYA Training Centres, such as the Nancy Oldfield Trust and the Norfolk Broads School of Sailing (Eastwood Whelpton).

Expenses

Volunteers may ask to have their travel and other expenses reimbursed by using the Expenses Form available from the Treasurer. Receipts must be provided. So that they may perform their roles during each week-long cruise, all meals and accommodation on board are provided to volunteer Leaders free of charge.

Insurance

Volunteers are covered by The Walrus Cruise's insurance policy whilst they are leading on any of our cruises. This includes Employer's Liability of £10,000,000, Public Liability of £5,000,000 and Products Liability of £5,000,000. However, this does not imply that volunteers have a contract of employment.

Equal opportunities

The Walrus Cruise operates an equal opportunities policy. A copy is in the Handbook and on the website. Volunteers are expected to have an understanding of, and commitment to, our equal opportunities policy.

Problem solving

We aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage. A Complaints Procedure has been drawn up for dealing with complaints either by, or about, volunteer Leaders and is included in the Handbook and on the website.

Confidentiality

The Walrus Cruise and its volunteers are bound by the standard requirements for confidentiality and to conform with the Data Protection Act.