

Report on	Visitor Safety Group Membership
Date of Meeting	Thursday 16th September 2021
Reporting Officer	Head of Parks Nigel Hill
Contact Officer	A H Reid

Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To seek Members approval to become a member of the Visitor Safety Group (VSG). The VSG provide a focal point of knowledge, expertise and proven good practice for managing visitor safety.
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>The VSG aim is to both protect our historic buildings and landscapes, and encourage public access, within levels of risk acceptable to society.</p> <p>Group members follow a consistent approach to visitor safety management and are committed to applying our guiding principles in their work.</p> <p>The group, set up in 1997, was originally called the Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group (VSCG). It includes organisations that own and manage land and property, with day-to-day experience of visitor management, as well as national policymakers and specialist safety advisers. They work together in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and share good practice • promote the application of consistent management principles • develop a model approach to risk assessment that incorporates valuing benefits • encourage consistency in the choice and application of risk control measures • seek a balanced and pragmatic approach to dealing with the many and varied factors that affect visitor safety management • produce sound interpretation of legislative requirements and court decisions. <p>The guiding principles and practical risk management techniques have been developed and implemented by VSG members over many years. They were first published in 2003.</p>

	<p>They have proved their worth in practice and have been recognised by enforcing authorities and courts as the basis for sensible risk management.</p> <p>The guiding principles have been adapted for use by the National Water Safety Forum and the National Tree Safety Group. Managing Visitor Safety in the Countryside' will help anyone who invites or allows members of the public into:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • moors, mountains and open countryside • parks and gardens • footpaths and waymarked trails • forests, country parks and nature reserves • canals and rivers • coastlines • reservoirs and lakes • urban green space • visitor centres.
3.0	Main Report
3.1	Future planning and the delivery of current Parks and Outdoor Recreation strategies will seek advisory guidance, knowledge and experience from the VSG group forums, workshops and publications, which are invaluable assets.
3.2	<p>The annual cost of membership to the VSG is £1,000.00. This will provide Council with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a focal point of knowledge, expertise and proven good practice for managing visitor safety. - information available through seminars, site visits, newsletters, e-zines and publications. - Have access to sharing of problems and solutions through a powerful networking group. With a broad spread of members, it is likely to find someone else who has dealt with the issues you might encounter. <p>By working as part of this group, the VSG can offer a consistent approach, which helps visitors, and present a coherent view to government and its agencies, like the Health and Safety Executive.</p> <p>The VSG can support members to find expert witnesses and provide precedents, if they face claims or litigation.</p> <p>The VSG is a group run for and by its members to meet their needs.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications
	<p>Financial:</p> <p>Annual Membership £1,000.00 which can be funded from existing Parks revenue budget allocations.</p>

	Human: A valuable learning resource for staff linked to research information and industry data associated to visitor and facility management.
	Risk Management: The knowledge gained will assist with operational and strategic Parks and Outdoor Recreation Risk Management.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: In conjunction with Council Policy and procedures
	Rural Needs Implications: In conjunction with Council Policy and procedures
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	Members are asked to approve the annual membership to the VSG for one year at a cost of £1,000.00.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
	N/A