

The Middleton Railway Trust Ltd  
Volunteers Handbook



Issued by the Council of  
The Middleton Railway Trust Ltd  
March 2019



Also, there are various working instructions that cover other aspects of the Railway's operation, and these are available on the members' section of the website.

For the new volunteer the do's and don'ts and other aspects of being part of the Railway can seem very daunting at first. What follows are a few points that will keep you safe on the Railway until you become more acquainted with our ways of working. Most of them are based on common sense, BUT never be afraid to ask if you are unsure. You must keep yourself and others safe.



- If you don't know how to use something or perform a task (however simple) ask someone who does and don't just press on.
- Don't try to lift or move anything that you think might be too heavy for you. Get someone else to help. Moving and Handling training will be given.
- Always let other people know what you are doing and where you can be found if you are working alone, however simple the task.
- Never, ever, run. Always walk. Tripping and stumbling are all too common.
- Don't interfere with any vehicle, or attempt to do any work on it, unless you are explicitly asked to do so.
- Always look before you cross the railway track and be aware of things that are going on around you so that you do not walk into danger by mistake. It is so easy to do and you rarely get a second chance!
- Don't walk along the railway track unless your duty requires it. Especially, DO NOT take a short cut from the workshops across the tracks to the station; use the recognised paths. Do not walk in the 'four foot' (the space between the rails) but walk to the side of the line, the 'cess'. Walking on sleepers can be particularly dangerous as they are often slippery, especially when frosty.



- Always step across rails, rather than on them. In particular, don't put your foot on any point blade or on any point rodding, as it may be moved and trap you.



- If you see a train moving towards you, move to a place of safety and then acknowledge any warning whistle by raising **ONE** hand above your head. React to moving trains as soon as you are aware of them. Don't wait until they get closer on the principle that you have plenty of time. You may know your intentions but others don't. They can only react to your actions.
- Never walk between two vehicles spaced less than twelve feet (four metres) apart. Even if they are as much as fifty feet (fifteen metres) apart, you must check before doing so to make sure that they are stationary, and that they are not likely to be moved. Remember, railway vehicles don't always make a noise when moving!
- Don't 'play' or otherwise interfere with equipment that you are not using.

- Be tidy. Don't leave things where they can be a hazard. When you have finished a task, put all the equipment you got out back where you found it.



- Be aware of limited clearances around the site.

## DRINK AND DRUGS

The Rule Book states that you must not drink alcohol whilst on the Railway. More importantly, the law states that you must not work on the Railway whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The same levels of intoxication apply as when driving a car. This also applies to prescription drugs if they affect you in any way.



All of this applies whether you are driving a locomotive, helping out in the shop or doing any other job. When you sign the attendance book you are also signing a legal document to say that you are fit for work and are not under the influence of alcohol or drugs.



## SIGNING IN

Under the Transport and Works Act 1992, whenever you come down to work on the Railway, you must sign in in the book provided. The main reason for this is that it is your statement that you are fit to work, not feeling unwell, and not under the influence of drink or drugs. It also provides information for insurance purposes. It is equally important that you sign out again when you leave, so we know who may still be in the building if an emergency situation should arise.



## SMOKING

It is against the Law to smoke in any building or vehicle at the Railway. The Railway has a **No Smoking Policy**, but volunteers who do smoke may do so outside, away from the platform, out of sight of children and away from other volunteers who may object. This includes electronic cigarettes and similar devices.



**NO SMOKING**

## FIRST AID

The Railway has a number of trained First Aid Volunteers and First Aid points; please ask if you require treatment. If you would like to volunteer to become a trained First Aid person please make this known to a member of the Railway's Council.



## I.C.E.

In Case of Emergency – this is a service the Railway encourages. You can obtain an envelope and form from the ticket office. The form you complete will give details of any medication you are taking and your medical history, your GP and contact numbers for friends and family. The form is then sealed inside the envelope by you and your name and emergency contact number written on the front. This is then kept locked in the Engine House office. In the event of you having to receive emergency treatment from a doctor or paramedic the envelope can be given to them to save valuable time. The telephone number on the front of the envelope enables us to contact your chosen person.



IN CASE  
OF  
EMERGENCY

## SECURITY

Security is in place throughout the site including CCTV cameras and intruder alarms. The CCTV images are strictly controlled and are confidential to the railway. The ticket office and shop have a panic alarm which when activated will ring in the workshop to summon help.



Do not bring valuables to the railway including cash. If you do have to bring something then use a locking locker. People do wander in uninvited and some may not resist temptation.



