



VOLUNTEERS' HANDBOOK



CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION:

A Brief History of the ESR

The ESR as a visitor attraction today

THE VOLUNTEER ROLE

A bit of give and take

Mutual support and expectations:

What you can expect from the ESR

What the ESR expects from you

Representing the ESR

BECOMING AN ESR VOLUNTEER

Appointment and induction

Attendance

Long term volunteering

Volunteer benefits

PRACTICAL MATTERS

Health and safety

ESR policies and procedures

Grievance and discipline

Handling difficult situations

Management structure and departments



A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ESR

2024 SAW THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EAST SOMERSET RAILWAY AS A VISITOR ATTRACTION - AND MARKED THE 166TH YEAR OF ITS EXISTENCE.

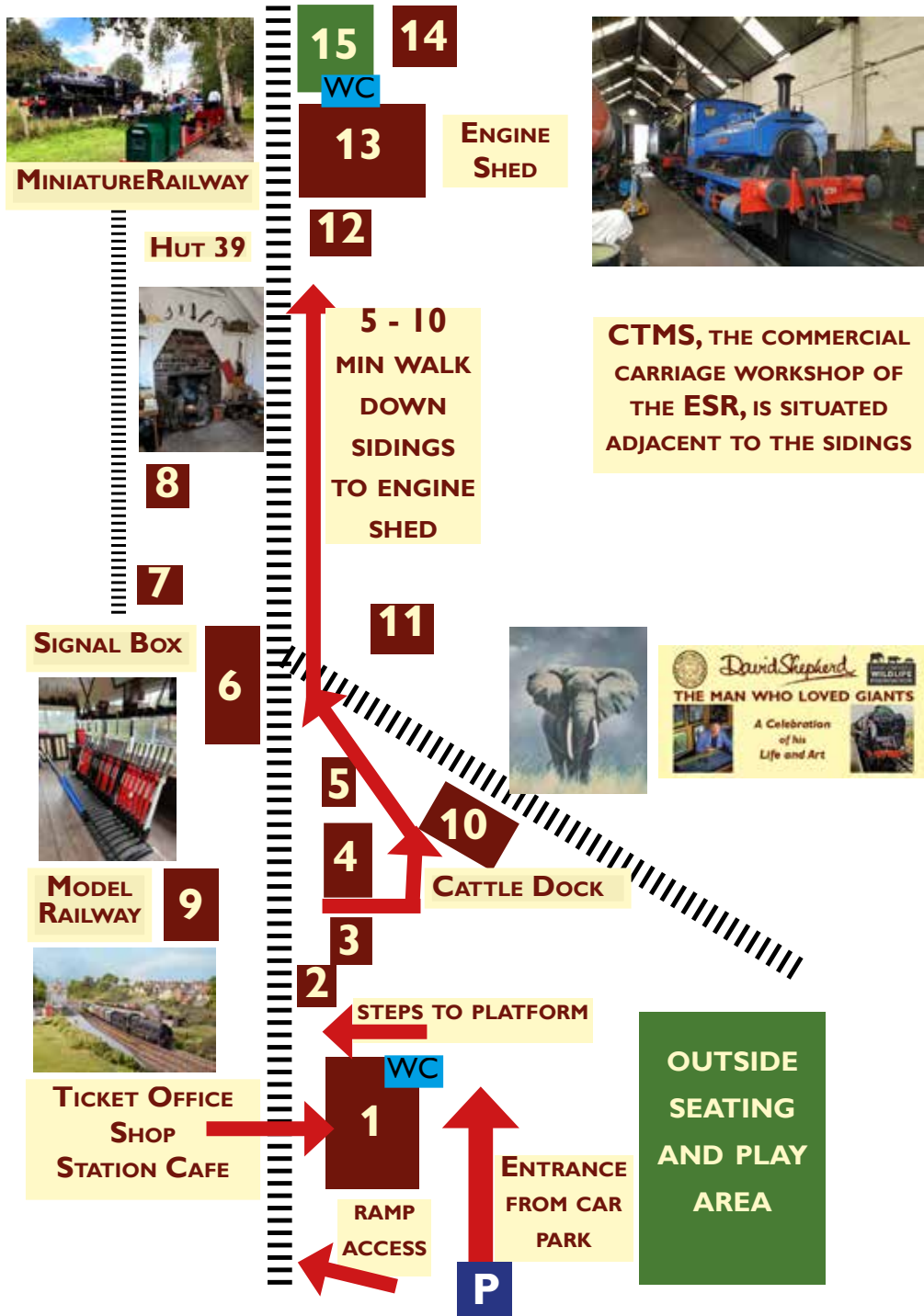
The East Somerset Railway is a Brunel railway (Isambard Kingdom Brunel was the Surveyor), though it was not originally owned by the Great Western Railway, that came later. Opened in 1858, it originally ran from Witham to Shepton Mallet and was built under an 1856 Act of Parliament. The GWR ran the line for the East Somerset Railway, as the ESR only owned the rails and had no rolling stock. The line was later extended to Wells where it joined The Strawberry Line and continued through to Yatton.

