



# Volunteer Policy

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## 1 Introduction

1.1. We recognise the valuable contribution that volunteers can make to Wimborne Minster Town Council (Council).

1.2. Volunteers can bring a richness of skills and experience and can provide a bridge to community involvement that it is difficult for paid staff or councillors to achieve.

1.3. We recognise that volunteers are motivated because it is their choice to volunteer and give of their time freely; in return, we want to provide volunteers with opportunities that will help them to develop new skills and experiences.

1.4. This policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and the support and procedures in place for volunteers.

## 2. Status of volunteers

2.1. A volunteer is not an employee and will not have a contract of employment.

2.2. We will discuss the role with the volunteer and there will be an expectation that the volunteer will meet the role's requirements.

2.3. We will discuss with volunteers the amount of time that they are willing to commit to volunteering, the frequency of their availability and how this will fit in with our needs.

2.4. Volunteers are encouraged to let us know as soon as possible if they are not available so that a substitute can be found, or different arrangements can be made.

2.5. Volunteers wishing to withdraw from their voluntary role are asked to give their named contact as much notice as possible.

## 3. Council's obligations to volunteers

3.1. We recognise that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to service users and to paid staff.

3.2. We will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into our strategic objectives and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to our work.

3.3. We will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.

3.4. Council staff and councillors will work positively with volunteers.

3.5. We recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their volunteer work effectively, dependent on the volunteer role.

3.6. We will cover the costs of involving volunteers with relevant presentation of receipts to the project co-ordinator (see below).

3.7. We recognise the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities and we will appoint a co-ordinator to supervise and liaise with all

volunteers.

3.8. We will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible and are treated equally, regardless of their gender, race, age, faith/religion, disability or sexual orientation.

#### 4. Recruitment

4.1. We will endeavour to recruit volunteers through a range of methods including word of mouth, advertising, talking to other agencies and contacting local volunteering organisations.

4.2. We will also endeavour to help any volunteer overcome barriers that may make it difficult for them to volunteer with the Council.

4.3. Council's Equal Opportunities, Inclusion and Diversity Policy will be adhered to in relation to the recruitment and support of volunteers.

4.4. All volunteers will be asked to sign a Volunteer Agreement (appendix 1), which requires them to abide by the policies and procedures of Council. It sets out what the volunteer and what the project can expect from each other.

4.5. DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks, and references may be required for some volunteer roles, especially where regular contact with children and/or vulnerable adults is necessary. This requirement would be discussed with relevant volunteers. A volunteer will be informed if we intend to apply for DBS checks. DBS checks are not a reflection on the individual, but a legal requirement in certain circumstances.

#### 5. Health and safety

5.1. Council has responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers and volunteers must follow Council's Health and Safety policies and procedures.

5.2. Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who might be affected by their actions and should not act outside their authorised area of work.

5.3 A risk assessment will be undertaken by Council (in line with Council's Health and Safety Policy and current Health and Safety at Work legislation) to identify and manage risks. If an area of activity presents a significant risk, consideration must be given to reducing or stopping the activity. Copies of risk assessments can be provided to volunteers when requested.

5.4. Volunteers must report all accidents to the Council.

5.5. Council will provide volunteers with an induction appropriate to the work to be undertaken and appropriate guidance on any health and safety issues that arise.

5.6. Appropriate clothing must be worn by volunteers; no clothing should compromise the safe working environment.

#### 6. Safeguarding

6.1. Council takes its role in the safeguarding of volunteers, staff and other members of the public seriously and have a Safeguarding Policy which must be followed - it outlines the responsibility of Council in relation to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

## 7. Insurance

7.1. Council will ensure that volunteers are covered for insurance purposes (Public Liability and Employers' Liability cover). Reporting and approval in respect of work which is of an ongoing nature is not necessary on each occasion.