## DRESS CODE

It may seem obvious, but you must dress appropriately for whatever you are doing! The Railway does not generally supply suitable clothing and the onus is entirely on you to provide suitable attire.

For the majority of volunteers who opt for manual work a pair of overalls is preferable and sensible. The most suitable for general work are boiler suits of a cotton based material - nylon or other similar materials are least preferred as they melt easily and, in so



doing, can stick to you and cause nasty burns. Being a steam railway, there are an awful lot of hot things!

Overalls should be cleaned regularly. Just how often must depend on how frequently you wear them and what jobs you have been doing, but once a month is a good guide for most volunteers working only at weekends. Dirty overalls are a health hazard and can be dangerous as they become flammable due to oil contamination. The sleeve cuffs can soon get oily and cause dermatitis around the wrists. Please be aware that the use of 'fabric softener' can reduce the fire retardant properties of cotton garments and should not be used. (A washing machine is available at the Railway, should you not wish to use your domestic machine.)

Footwear is perhaps more important than overalls and you should always wear stout shoes or boots with steel toe protectors when doing manual work. Ankle boots with internal steel toecaps are the best. Trainers are definitely out!



A good pair of gloves to protect your hands is also a must and is usually provided by the Railway for different jobs. The Railway also supplies safety helmets, goggles and ear defenders for use when they are required, although you can if you wish obtain your own personal ones.

If you aspire to footplate duties on a regular basis you should endeavour to obtain suitable jacket and trousers in the traditional blue material. Footplate crews are encouraged to look smart with clean overalls, shirt and tie or neckerchief. Traditionally, footplate men wore grease top hats and these do provide good protection from dust and grease for the head.

Shop staff and Guards are very much in the public eye and it is important that they present a clean, smart appearance. Guards, especially, should endeavour to project an air of authority and, to this end, the wearing of the traditional 'railway type' uniform is very much encouraged. Wearing a 'GUARD' badge will help the public to identify who you are. Because many of our volunteers perform multiple roles it is sometimes a difficult balancing act trying to present this tidy appearance when, half an hour earlier, you have been busy oiling up coach axle boxes or emptying dustbins, but it is something you should endeavour to do. A dustcoat can work wonders in such circumstances.



## AROUND THE SITE



The site is only open when work is planned to take place, such as when trains are due to be running. At other times it is kept locked. There are a number of key holders but handing out keys to the main gates is not undertaken lightly. These keys are only issued by senior officers of the railway, appointed by the Trust Council, and these officers have to be satisfied that there is a good reason for you to need to be on the site when it may be locked before releasing these keys.

**Keys shall NOT be copied or lent to other volunteers.**

Much of the work carried out by volunteers involves being around and about the track, whether it is doing track work, operating trains or simply walking about the site. Speeds on the Railway are relatively slow and complacency can easily set in. **Be aware at all times.** In particular, be aware that a railway vehicle can roll silently at a walking pace, but is heavy enough that it will still have enough momentum to kill you if you get in its way. Much of the day to day activity is focused on the workshop building. It is here that the tools and equipment are kept and people tend to congregate when they first arrive on site. Even if you don't work in here, you will probably pass through it regularly. The building is divided into two parts, with the entrance lobby between them. These two parts are usually referred to simply as the old shed and the new shed. The old shed is to the left of the entrance lobby, and the new shed is to the right. There is a locker room in the old shed, which is used mainly for hand-washing, and a larger mess area upstairs in the new shed. Please help us to keep these facilities clean and tidy!

Because of the very nature of the workshop, it has the potential to be a dangerous place. It will not be a dangerous place if the rules are obeyed and common sense prevails. Even if you are just passing through, watch out for tripping hazards such as trailing cables, pipes, or parts of locomotives that may be on the floor. Be particularly aware of welding as the ultra-violet light emitted from arc welding can very quickly cause painful eye damage. Never, ever, watch somebody welding without wearing the correct eye shield. Watch out for people using grinders or oxyacetylene cutting gear. They may be unaware of your presence and, although they will be wearing goggles, you may not be. Do not stand near people who are using machines - they need room to work.





## THE SHOP

Helping in the shop is a significant task that often appeals to those who do not wish to get their hands dirty or feel unable to contribute to engineering work for some other reason. Virtually all the Railway's income comes through the shop, and it is thus of paramount importance to the success and future of the Railway. Because it is so important, we need to be security conscious at all times, and you are asked not to go behind the counter unless you are actually on duty there. There is a locked cabinet for staff to put their personal belongings in for safety.

Shop staff are encouraged to enter their names on the roster which is displayed behind the counter. All duty turns in the shop, like train crew, need to be pre-booked on the roster.

