

NarVOS HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY & PROCEDURES

Introduction

NarVOS contributes to the wellbeing of the community through encouraging an appreciation of local birdlife through relevant informative and entertaining events in the company of like-minded people and through outdoor field events aimed at the direct observation of birdlife without disturbance. In this NarVOS recognises the right of every individual to stay safe. To this end NarVOS organises outdoor and indoor events throughout the year and recognises that in doing so these events will inevitably carry an element of risk. As a club NarVOS has a duty of care for and is committed to the health and safety of its members, volunteers and the general public who attend any of our activities and events and as such we will endeavour to mitigate such risks by identifying them and taking proactive measures to nullify them as far as possible.

Policy Statement

While NarVOS will take all reasonably practical steps to ensure the safety of all participants through risk assessment and mitigation, all participants also have a responsibility to their own safety and that of others by adhering to the instructions of the event leader and behaving in a safe and responsible manner at all times. It must be noted that participation in NarVOS activities is subject to the terms and conditions of the NarVOS Constitution, Policies and Procedures and Risk Assessments for Indoor and External Events.

Code of Conduct

Safeguarding: NarVOS may come into contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults through their activities. The type of contact with children will be through NarVOS Committee members, and other Club volunteers and/or members assisting in delivering or participating in activities throughout the year. However, contact should not be made with any child or vulnerable adult unless in the presence of their parent, guardian or carer who is the adult responsible for their safety and wellbeing at all times. NarVOS does not work directly with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults.

Health and Safety: The Iceni Partnership have issued both a generic risk assessment and a fire risk assessment applicable to both the Assembly Rooms and Community Centre to which NarVOS endeavour to adhere strictly. Actions advised by these are carried out by NarVOS with advisory notices being explained to members at the commencement of every meeting. The scope of these is restricted only to these premises. For external events NarVOS conducts risk analysis of the location and expectation of likely hazards and issues relevant advice. All participants are expected to adhere to advice given and prepare accordingly.

Social Media: NarVOS sponsors a website, Facebook and WhatsApp, however, communication via other media is included if the communication can be interpreted as being on behalf of NarVOS. NarVOS recognises that the inappropriate use of these media may be the source of harm to an individual and to the reputation of the society. NarVOS both advises appropriate behaviours for use of these media and is prepared to act against individuals who seek to misuse these wilfully or otherwise.

Committee Powers: (Code of Conduct). The Committee is empowered to act, which may include issuing a verbal warning, a written warning, temporary suspension from events, or revocation of membership in line with the NarVOS Constitution.

Definitions

Safeguarding is about embedding practices throughout NarVOS to ensure the protection of children and/or vulnerable adults wherever possible.

A child is a person under the age of 18 (as defined in the United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child).

A vulnerable adult is a person aged 18 and over who has care or support needs, requires assistance in the conduct of their own affairs, may be unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm, abuse and or from being exploited and may include a person who is elderly and frail, and/or has a physical, sensory, or learning disability.

Abuse and harm can take a number of forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, financial, bullying and neglect.

Definition of a volunteer, as per the Police Act 1997 (criminal records) Regulations 2002, is: any person engaged in an activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit some third party and not a close relative. A NarVOS volunteer role is entirely voluntary, unpaid, and primarily aimed at providing a service to a 3rd party.

For the purposes of insurance, a member of the society is classed as a member of the general public.

Guidelines governing behaviour in public and through social media

NarVOS operates a zero-tolerance policy regarding abusive or offensive behaviour in all forms and at all times. It is advised that all in attendance at public meetings should be courteous to others even if opinion is divided. The Committee is empowered to act against individuals if appropriate.

General rules for social media use:

- Do not post or forward a link to any abusive, discriminatory, harassing, derogatory, defamatory, or inappropriate content and do not post anything that our members or non-members would find offensive, insulting, obscene and/or discriminatory.
- Never disclose private or confidential information. If unsure whether the information you wish to share falls within one of these categories, you should discuss this with the Chairman or Membership Secretary in the first instance, or another member of the Committee.
- You are personally responsible for content you publish on behalf of NarVOS – be aware that it will be in the public domain for many years. Be honest and open but be mindful of the impact your contribution might make to people's perceptions of NarVOS and do not post material in breach of copyright or other intellectual property rights.
- When using social media for personal use, use a disclaimer, for example: 'the views expressed are my own and don't reflect the views of NarVOS'. Be aware though that even if you make it clear that your views on such topics do not represent those of NarVOS, your comments could still damage our reputation.
- You should avoid social media communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage our reputation, even indirectly.
- If someone gets in touch through any of the NarVOS social media channels and asks you to comment on, or on behalf of NarVOS forward it to the committee for review.