Originally built to GWR broad gauge, the line was converted to standard gauge in 1874 and around the same time the East Somerset Railway sold out to the GWR. It had run out of money, sadly an event which was to plague it several times in its long history.

Always a modest railway, the ESR depended on passengers and rock for its prosperity, with a drop of milk thrown in. Quarrying was and is big business in the Cranmore area and soon Cranmore Station developed links with local quarries and a narrow gauge railway was built from Waterlip to Cranmore, with a rock crushing plant erected close to the mainline.

Like many railways the East Somerset Railway lost its fair share of staff to World War I, whilst the aftermath of World War II saw usage of the line drop off with the rise of the motorcar and the transport of stone by lorry. The mainline finally closed for business in July 1964, having carried its last passengers a year earlier. The line was then only used for Foster Yeoman stone trains from Dulcote for the next four years at which point the line past Cranmore died. Bitumen was carried from Cranmore sidings until final closure in 1985.

But help was soon at hand. The renowned wildlife artist, the late David Shepherd, was looking for a home for two engines he had acquired (Black Prince and Green Knight). He found this home at Cranmore and acquired it. The East Somerset Heritage Railway was officially opened to the public on 1st August 1974. It has had its ups and downs since then but is now thriving and providing a much needed tourist attraction for the locality.



THE EAST SOMERSET RAILWAY AS A VISITOR ATTRACTION TODAY

As a volunteer, it is important that you familiarise yourself with all of the site in order to answer visitor questions as well as increasing your own knowledge and interest. Opposite is a very simplified map which shows the locations of all the areas open to the public.

It is also important to be aware of timetabling and events. Details can be found on our website at www.eastsomersetrailway.com and we have regular updates on our Facebook page as well as other social media.

PLATFORM 1 AREA

- 1** Station building, including gift shop, cafe and toilets (ground level)
- 2** Vintage post and telephone box, circa 1926
- 3** W H Smith hut - ex Salisbury station
- 4** Original station building (1858) containing museum, 1950s style ticket office and waiting room
- 5** Cast iron Victorian gents toilet

PLATFORM 2 AREA

- 6** Signal box (1904)
- 7** Miniature railway (open Wednesdays and some weekends)
- 8** Linesman's hut - 'Hut 39' fully restored
- 9** David Shepherd Discovery Centre and David Shepherd's model railway

ACCESS TO THE FOLLOWING VIA THE GATE ADJACENT TO THE W H SMITH HUT:

- 10** Cattle dock and David Shepherd Exhibition carriage
- 11** Station Master's house (now a private dwelling)

FOLLOW ENGINE SHED SIGNS TO THE FOLLOWING

- 12** 1908 GWR steam crane
- 13** Engine sheds and workshops
- 14** Diesel Museum (open by appointment only)
- 15** Toilets and picnic area

THE VOLUNTEER ROLE

A BIT OF GIVE AND TAKE....

In order to become a volunteer, you need to become a member of the East Somerset Railway. This means that when you are working as a volunteer, you are covered by the company's insurance.

Other than when you have trained, passed out and are involved in duties requiring rostered turns, there is no enforceable obligation for volunteers to attend or do the tasks suggested.

Likewise, the ESR does not provide regular work or payment for activities undertaken in a voluntary capacity. Our arrangements with volunteers are binding 'in honour only' and do not represent a legally binding contract.

Any reimbursement of expenses are discretionary - and do not affect the fact that volunteers give their time freely.

MUTUAL SUPPORT AND EXPECTATIONS

Although you give your time and skills freely and without obligation there is a presumption of mutual respect, support and reliability.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE ESR:

- A member of staff or volunteer to act as your support and guide you as necessary
- A clear explanation of the tasks the ESR ask you to undertake
- Supervision and support to enable you to carry out your tasks
- Safe working conditions
- Training where appropriate
- To be listened to - we will listen to your ideas and suggestions when raised appropriately
- Confidentiality of all volunteer records
- Benefits - such as free or discounted train travel, free tea and coffee whilst volunteering, the opportunity to attend social events

WHAT THE ESR EXPECTS FROM YOU:

- Learn about the ESR, its basic management and operational structure, its aims and how your role fits within it
- Attend training sessions as required for your role
- Maintain a high standard in all aspects of your role

- Ensure good relationships and respect other members of staff, volunteers and the general public
- Work within and support ESR policies and procedures including those pertaining to health and safety, security, working with young people etc.
- Have regard to decisions made by the ESR and be aware that the ultimate responsibility for management rests with the Board of Trustees and Business Manager
- Protect cash, assets and securities from theft, loss, damage and unnecessary wastage as far as is reasonably possible
- Endeavour to be reliable
- Safeguard confidential information about the ESR
- Seek to uphold our good reputation and image at all times

REPRESENTING THE ESR

As a volunteer, you are an important ambassador for the ESR and should always try to represent its best interests. For many visitors, you may be their first point of contact and so to them, are the face of the ESR. Always give a warm welcome and be polite and courteous - no matter how you may feel personally. Things do go wrong - but please spare the visitors from your own personal frustrations and complaints!

It is hoped that all volunteers will be proud to be part of the ESR, show a sense of loyalty and feel able to support its policies and management decisions. There are usually good reasons behind most decisions - but if you should happen to disagree with any of them please raise your objections privately with your team leader or the appropriate member of the management team.



BECOMING AN ESR VOLUNTEER

WHO CAN VOLUNTEER?

Volunteering with us is open to all - regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, community background or political beliefs. However, as some departments on the railway are not considered suitable for every volunteer, we reserve the right to make placements on merit, experience and the ability to perform the tasks required.

We encourage young volunteers (from age 14) and volunteers with special needs - however offering suitable placements is dependent on our ability to provide the level of supervision and support required for the individual. We endeavour to be transparent about any decisions made in this regard, and value your understanding.

APPOINTMENT AND INDUCTION PROCESS

If you decide to offer us your time and skills as a volunteer, you will have an initial meeting with the head of department. On appointment to a role, if you are not already a member of the ESR, you will need to join. This ensures that you are fully insured to work with us and will involve a small annual subscription.

Initially, you will be invited to work alongside another volunteer or within a team on a trial basis in order to discover if the role is appropriate for you and if the ESR is the right place for your volunteering journey.

Depending on your role, there may be mandatory training courses which you are required to attend before commencing. There may also be dress code requirements - either for Health and Safety or as a visitor facing volunteer - which you may be required to adhere to.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance as a volunteer is not compulsory - and you may give as little or as much time as you wish. However it is important to indicate your anticipated availability from the outset. Some roles require a regular attendance or commitment to a roster. Reliability is therefore important - and we expect you to let us know as soon as possible if you are unable to do a rostered turn. You may cease your involvement with us at any time, but we would be grateful if you could let us know if you do not wish to continue. If there are specific issues which have caused you to consider leaving us - we would like to know as this may help us if wider issues need investigating or resolving.

LONG TERM VOLUNTEERING

Many ESR volunteers stay with us for many years and are extremely valuable in terms of their knowledge, skills and experience. However, legislation and policies are subject to change and we expect volunteers to accept any necessary changes or updated requirements. This is particularly important in terms of Health and Safety legislation and the updating of any training or certification required.

VOLUNTEER BENEFITS

On receipt of your volunteer / membership card, you will be entitled to free day rover travel on the railway for yourself and discounted travel for friends and family. Some special events will also be discounted for volunteers on discretion of ESR management.

Free tea and coffee is provided on site and there are special volunteer offers available from the Station Cafe.

There are occasional volunteer social events and the opportunity to socialise and make new friends.

A bi-monthly publication 'Between the Lines' is emailed to all volunteers and contributions from all volunteers are encouraged.

You will receive a copy of the annual journal and, alongside all members, will be invited to attend the annual general meeting.

We welcome opinions and suggestions from all our volunteers and endeavour to progress and improve as an organisation by their involvement.



PRACTICAL MATTERS

HEALTH AND SAFETY

The ESR is responsible for ensuring, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of its staff, volunteers, visitors and neighbours.

Every volunteer has three particular responsibilities:

- To be responsible for their own safety and that of others
- To ensure that their own actions do not endanger others
- To co-operate with the ESR's policies for providing and maintaining a safe place of work.

The ESR encourages all volunteers to make suggestions or to report anything that could be detrimental to Health and Safety. For example: defects in equipment or tools, trip hazards and potentially dangerous situations.

Details of the nominated Duty Manager and First Aiders are available in the ticket office.

You are expected to familiarise yourself with the location of first aid boxes, accident books and fire extinguishers.

ESR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Documents are available online and can be accessed as appropriate by way of a designated sign in, which can be requested if not automatically issued.

GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINE

Any grievance should be raised with your Team Leader / Department Head initially. It can be also escalated to the Volunteers Officer and, if not resolved, to the Board.

HANDLING COMPLAINTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

All volunteers will have contact with our visitors, and, if in specific public facing roles, will have the requirement for excellent customer service skills at the heart of their role. Problems will arise, mistakes will be made and all of us at sometime will receive a complaint. Listen to the complaint carefully and resolve the issue in a friendly manner if you can. Avoid any confrontational situations and, if the issue cannot be easily resolved, escalate in an appropriate manner. This may, for example, be to the Duty Manager at the time, or it may require details to be taken in a private area away from the public for appropriate action as soon as possible.

ALWAYS REMEMBER - VISITORS ARE OUR REASON FOR EXISTING!

EAST SOMERSET RAILWAY MANAGEMENT AND DEPARTMENTS

CHAIRMAN AND BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Responsible for the overall management of the the railway - the day to day running of the railway is delegated to a salaried

BUSINESS MANAGER

who also line manages the other salaried staff

CTMS
**Cranmore Traincare
and Maintenance LTD**
(salaried staff)

Administration and Finance Officers
Volunteers Officer
Cleaner
(salaried staff)

The departments below are all run by volunteers headed up by a Team Leader / Department Head.

Within these departments, there are various volunteer roles, some of which are mentioned:

THE STATION CAFE
trades as an
independently run
business

STATION
Ticket Office
Shop - Fundraising
Education
Archive

**RUNNING SHED AND
WORKSHOP**
Operations
Engineering
Maintenance of locos
and rolling stock

There are also some
LODGER GROUPS
which are independent
of the ESR and are
on site by mutually
beneficial arrangement

PLATFORM
Platform Staff
Train Preparation
Guard
Ticket Inspector
Crossing Keeper

**PERMANENT WAY
DEPARTMENT**

**SIGNAL AND TELEGRAPH
DEPARTMENT**

MODEL SHOP

VINTAGE CARRIAGES

MINIATURE RAILWAY

SENTINEL DIESEL
MUSEUM AND DMU

GROUND AND INFRASTRUCTURE MAINTENANCE

If you wish to make contact with the Volunteers Officer,
please e-mail:

volunteers@eastsomersetrailway.com



**THANK YOU TO ALL OUR
VOLUNTEERS**



**WE COULDN'T EXIST
WITHOUT YOU**