Shop duties must be covered by at least two people when the shop is open. Duties in the shop cover the selling of tickets and the sale of souvenirs and refreshments. Less pleasant, but nonetheless essential, are tasks like the routine emptying of bins, cleaning the toilets, and mopping the floor after the day's visitors have gone. The aim is always to leave the premises in the condition in which you would wish to find them!



Shop staff should always look smart and well presented as they are generally the public's first encounter when arriving and it is important that a good and efficient impression is given. The public often ask questions, some of which are simple to answer, others, not so. If you do not know the answer, try to find someone who can help. If you can't find anybody, please ask the visitor to leave details of their enquiry, together with contact details, and advise them one of our volunteers will respond as soon as possible.

A volunteers' badge should be worn by all shop/ticket office staff.

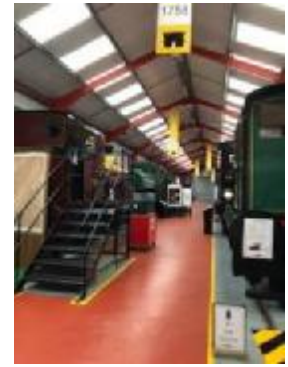
There is always a Duty Manager present when the Engine House is open for our regular running and also school visits, meetings, and any other bookings of our facilities.

**For further information please contact the Commercial Manager**

**[info@middletonrailway.org.uk](mailto:info@middletonrailway.org.uk)**

## THE DISPLAY HALL

This part of the Railway is free to enter for the general public. It houses some of our collection of locomotives and also artefacts relating to the history of the Middleton Railway. Not all the items in here are the property of the Railway so extra vigilance is required to make sure visitors do not do anything that would harm our exhibits or indeed harm themselves.



This area has a variety of functions and is often re-arranged to accommodate Model Railway Exhibitions and other gatherings such as SteamPunk. A lot of volunteer input is needed in this area including cleaning and moving items around. Volunteers should always take care of museum exhibits.

**For further information please contact the Display Hall Manager**  
**[info@middletonrailway.org.uk](mailto:info@middletonrailway.org.uk)**

## ENGINEERING WORK

When no work is taking place the workshop is kept locked. There are several key holders but handing out sets of keys is not undertaken lightly. Workshop keys are only issued on the authority of the Trust Council and, as with site keys, they have to be satisfied that there is good reason before releasing sets of keys. **Keys shall NOT be copied or lent to other volunteers.**

The workshop is relatively small and there is very little space for personal lockers, of which there are a few. If you wish to have a locker you should enquire as to their availability.

Engineering work to be done, whether in the workshop or outside it, is organised by the senior engineers, (a mechanical engineer, an electrical engineer and a civil engineer). Others act as deputies for them, or as workshop supervisors.

Most jobs will be allocated, but if in doubt ask one of these engineers or supervisors before starting a specific job, in case there are special precautions that need to be observed whilst carrying it out. Never climb on or off a locomotive or vehicle whilst it is in motion or get underneath a locomotive that is not in the workshop. If you then have to leave a job unfinished, leave it

in a safe state, chalk a note on it if required e.g. 'HOT'. If a job goes 'pear shaped' tell other people what is wrong and what needs doing. There is no shame in this, nobody is perfect, but by leaving something unsafe you may cause injury to others. If necessary leave concise, written instructions on the equipment where they can be easily seen.

When you are working with rough or sharp materials, always wear appropriate protective clothing such as gloves. Similarly, when you are using sanders or similar power tools, always wear appropriate protective equipment such as goggles, and ear defenders if the tools are noisy.



There are many machine tools available to use but do not attempt to use them until your competency has been examined and you have been approved. Only authorised persons may operate any machine tool. For those that have no experience with machine tools but would like to learn, training can be given.

Electricity is widely used in the workshop and, if not treated with respect, it can easily kill. All electrical apparatus should be kept in good condition and the leads of any portable equipment should be examined and found to be free from damage before you use it. Keep electrical leads clear of tracks. If you have to take leads across tracks, put them under the rails. In the event of somebody receiving an electric shock you should isolate the supply immediately before attempting to touch them. The type of plugs and sockets differ from the normal domestic 13amp 3pin plug and socket. These are industrial sockets and leads and are colour coded for different voltages. DO NOT try to connect different colours. ALWAYS connect to the same colour.