7.2. The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the volunteering agreement.

7.3 Volunteers that use tools must only carry out minor and pre-agreed work involving the use of non-powered tools, lawnmowers/grass cutting equipment and strimmer's, with appropriate clothing and personal protection equipment worn (e.g. safety goggles in case of using strimmer's). Tree work can only be undertaken at ground level and other tree work must be carried out a qualified tree surgeon with their own public liability cover. Volunteers in buildings can only carry out work on equipment with the prior agreement of the Town Clerk and in relation to the theatre under the supervision and direction of a Council member of staff or councillor.

7.4 If volunteers use their own tools, Council cannot be held liable for any injury caused by them through the use of faulty equipment/tools.

## 8. Induction and training

8.1. All volunteers will receive an induction to familiarise them with the work the volunteer will be involved with.

8.2. Training will be offered where it helps to fulfil the role.

## 9. Support and supervision

9.1. All volunteers will have a named person (Council employee or councillor) as their main contact.

9.2 Volunteers must agree with the named person the work they intend to undertake before commencing such work.

9.2. Volunteers will be given regular feedback and provided with an opportunity to discuss how things are going and air any problems with their named person.

9.3. Meetings between volunteers and the named person will be developed to encourage peer support and share experiences.

9.4 The named person will report project outcomes and volunteer feedback to Council. Volunteers are also welcome to attend Council meetings (excluding Exempt Business).

## 10. Expenses

10.1. Volunteers will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred on behalf of Council if approved in advance by the Town Clerk and with the relevant presentation of receipts – see 3.6.

## 11. Grievance

11.1. The relationship between Council and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and it does not imply any contract.

11.2. Council aims to maintain an acceptable provision of services and facilities and it is important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service.

11.3. If, in their role volunteering for us, a volunteer does not meet our standards, their case will be dealt with in the same manner as paid staff.

11.4. If a volunteer has any concerns regarding our treatment of them and this has been fully discussed with the Town Clerk, and they are still not satisfied, any complaint may be taken to Council.

## **Appendix 1 - Volunteer Agreement**

This volunteer agreement describes the arrangement between Wimborne Minster Town Council (Council) and you. We appreciate your time and acknowledge that you are using it to volunteer with us and we will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience enjoyable and rewarding

**Purpose of role:** [insert project name and what role volunteers are playing in the project]

**Possible tasks:** [insert all tasks that will be undertaken by the volunteer]

### **Part 1: What can you expect from Council:**

Council will provide you with:

- Contact information (name and contact number) for a volunteer co-ordinator who will supervise, explain and discuss your volunteering work.
- Encourage and support you in your volunteer role.
- Agreed training identified and related to your responsibilities as a volunteer with this project and relevant to Council policies (see below).
- Insurance cover for Council authorised volunteer work.
- Reimbursement of any specific expenses incurred which has been previously approved by Council, with receipts.

### **Part 2: Volunteer expectations:**

The project leader will discuss with you the amount of time that you are willing to commit to volunteering, the frequency of your availability and how this will fit in with the project's needs. If, for any reason, you will not be attending a previously agreed volunteering session please let then named contact know via telephone or email. If we have no work for you, we will let you know as soon as possible. We expect you:

- To perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability
- To follow Council's policies & procedures and standards, including Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding Policy, and Diversity, Inclusion and Equality Policy (copies of which can be provided to you if requested). If you have any queries or concerns regarding your role with Council and these policies, please discuss them with the Town Clerk.
- To maintain the confidential and personal information of the organisation and of its users as appropriate. When you are volunteering you may come across information about the project, its staff, and its customers. You must respect this

information and not disclose this information except where required to do so by law.

- Either you or Council can terminate this agreement with or without notice at any time. This agreement is binding in honour only. It is not intended by the parties to be a legally binding agreement nor is it intended to create an employment relationship between us now or at any time in the future. It may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party.

Please complete the information below in order that we may keep your details on file. In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations – by signing the agreement to volunteer you are also agreeing that we will hold your details for the sole purposes of administering Council’s volunteers:

**Personal details:**

First name: ..... Surname: .....

Current address: .....

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Date of birth: .....

Email address: .....

Tel no: ..... Mobile no: .....

Emergency contact information (name and contact number):

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**Signed, printed name and date - Volunteer:**

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**Signed, printed name and dated - Volunteer Co-ordinator:**

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[end]