



WSPC Volunteering Policy 2024

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| Approved by: | West Swindon PC | Date: September 2001 |
| Last reviewed: | September 2001 | Adopted: 20th may 2024 |
| Next review due: | May 2025 | |

VOLUNTEERING POLICY

1. Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in West Swindon Parish Council. It is of relevance to all within the Council, including volunteers, staff, Councillors, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility. This policy is endorsed by West Swindon Parish Council and will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of West Swindon Parish Council and its volunteers.

2. Commitment

West Swindon Parish Council recognises that volunteers contribute in many ways, their contribution is unique, and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. West Swindon Parish Council values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

West Swindon Parish Council recognises its responsibility to support volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is meaningful and appreciated.

3. Definition

Volunteers are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

4. Statement of Values and Principles

Volunteering is an important activity that is supported and encouraged by West Swindon Parish Council and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements, but does not replace, the role of paid staff. Volunteer activity should always be in addition to activities undertaken by the workforce.

The volunteer role is an informal relationship with the Parish Council based on trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged, both of what the Council expects of volunteers, and what volunteers expect of the Council.

5. Volunteer Co-ordination

All volunteers will have a nominated contact in the Parish Office when they are working alone. If they are engaged with a local volunteer group, a member of the group will take responsibility for the organisation and supervision of its participants.

Volunteers should be mindful that volunteer activity should support and enhance the delivery of Parish Council services. Where activities are creating additional demands on the Parish Council, volunteers and volunteer groups should liaise with the Parish Office in advance so

that any additional resources required to support this activity or event can be agreed and allocated. From time to time, Councillors will organise community activities and events. In this instance, Councillors present will act as the lead organiser and will be responsible for ensuring participants are informed and supported in line with the Risk Assessment and Safe System of Working.

6. Recruitment & Selection

The Parish Council will offer information to interested residents on what volunteering opportunities are available. This will include local groups and events.

The majority of volunteering within the Parish is self organised and self managed.

If a local group anticipates working with vulnerable groups (children and/or adults) they will be advised to take steps to ensure that relevant checks and procedures carried out including asking a volunteer to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check. More detailed information will be made available specific to legislative requirements and to the particular volunteer role.

Volunteers have a clear and concise task description set out in both a Risk Assessment and a Safe System of Working relevant to the task they are completing.

New volunteers will be asked to confirm they have read and understood both documents and will follow those instructions when volunteering. Group-led activities are expected to follow the same procedure and it will be for the Group organiser to ensure that all participants are aware of the information. Groups should also keep a register of participants that includes a name and date for future reference. Registers should be passed to the Parish Council office after the event activity for insurance purposes.

7. Training & Development

All volunteers should work within the remit and scope of the risk assessment and safe system of working shared and agreed at the start of their participation. No volunteer should undertake activity outside of that remit.

It will be the responsibility of the designated group leader to ensure that volunteers are equipped with the information and skills to carry out their tasks.

If volunteers identify a training or information need, the Parish Council will do its best to share the relevant information or skills development.

8. Support, Supervision and Recognition

Volunteers should be supported to manage their volunteering in a way that is safe and reasonable and within their abilities. will have access to regular support..

Activities will be developed in order to give formal recognition of the contribution of the Council's volunteers (e.g. articles in newsletters, volunteer of the month, volunteer gatherings, thank you letters etc).

The Parish Council operates a Clean and Green fund which allocates funds into a

neighbourhood pot when local volunteer hours and sessions are reported. Residents and groups can request expenditure from the pot through the Parish Office. Regular updates on the Clean and Green Fund are received by the Council's Planning, Leisure and Environment Committee.

9. Insurance

The Council's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them. Volunteers are only covered when participating in their volunteer role and working within the guidance of the Risk Assessment and Safe System of Working.

The Parish Council's insurers have a limit on the numbers of people participating in an activity (currently 50). All events and sessions should be notified to the Parish Council in advance to ensure that any queries arising can be considered and resolved. The Council does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage or cover travel or transport to the volunteering activity. The Parish Council's insurance does not cover

- any activity taking place outside of the Parish boundary
- activity that is not on public open space or within Parish Council premises e.g. waterways, roads, car parks
- work that is not within the remit and responsibility of the Parish Council
- work or activity that has not observed the Risk Assessment and Safe System of Working relevant to the activity

10. Confidentiality

The Council will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the Council relating to the volunteer. Any personal information will be handled in accordance with the Parish Council's Data Protection policy.

11. Settling Queries and Disputes

The Council aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The Council seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and agreeable solution.

12. Promoting Volunteering

The Parish Council will promote the opportunity to volunteer through social media and the website. It will share information and images from activities and events to highlight the positive contribution and impact of local volunteers.

Where appropriate, the Parish Council may provide signage, posters or banners highlighting the work of volunteers within the Parish.