**For further information please contact the Mechanical Engineer**

**[engineer@middletonrailway.org.uk](mailto:engineer@middletonrailway.org.uk)**

## ON THE TRACK

There is a lot of terminology associated with the track, which may bewilder newcomers. Here are a few words to get you started! Generally, the track and its formation (the ground it lies on) is called the permanent way. The area between the rails is known as the four foot. Where there are two tracks together the space between them is the six foot; the edges of the tracks are called the cess. The lines on which passenger trains operate are known as running lines.

What are commonly called “points” or ‘switches’ are more correctly known as turnouts and if you are asked to take part in shunting trains then you may be asked to operate these - generally referred to as ‘setting the road’. The turnouts, except those controlling movements off the running line, are operated by two-way levers. These are always pulled in the same direction, whichever way you are ‘setting the road’. They have a toggle mechanism which may not always ‘catch’, so be wary about putting your full weight into pulling the lever; you may end up flat on your back! If you are entrusted with ‘setting the road’, always ensure that the switch blade has made full contact with the stock rail and that there is no gap between them. A wheel may split even the smallest of gaps and cause a derailment.



Turnouts on the running line are controlled from ground frames which are kept locked by a special key, called an Annetts key. The Annetts key also forms the single line token, of which there is only one, and the driver must be in possession of this to be permitted to have his engine on the running line. While in possession of the token, the driver knows that nobody can alter the position of the turnouts on the running line without the driver’s knowledge.



**For further information please contact the Civil Engineer**  
**[engineer@middletonrailway.org.uk](mailto:engineer@middletonrailway.org.uk)**

## TRACK WORK

Track work (or Permanent Way work) generally takes place during the winter months but may also occur at other times during the year. To join a track gang is a good introduction to working on the Railway as, being relatively unskilled work, the new volunteer can easily join in and make a really positive contribution. It is also teamwork and you can easily feel part of the team. It is generally manual work and, if you are not used to it, expect to have some aching muscles at the end of the day! A few do's and don'ts will help in ensuring that you avoid accidents.



### Do:

- Wear gloves and sturdy boots.
- Keep your fingers and feet clear of supported equipment.
- Be very wary of crowbars if you are using them. They can kill.
- Be aware of people working around you and what they are doing.
- Expect the unexpected.
- 

### Don't:

- Lift something that is too heavy. Get assistance.
- Put your full weight into pulling something unless you have a foot behind you, to prevent you from falling over should the load move suddenly.
- Get into a position where you could be trapped. Personal positioning is very important. A load can easily slip and fall, even when it seems secure.
- Never rely on a jack to continue to support something. The jack is used to lift something which should then be supported on wooden blocks of a suitable size.

**For further information please contact the Civil Engineer**

**[engineer@middletonrailway.org.uk](mailto:engineer@middletonrailway.org.uk)**

## CRANES

The Railway has rail mounted cranes and craning work is often happening. If not carefully carried out, craning can be very dangerous. Craning work is entrusted to volunteers with considerable experience and you should not get involved with this unless you are specifically requested.



As a general rule, stand well clear whilst craning is taking place. Beware of swinging loads. Remember, too, that it is possible for a load to slip out of the sling that is being used to lift it. In such circumstances, the load will slide sideways and travel quite a distance. Personal positioning is again of paramount importance. You should be nowhere near the craning operations unless authorised.

For further information please contact the Mechanical Engineer  
[engineer@middletonrailway.org.uk](mailto:engineer@middletonrailway.org.uk)

## SHUNTING

Shunting is often taking place. You should always stand well clear of any shunting movement unless you are actually involved in the shunt. Never attempt to get involved with the shunting unless you have been asked to do so, or you are qualified to do so, even if you feel that you would be helping. If you are helping, under the supervision of a qualified shunter, never attempt to go between vehicles to couple or uncouple them without being certain that the driver knows that you are doing so and tell him when you are clear.

Unless it is to stop an engine in an emergency, never attempt to give hand signals until you have been passed as competent to do so.

(The stop signal, by the way, is both hands raised high above the head). Only one person should give signals to the driver, and that should be the person in charge of the shunting.

If you are asked to help with the shunting, it will often be to put the loco handbrakes on and off. All loco handbrakes turn



clockwise to apply the brakes, anticlockwise to take them off. They should be screwed tightly on and screwed fully off; no half measures.

**For further information please contact the Traffic Manager**  
**[trafficmanager@middletonrailway.co.uk](mailto:trafficmanager@middletonrailway.co.uk)**

## FOOTPLATE DUTIES

Many of our volunteers have aspirations to work on the footplate and this is generally encouraged. After you have become reasonably familiar with the Railway and have passed your shunter's test, you will be invited to put your name down on the roster via the website. The roster system will only allow you to roster yourself for duties you are passed out for as being competent to undertake. Great emphasis is placed on attendance at the times and on the dates that you have put down for, no matter how unimportant the duty may appear. Your reliability will be taken into account when you are considered for promotion, as unreliable volunteers are of little use to us in train operation. If you find that you cannot cover a duty that you have put your name down for, try and arrange cover and advise the Roster Clerk as soon as possible. If you are unable to find someone else to cover the duty advise the Roster Clerk immediately.

New footplate volunteers start off, as has always been tradition, as cleaners. A cleaner's prime task is, as the name implies, to clean the engine. In this way you gain a basic familiarity with the locomotive and its various parts. When cleaning a locomotive always be wary of putting yourself in positions of potential danger whilst performing your work. Be very careful when climbing on engines as they may be extremely slippery. Always hold onto something secure with at least one hand. When an engine is in steam do not grab hold of pipes, etc. as they can be very hot and burn badly. Do not lean over the safety valves, whistle or chimney.

As a cleaner, if you carry out your task satisfactorily, you will generally be invited to travel as a third man on the engine. It must be understood, however, that this is a privilege and not a right. When on the engine you must do exactly as the driver and fireman tell you. Do not tamper with the controls or otherwise lark about.



The ladder of promotion is a learning and maturing process. When you are considered sufficiently trained, responsible and knowledgeable you may take a fireman's exam as the next step on the promotion ladder, followed by a driver's exam, before becoming a driver.



The process of promotion from cleaner to engine driver used to be known as the longest apprenticeship in the world, but you are unlikely to take as long as was once the case. However, you should not expect to have sufficient expertise to become passed out as a driver for several years.



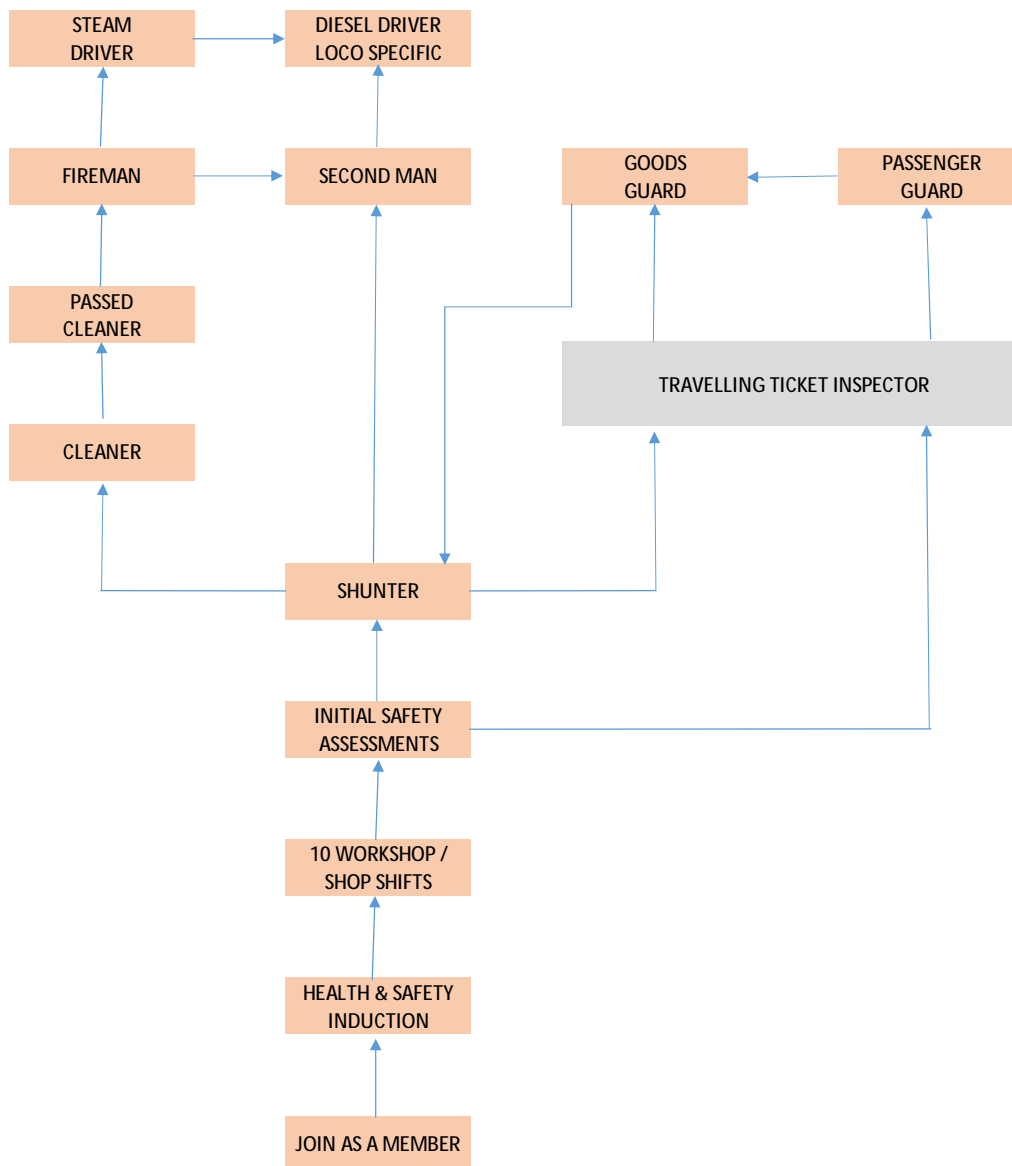
Many people are unlikely to have been brought up in a steam environment and will have a lot to learn. The erstwhile British Transport Commission used to publish a book entitled "Handbook for Steam Locomotive Enginememen". This was reprinted by Ian Allan some years ago and although now out of print again, copies can often be found online. You should endeavour to obtain a copy as it will greatly help you gain knowledge of the operation of steam locomotives.

