



# WINTERTON-ON-SEA PARISH COUNCIL

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## VOLUNTEER POLICY

### **Vision for Volunteering**

The Council has a vision of thriving communities where volunteers play an active role in shaping local service delivery, promoting community cohesion and positively influencing decision making. The Council will work with local communities and partners to develop a diverse range of suitable volunteering activities that are relevant for all people.

### **Why Volunteer?**

People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons, for example:

- To socialise and get to know the local community
- To put something back into society and make a difference
- To regain or learn new skills
- As a route to employment
- To help the environment

### **Volunteering with the Parish Council**

The Council regards volunteering as an activity where someone gives time freely to help an organisation or an individual who they are not related to. In other words, volunteers are not paid staff and do not have a legally binding contractual relationship with the Council. Volunteers bring a range of expertise to particular tasks or projects. Their expertise should complement and add value to the skills of staff. In many instances, volunteers can develop a range of support to service users that cannot be provided solely by paid staff, and the Council welcomes volunteers in all service areas. The Council is committed to engaging with volunteers in a way that complements and expands service delivery.

### **Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers**

Volunteer role descriptions, application forms, policies and other documents will be available on the Council website, or via partner volunteer organisations. This policy applies to volunteers undertaking work / duties on behalf of, but not directly employed by the Parish Council. Volunteers must inform the Parish Council of the work they intend to undertake before commencement. Written approval must be received prior to the undertaking of any work / activities on Parish Council property. The Parish Council must issue clear guidance in respect of the scope of a volunteer's activity. Volunteers wishing to provide the Parish Council with an update on their activities can do so during Public Participation.

## **Training**

Volunteers must be adequately trained to be able to carry out the role. The exact nature of the training will depend on the role. It is not possible to detail what constitutes 'adequacy' as requirements will vary according to:

- the job or activity;
- the existing competency of volunteers;
- the circumstances of the work (e.g., the degree of supervision);
- the tools and / or equipment being used.

The training standard, however, must be sufficient to ensure the Health and Safety of volunteers and any people who might be affected by the work as far as reasonably practicable. Responsibility for providing training rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided by the Parish Council to undertake the work / duty.

Volunteers, if working for only a few hours to help at an event or similar, must still be informed about the task and its purpose, health and safety and supervision arrangements. Responsibility for this rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided by the Parish Council to undertake the work / duty.

## **Equality**

Volunteers expect to be treated equally, regardless of their gender, race, age, faith/religion, disability or sexual orientation. Volunteers must be accommodated from all walks of life.

## **Induction**

Volunteers must undergo an induction appropriate for the task(s) being undertaken. This must include health and safety, what to do if there is a problem and an introduction to other relevant individuals. Responsibility for induction rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided by the Parish Council to undertake the work / duty.

## **Risk Assessment**

A risk assessment must be undertaken in order to identify risks that might be faced and how they will be managed. If an area of activity presents a significant risk, consideration must be given to reducing or stopping the activity which gives rise to the risk. The Parish Council, through the office of its Clerk, or other persons as advised, must receive a copy of such risk assessment records. Responsibility for undertaking the risk assessment rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided by the Parish Council to undertake the work / duty. Risk assessments and their associated paperwork must comply with current Health and Safety at Work legislation.

## **Insurance**

On condition that volunteers are working at the sole request of and under the sole control of the Parish Council, they will be covered under the Parish Council's Public Liability and Employers' Liability cover provided that their name has been supplied to the Parish Council and recorded on its list of persons involved with activities of the Council / list of

persons volunteering at a specific event. Volunteers must sign the Volunteer Indemnity Form on the first day of induction. This provides them with basic accident cover and also indemnifies the volunteer against any claim made against them or the Council whilst carrying out their activity. Where volunteers drive as part of their voluntary activity, and use their own vehicle, they must ensure they possess the relevant class of insurance. Further guidance should be sought from the Volunteer's own insurance company.

The use of chain saws and similar equipment is specifically excluded from Parish Council insurance and employees and volunteers should not undertake such activities. When driving on Council business volunteers should ensure they have appropriate motor insurance.

### **Health and Safety**

All work undertaken by volunteers shall have regard to Health and Safety legislation. Volunteers may only carry out less hazardous work. Appropriate levels of personal protective equipment (suitable footwear, gloves, safety goggles, high visibility vests etc.) must be worn when undertaking such activities. Prior to work commencing a visual inspection must be carried out to ensure that there are no obvious hazards such as litter, glass or stones.

Responsibility for undertaking the inspection rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided by the Parish Council to undertake the work. Remedial action must be taken immediately and these inspections are to be recorded. Jewellery, necklaces, watches and the like must not be worn where they compromise the safe working environment. Appropriate footwear should be worn. Long hair should be tied up if it is deemed that it could compromise health and safety requirements.

### **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

Volunteers will be made aware of the Council's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies. If their role requires, volunteers must receive appropriate training, for example Information Governance training.

### **Safeguarding**

The Parish Council will ensure that volunteers are aware of and have received appropriate training in the Council's Safeguarding Policy on Children and Adults.

### **Expenses**

All expenses require prior approval. Receipts must be produced and a claim form submitted.

### **Complaints**

Volunteers are entitled to use the Council's Complaints Procedure. Complaints by volunteers should be raised in the first instance with the Clerk which will be dealt with informally where possible. Where appropriate, the complaint will be investigated fully by the Clerk and Councillor or two Councillors. If a complaint is brought against a volunteer, this will be investigated by the Clerk and a Councillor. Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter as quickly and informally as possible. If the issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved, then the Parish Council reserves the right to inform the volunteer that their services are no longer required and with immediate effect.

### **Moving On**

The Council welcomes feedback and encourages volunteers to offer ideas for improvements. Volunteers who choose to stop volunteering at any time will also be invited to provide feedback before they move on. Volunteers who are leaving the organisation and who have made a regular commitment to it should be offered an exit interview, reference and/or statement of their achievements to ensure that their services are properly and formally appreciated.

### **Termination of Activity**

Where appropriate, the role and placement of the volunteers may be terminated by the Clerk or Council at one week's notice, or immediately where inappropriate behaviour has occurred. In all cases, the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken.

*Adopted July 2021*

*Next Review May 2023*