GREATER SHANTALLOW AREA PARTNERSHIP
VOLUNTEER POLICY

1. The GSAP values the involvement of volunteers in our work and recognises volunteers as a core part of our team, with a distinctive but complementary role alongside paid staff.

2. Insofar as GSAP benefits from the skills, experience and enthusiasm of volunteers, we believe that volunteers should be able to gain personal benefits from the experience too. We are committed to managing volunteers in a way that ensures that the needs of both parties are met.

3. GSAP are committed to ensuring equality of access to high quality volunteer opportunities and equality of treatment for our volunteers in all our policies and practices.

4. GSAP ensure that volunteers are involved at every level of the organisation in roles which complement, but never substitute, the work of paid staff and Volunteers will not be used in times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff. They may continue with their regular tasks, but will not be asked to undertake additional duties.

5. All volunteers are provided with a written role description, outlining the purpose, tasks and main requirements of their role. This role is reviewed regularly and at least every 3 months with the volunteer’s supervisor.

6. Volunteers with GSAP are fully protected by the organisation’s public liability and personal accident insurance. However, drivers using their cars in connection with their voluntary work must inform their own insurance company to ensure adequate and continued cover.

7. GSAP reimburses volunteers out of pocket expenses for travel and dependant care when claims are submitted on a standard expenses claim form and accompanied by proof of expenditure.

8. The Management Committee is responsible for the overall management of volunteer involvement, including overseeing the implementation of this policy and dealing with any complaint or grievance relating to volunteers. The volunteer’s designated supervisor / co-ordinator provides support and supervision, identifies training requirements, countersigns expenses claims etc. Staff are provided with training in the management, supervision, support and training of volunteers.

9. GSAP is committed to promoting volunteer opportunities throughout the area and we will endeavour to make recruitment and selection materials available in a format accessible to any individual or group, upon request. Furthermore, we regularly review the make-up of the volunteer team to identify and target any under-represented group(s).
10. GSAP implements a fair, effective and open system in the recruitment and selection of volunteers and treats all information collected in this process confidentially. All potential volunteers must complete registration forms, provide references and attend an interview. Additional measures may be implemented depending on the nature of the volunteer role and police records checks are conducted where appropriate.

11. All volunteers are provided with an agreement that outlines the expectations and responsibilities of both the volunteer and GSAP. This agreement may be reviewed at any time with the consent of the volunteer and his/her supervisor including during the initial review meeting at the end of the trial period.

12. All volunteers are provided with an induction that provides background information on GSAP project work and activities; explains its structures and procedures; describes the volunteer role and the work team and outlines how she will be supported, including practical information on for e.g. expenses. During the induction period volunteers will be provided with written information on relevant legislation, organisational policies and codes of practice and will be given the opportunity to discuss any of the issues with the Management Committee and /or supervisor / co-ordinator.

13. All volunteer placements are subject to a trial period, the length of which depends on the nature and hours of the voluntary work. During this period volunteers are given additional support and a review meeting between the volunteer and his/her supervisor is held at the end of the trial period to ensure that all parties are satisfied with the arrangement.

14. All volunteers are allocated a named member of staff as their supervisor (although the Management Committee can also be contacted in case of an emergency or if the designated supervisor is unavailable). This individual can provide day-to-day help and guidance on any issue related to the voluntary work and is responsible for providing regular support to, and supervision of, the volunteer. The frequency, duration and format of this support and supervision will be agreed between the volunteer and his/her supervisor at the end of the trial period.

15. Volunteers will be encouraged to attend any in-house and external training course that they feel is relevant to their voluntary work, subject to the approval of their supervisors and availability of places.

16. GSAP recognise our duty to protect the wellbeing and interests of all stakeholders and therefore operate a formal complaints procedure in the case of more serious complaints. In the case of particularly serious offences, as specified in the Code of Practice, this process may be bypassed and/or the subject of the complaint asked to leave. Where a criminal offence is suspected, the matter will be handed over to the police.

17. GSAP recognises the core role that volunteers fulfil at every level of the organisation. It endeavours to communicate with volunteers in all appropriate ways and mediums.

18. GSAP also recognises the importance of seeking volunteers’ ideas and opinions at regular intervals and conducts an annual volunteer survey and provides suggestion
boxes at the office. Feedback from volunteers is always welcome and any volunteer may make representations to the monthly meeting of the Management Committee.

19. In order to effectively monitor the work that volunteers do and how they are managed, a personal file is maintained for all volunteers, which includes contact details and other relevant personal information; details of the application and selection process; agreements made; hours worked; records of support and supervision activities; training undertaken and any complaints or grievances made or received. Some of this information and other relevant information may also be recorded in computerised records. All such information is treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and volunteers are entitled to inspect all such information pertaining to their own involvement.