**For further information please contact the Traffic Manager**  
**[trafficmanager@middletonrailway.org.uk](mailto:trafficmanager@middletonrailway.org.uk)**

**For further information regarding rostering duties please contact**  
**[roster@middletonrailway.org.uk](mailto:roster@middletonrailway.org.uk)**



## POSSIBLE PROGRESSION LADDER FOR TRAIN CREWS



Because some of the positions in the chart above are 'Safety Critical' positions, age and medical restrictions do apply.

For those wanting to become diesel drivers, a similar but perhaps less rigorous, route is followed.

**For further information please contact the Traffic Manager**  
**[trafficmanager@middletonrailway.org.uk](mailto:trafficmanager@middletonrailway.org.uk)**

## VOLUNTEER CHARTER

Our basic purpose as the Middleton Railway Trust (MRT from now on) is to keep alive for future generations the world's oldest working railway and the spirit of industrial railways, by preserving, restoring, operating, displaying and interpreting historic locomotives and rolling stock and related artefacts of the Middleton Railway. By volunteering at the Railway you can assist us in achieving this purpose, and to help you understand what this volunteering would involve the following "volunteer charter" explains what each of us should expect from the other.

As a volunteer, you can expect us (the MRT) to:

- give you the opportunity to undertake a variety of activities, to suit your interests;
- provide you with appropriate introductions to these activities, and then the training, supervision and monitoring for them;
- ensure the safety of the working environment for these activities, and for your safety whilst undertaking them;
- provide you with appropriate general items of personal protective equipment;
- provide adequate insurance cover\* for you while undertaking these activities;
- provide you with appropriate assistance if any emergency should arise;
- treat you with reasonable courtesy and respect at all times.

**\*This is Public Liability Insurance NOT personal accident insurance.**

Since we are all volunteers, we need you to contribute to meeting these same expectations on the part of other volunteers, and so in turn we expect you as a volunteer to:

- contribute reliably and to the best of your ability to any activity which you undertake;
- ensure that you inform somebody as soon as possible if you find that you are unable to undertake any activity to which you had committed yourself;
- be willing to learn, and accept the introductions to training, supervision and monitoring for any activities that you undertake;
- dress appropriately for any work that you will undertake;
- ensure that you undertake all work safely;
- ensure that you maintain a safe working environment for all others in all work that you undertake;
- follow carefully any policies, procedures or instructions which relate to any activity that you undertake;
- give appropriate assistance to others if any emergency should arise;
- treat other volunteers and members of the public with courtesy and respect at all times.

Of course, being human we do not always live up to all of these expectations, but we must all try to do so.

## YOUNG VOLUNTEERS CHARTER

The MRT welcomes young people to become active volunteers, providing support, guidance and training in return. To ensure that all young people are safe and appropriately treated a few basic rules must be followed:

- A young volunteer may only attend at an allocated time when there is suitable supervision for them.
- The times of work are 10am until 4pm; a young volunteer must arrange transport around these times.
- A young volunteer must follow the instructions of any other volunteer working with them, especially in regard to safety.
- A young volunteer should pay close attention to all tasks, methods and skills being shown to them in order to progress as a volunteer at MRT.
- Every day that you attend as a volunteer you will be expected to get your log book completed by your mentor or an appropriate Volunteer Liaison Officer (VLO). A list of these officers is on display in the new shed mess room and the shop kitchen.
- After the probationary period of three months your progress will be reviewed and a decision will be made about your suitability to continue volunteering – **completion of your logbook** is vital for that conversation.
- Please remember we have members of the public on site and your conduct, appearance and language should be appropriate at all times. Our volunteers are friendly, helpful and knowledgeable, please respect them in return.
- You must wear your name badge at all times.

