**Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group, Information for Members**

We want to involve more organisations and individuals in the work and ethos of the group, broadening site visit and workshop attendance and the take-up of our principles.

VSCG is open to organisations and individuals that:

have visitor risk management responsibilities in the countryside or historic built environment or have a role in influencing broad strategic policy on visitor access to the countryside or historic built environment, as defined in the VSCG constitution; *and*

publicly endorse the VSCG guiding principles, managing their sites in accordance with them; *and*

offer and contribute expertise in relevant areas.

New members are admitted following application to the Management Board, and payment of the subscription fee. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they meet the criteria in the constitution.

**Member organisation benefits**

* access to all site meetings, open talks, discussions on wider issues held throughout the year and across the full geographical range
* free electronic copy of VSCG publications for internal use by the member’s staff
* access to members-only area of website where internal documents are shared and debate is encouraged between members
* an e-newsletter keeping members up to date on court cases of relevance, new publications and other information relevant to the work of the group, including a summary of site meetings for those members not able to attend
* discounts to attend larger and more widely promoted open seminars or conferences that VSCG may choose to put on from time to time
* access to contacts in all member organisations to share good practice and seek advice
* eligible to stand for election to the management board
* right to vote to elect members of management board

**Management structure**

A **Management Board** of no more than eight member organisations, elected by its members, directs VSCG. A minimum of four are needed at management meetings to enable decisions to be made on behalf of VSCG as a whole.

Member organisations are elected to the management board for a two year term but can stand for re-election each time. Four positions on the management board will be elected each year. Management board members are expected to commit to attending a minimum of three meetings a year. Elections will be held at a full meeting of VSCG.

The management board runs finances, plans all open meetings, agrees topics to be covered and appoints a facilitator to deliver work to a budget, agreeing a day-rate for the facilitator's services.

**Facilitator or Chair**

The management board appoints and manages the facilitator to pursue the work of the VSCG between meetings. The board also agrees routine hours of work and extra hours when necessary. The appointment of facilitator will be reviewed at three year intervals by both sides.

Facilitator arranges meetings, venues, chairs meetings and site visits, records actions from management meetings, reports on business to all members, produces e-newsletter at intervals, updates website and responds to consultations on behalf of Group. Each package of work will be preceded by an estimate of hours, and completion at an agreed rate.

**Management Board meetings**

These run the business of VSCG and plan developments e.g. publication review process, major seminar/conference, commissioning of papers for the website. The Management Board agrees topics for open meetings including arranging speakers and venues. It also brings items to open meetings or via e-consultation where it is felt a wider endorsement of work priority is required.

**Open site and/or presentation meeting**

VSCG aims to run at least 4 per year, rotated around membership organisations, to look at topics of concern, share good practice and report back on developments. Each meeting may include indoor and outdoor elements. All member organisations are entitled to attend all open meetings free of charge, with a maximum of two places per event (although additional places will be made available whenever possible). Members must book in advance to enable appropriate space, refreshments etc. to be provided. At least one meeting per two year period will include a review of work and budgets, discussion of work plan and developments and an opportunity to share anything not already fitted in to other meetings.

***Typical format***

Day 1 (usually Tuesday) – Management Board meet at 14.00, with business meeting to 17.30. Overnight stay. Other members wishing to attend Day 2 arrive, if needing overnight stay. A group networking dinner will be arranged for all those attending.

On occasion, we may offer an additional workshop option on Day 1 afternoon.

Day 2 (usually Wednesday) – Welcome to site or seminar at 09.30. Introductory speakers, site visit, meeting back indoors to conclude business, agree further work, take questions. Buffet lunch and networking, depart 14.30, or 16.00 if a workshop continuing through the afternoon.

***Additional special events***

Occasional open, full day seminars will include speakers from inside VSCG and outside. When a fee has to be levied for such events, members will get a 25% discount on the full cost to non-member organisations.

**Newsletter/e-bulletin**

To be produced at intervals to suit amount of information needing to be shared. E-newsletter is only sent to members and will include new documents, court cases, announcement of programme of meetings, summary of previous open meetings for those not able to attend etc.

**Members only area of VSCG website www.vscg.co.uk**

A members-only forum to be used to seek views on member organisations’ issues. These can include documents that members are unwilling to put into public domain, drafts of case studies, case law, and good practice notes; facilitating feedback by all members with access. Members must respect the confidentiality of meetings and forum postings.

**Membership contributions**

VSCG has a healthy bank balance. This, and income from sales of our publications, has allowed VSCG to keep the annual membership fee unchanged for the past five years.

There are two levels of annual fee, depending on size of organisation:

Larger organisations – £1000, smaller organisations – £500.

VSCG does not prescribe the definition of small or large organisations, and leaves it to the judgement of the organisation. (We would be happy to advise what levels of fee comparable organisations typically pay.)

The annual fee is payable from 1st April. New members are required to pay, on joining, a proportionate fee for the remaining months to 31 March.

VSCG funds are subject to audit and held in a single, separate account by one of our members, currently Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland.

**VSCG Members at June 2017**

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| Anglian Water  British Mountaineering Council  Broads Authority  Cadw  Canal and River Trust  Chatsworth House Trust  Coillte  Commissioners of Irish Lights  Department for Communities, State Care Heritage Branch, Historic Environment Division, NI  Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Ireland  Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Ireland, The National Parks & Wildlife Service  Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs, Ireland  Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture, Isle of Man  Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water  English Heritage  Environment Agency  Forestry Commission, England  Forestry Commission, Scotland  Historic Houses Association  Historic Environment Scotland  Inland Fisheries Ireland | The Land Trust  The Landmark Trust  Manx National Heritage  Mountaineering Ireland  The National Trust  The National Trust for Scotland  Natural England  Natural Resources Wales  Nene Park Trust  Office of Public Works, Ireland  Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland  Peak District National Park Authority  Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority  RNLI  The Royal Parks  Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents  Royal Society for the Protection of Birds  Scottish Canals  Severn Trent Water  South West Lakes Trust  Sport Ireland, National Trials Office  State Claims Agency, Ireland  Waterways Ireland  The Woodland Trust  Yorkshire Water  Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust |