



SUSSEX ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

## **Health and Safety policy**

### **Statement of intent**

The policy of Sussex Ornithological Society (SOS) is to provide, maintain and promote a safe and healthy environment for all our members, volunteers and associates. This policy relates to the Society's formal activities and to SOS members and anyone directly affected by our activities, such as visiting speakers and members of the public at our events.

As SOS are not employers, it is not a legal requirement to have this policy, but we have a duty of care to members and others to ensure that our operations are as safe as reasonable.

### **Responsibility**

Overall and final responsibility for Health and Safety at all events, conservation working parties and activities organised by SOS lies with Council. This responsibility is delegated to a named Leader for each event or activity. This Leader is responsible for ensuring that this policy is upheld.

For SOS Council meetings the responsible person is the Chair of SOS.

For other events the responsible person is the Walk Leader or Public Engagement Event Convenor or the Chair of the meeting or talk.

### **Scope**

All SOS events and activities must be supported by a relevant Risk Assessment. This policy covers formal events publicised in the SOS Annual Calendar and other events sponsored by the Society. It does not relate to informal activities that may be organized by individuals or groups of members.

Continued overleaf....

## Procedures for events hosted by SOS

Activity type	Requirements	Who	Practice Guidance
Outdoor events/walks organized by SOS	<p>A Risk Assessment (RA) tool (example below) will be maintained and regularly updated covering planned outdoor events. For each event the tool will be tailored to reflect identified potential health and safety risks and consequences. The RA assesses whether any planned activity could result in someone being harmed or injured and how serious that harm or injury could be. Appropriate mitigations are identified to minimise the identified risks and possible consequences.</p> <p>This comprehensive approach will include assessing risk as it relates to aspects of the event such as venue, volunteers, attendees, terrain, physical hazards, and the weather. This is not an exhaustive list.</p> <p>For all outdoor events, leaders must be provided with a copy of the Risk Assessment tool. At the beginning of the event or walk Leaders must provide participants with a verbal safety briefing based on the risk assessment.</p> <p>For outdoor events the risk assessment will be made available on the SOS website with a reminder that all participants have a duty of care to inform themselves of the suitability of a walk for their abilities and health.</p> <p>This ensures that all participants can familiarise themselves with the risks associated with an event, the mitigations in place and whether the activity is suitable for their participation.</p>	Walk Leader	The simple template provided is designed to be a quick and simple tool to be used pragmatically by walk leaders in a light touch way, not to make this task over onerous, but ensuring that the key risks are identified and mitigations covered.
Conservation working parties and site management	<p>A generic RA for conservation site management, plus a specific RA for the use of chainsaws, will be maintained and regularly updated. The RAs assess whether any planned activity could result in harm or injury to those involved and identifies appropriate mitigations that must be in place to minimise identified risks.</p> <p>The working party / site management Leader is responsible for ensuring that participants are aware of any risk mitigation measures.</p>	<b>Conservation working party Leader</b>	RA to be reviewed annually by SOS Council in association with Conservation working party Leaders / relevant site manager.

## Procedures for events hosted by SOS - continued

Activity type	Requirements	Who	Practice Guidance
Indoor Events	<p>For indoor events (typically scheduled SOS talks, conferences and meetings, open to members and the general public) a RA is usually supplied by the venue provider and can be adopted. But it is essential that the organiser of the meeting has scrutinised this document for its adequacy and higher standards should be put in place if necessary.</p> <p>Based on that RA, a safety briefing will be presented verbally at the start of the meeting. Typical items will include the nature of fire alarms, the locations of fire exits, evacuation processes and smoking restrictions.</p> <p>For Council meetings, a general Risk Assessment will be completed and reviewed annually by the chair.</p>	<p><b>AGM:</b> SOS Secretary</p> <p><b>SOS Conference and President's Evening</b> Event Organiser</p> <p><b>Council and other meetings</b> Meeting's Chair</p>	<p>Look at site's RA and amend as necessary to make it pertinent to the SOS gathering if needed.</p>

## **Procedures for events hosted by another organisation**

When SOS participate in an event hosted by another organisation, the Council delegates authority to the Chair of SOS to review the Risk Assessment requirements for that event. The Chair may choose to involve Council in this review.

If the host organisation has completed a Risk Assessment that includes SOS participation, then as a minimum SOS will comply with the host organisation's health and safety requirements. SOS may choose to follow higher additional requirements if deemed necessary by the SOS Council risk assessment process.

## **Other matters**

Safeguarding: a separate stand-alone policy is in place that covers the arrangements for children and adults at risk, in accordance with the legislation and guidance applicable in England.

SOS has Public Liability Insurance (Zurich Insurance) with specific cover for site activities.

## **Practice guidance notes and definitions:**

For outdoor walks and events, a pragmatic approach to risk assessments is taken. Risk assessments are based on knowledge of the route to be walked or the location of a public engagement event.

Normally Risk Assessments should be verified and updated by walking the route or visiting the venue etc. Over time, for popular walks and public engagement venues SOS will establish and maintain a library of risk assessments supported by 'field experience'.

Walk Leaders will also provide feedback on completed walks and this may lead to risk assessments being modified. This is consistent with risk assessments being 'live' documents.

SOS organises a wide range of outdoor events. These include walks that are in our formal and communicated walks programme and outdoor public engagement events usually targeted at non-members.

For site management work where specialist equipment such as chain saws are used, SOS ensures that all personnel involved hold appropriate and up to date qualifications in the operation of these tools, have relevant PPE and do not work alone.

## **Frequency of Review**

This policy must be reviewed annually.

Date approved by Council: 31 October 2023

Version 1.0



Clare Buckle – Chair of Council



Alan Swetman – Secretary

This policy has been created using a template provided by TCV Adur and Worthing and web-based advice from Zurich Insurance.



## RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

Assessor's name:

Location:

Brief Description:

Suggested clothing:

Hazard	Who might be harmed	Evaluation of risk	Risk mitigation measures	Comments
Bad weather	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low	e.g. Cancel/curtail walk	e.g. Monitor weather forecast
Lightning	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		
Snow and ice	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		
Darkness/cloud/fog	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		
Hot weather	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		
Uneven surfaces	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		
Muddy conditions	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		
Standing water/flooding	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		
Slippery surfaces	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		
Stiles/gates	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		
Barbed wire/fences	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		
Biting invertebrates	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		
Snakes	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		
Farm/other animals	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		
Cycles	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		
Cars/other vehicles	All/some participants or N/A	High/Medium Low		