## SAFEGUARDING

A separate leaflet regarding Safeguarding has been produced by the Middleton Railway. This will be given to you with your Volunteers Handbook.

We have Volunteer Liaison Officers and Safeguarding Officers at the Railway to help you and they can be contacted either in person at the railway or by email:

[volunteering@middletonrailway.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@middletonrailway.org.uk)

A full list of our Volunteer Liaison Officers and Safeguarding Officers is displayed in the new shed mess room and the shop kitchen.

## TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

A number of training opportunities are available to volunteers including Mutual Improvement Classes (MICs). These are advertised in our quarterly magazine 'Old Run' and also emailed to all working volunteers in Turnout on a monthly basis.

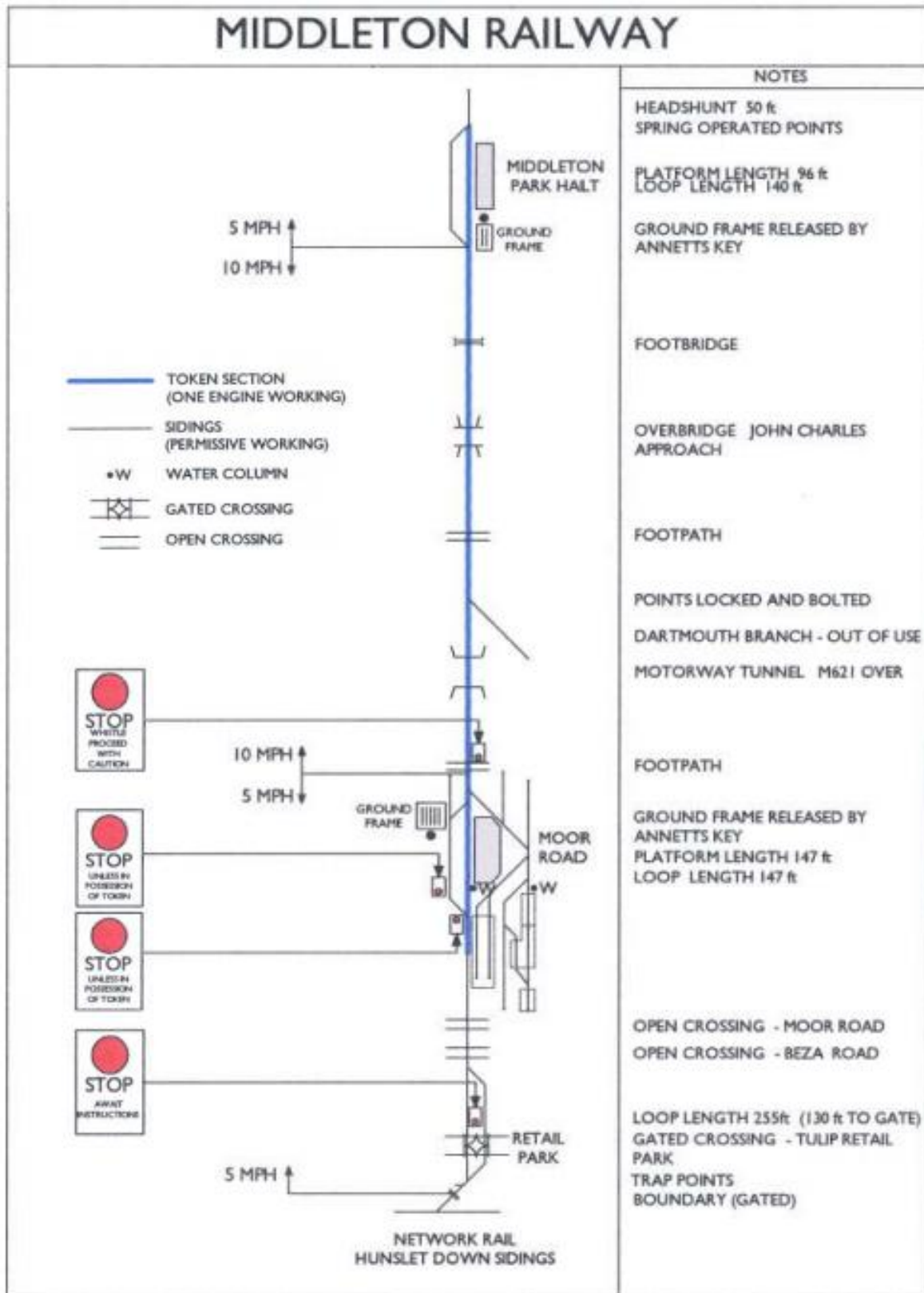
*...AND FINALLY*

Remember that, although you are a volunteer, so is everybody else and you should adopt a professional approach in all that you do!