- Additional guidelines for use of WhatsApp are available at reference “NarVOS WhatsApp Group Administration Guidelines”

Recognising and responding to concerns

NarVOS is unable to take responsibility for the supervision of either minors or vulnerable adults, for which an appropriate parent, guardian or carer must be present at all times whenever a NarVOS meeting or event is taking place. In the event of a Safeguarding or Health and Safety concern arising, NarVOS expect adherence to procedures for handling this and ensuring appropriate action is taken. If a child or vulnerable adult is involved then the first course of action is to inform the responsible adult supervising and to inform a Committee Member, who should seek to record the event. The process steps are as follows:

Immediate safety: Ensure the child/vulnerable adult is safe from immediate harm.

Listen and reassure: Listen carefully without asking leading questions. Reassure them they are right to speak up, but do not promise confidentiality.

Record: Write down exactly what was said or seen, using the person’s own words. Note the date, time, location, and any witnesses. Sign and date the record.

Report: Immediately report the concern to the NarVOS event leader or to a Committee Member, who should then decide on the need to report to external authorities.

The Icen Partnership have available a designated Safeguarding Co-ordinator, who can be contacted if an independent advisor is required and who should be contacted by the reporting officer if an incident has occurred on any Icen premises. Similarly, a Committee Member should be informed of hazards arising in the indoor venues, the hazard recorded and informed to the Icen Partnership. For external events, any participant who identifies a hazard must inform the group leader immediately. External assistance may be required if an injury has occurred. Contact details should be carried by the leader.

Keeping records

Records will be kept by the Membership Secretary of any Safeguarding and/or Health and Safety concerns that arise as advised to the Committee. Details will be recorded and maintained in accordance with the NarVOS Data Protection Policy, which defines our responsibilities for confidentiality, consent, and information sharing. For external events, in the first instance a record of the hazard or incident should be recorded on the Incident Report Form where available and signed and dated by the event leader. Information to include date, time, location, people involved, nature of incident/illness, actions taken, and witnesses.

Responsibility for implementation of the policy

NarVOS Committee has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy.

NarVOS Committee members and relevant volunteers are required to have training with regard to Health and Safety including Safeguarding but limited to only their awareness of the NarVOS Health and Safety Policy. Their roles and responsibilities in terms of this are limited only to the reporting of an incident to an appropriate authority. Training will take the form of a peer-led induction session for Committee members (at a Committee meeting) on initial adoption of the Policy and then annually. The NarVOS Health and Safety Policy and Procedures are to be made available to members via the NarVOS website.

Policy links and review

The NarVOS Health and Safety Policy is informed by and aligns with the principles of current UK safeguarding and health and safety legislation.

The NarVOS Health and Safety Policy is strictly in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy issued by the Icen Partnership for the premises in which NarVOS hold meetings. Additional information is contained in this document concerning definitions of scope and contact numbers for local safeguarding agencies. The Icen Partnership also nominate a Safeguarding Co-ordinator who can be contacted in regard to any issue related to their premises.

The NarVOS Health and Safety Policy will be reviewed on an on-going basis by the NarVOS Committee for any amendments due to changes in legislation or other events, as well as every 12 months from the date of its commencement.

Contact details

Norfolk's Emergency Duty Team on 0344 800 8020. Children's Advice and Duty Service on their direct line: 0344 800 8021. (In an emergency call 999)

Police: CEOP www.ceop.police.uk

Local Police non-emergency: 101

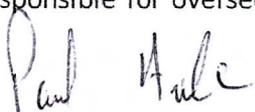
NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000

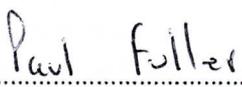
Icen Partnership (Safeguarding Co-ordinator – Assembly Rooms, Community Centre): 01760 722800

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually.

This policy document was last reviewed and approved by the NarVOS Committee on: 07/01/2026.

Person responsible for overseeing review: Paul Fuller, NarVOS Chairman

Signed:  Chairman

Name:  Date: 