Enjoy yourself but, above all, stay safe and be sensible.



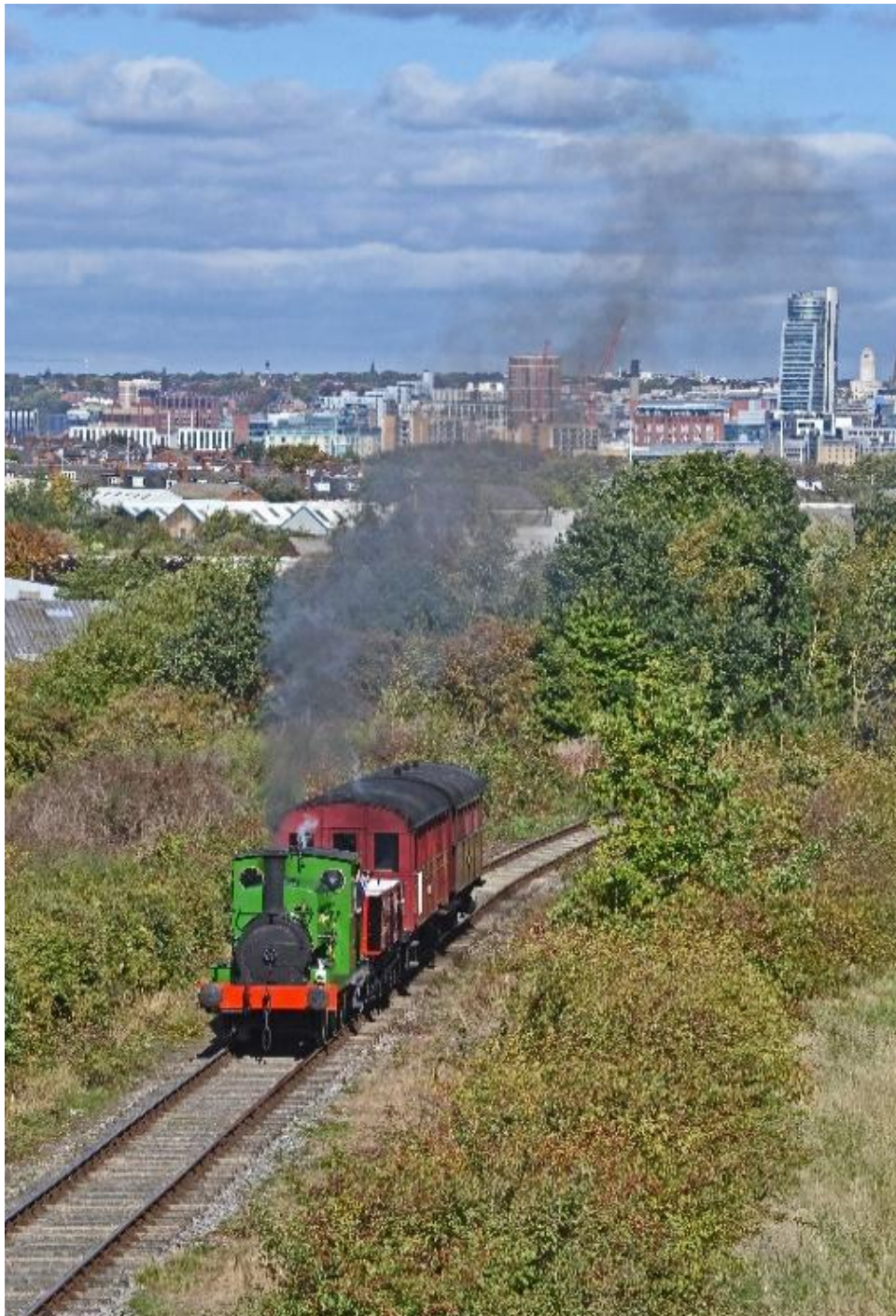
# MAP OF SITE







A series of 18 horizontal dotted lines for writing.



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