



FLITWICK TOWN COUNCIL

VOLUNTEERS' POLICY

Flitwick Town Council is the tier of government closest to our community.

Many of our activities involve working in partnership with community and voluntary groups, also volunteers work directly with us for a number of reasons:

- To increase our contact with the local community we serve
- To help ensure our services reflect the needs of our community
- To increase skills, experience, perspectives, and diversity in the workplace and
- To temporarily increase our skills and capacity.

Flitwick Town Council recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers can make to the work it does in the community and how vital volunteers can be for projects and events to be successful.

The Council also recognises that volunteers are motivated, because it is their choice to volunteer and give their time freely. In return, the Council wishes to provide volunteers with opportunities that will help them to develop new skills and experiences.

The aim of this policy is to ensure volunteers are safe and appreciated when volunteering with the Council. It is designed to provide a framework for how the Council will manage volunteers and what volunteers can expect from the Council; it sets out the principles and practice by which the Council will involve volunteers.

This policy applies to all volunteers undertaking work or duties on behalf of the Council in a voluntary capacity. It does not apply to those who are directly employed or contracted by the Council.

Officers may identify the opportunity for volunteering with the Council, but all volunteering opportunities must be approved by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Personnel Committee.

We will ensure that volunteers feel part of the Town Council structure by enabling them to contribute to our ongoing development. We will have systems in place to involve volunteers in staff information sessions, and regular supervision.

Flitwick Town Council does not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff. We expect that staff at all levels will work positively with any volunteers and where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.

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

Volunteers may come through community groups, direct from the community or be students from a local educational institute.

Guidelines:

The following guidelines deal with practical aspects of volunteering with the Town Council. More information can be found on our website and in copies of policies mentioned here.

Recruitment:

The Council may recruit volunteers using a range of methods, including word of mouth, advertising, talking with other organisations or engaging volunteers through another organisation.

It may also directly approach people who have previously volunteered with the Council. The Council will endeavor to help a volunteer overcome barriers which may make it difficult for them to volunteer.

Whilst not applicable for the majority of volunteering opportunities with the Council, for certain voluntary roles prospective volunteers may be interviewed to assess their suitability.

Volunteer Agreement and Task Descriptions

Each volunteer will have an agreement establishing what Flitwick Town Council undertakes to provide for them. Also, volunteers will be asked to agree to a written outline of the specific work they will be undertaking. Neither of these documents is intended to form a contract. Flitwick Town Council has no intention of creating a contract with any volunteers. Each volunteer will also be given an information pack about the Council.

Expenses

Volunteers working a minimum of five hours per day will be able to claim expenses for lunch this would be paid against a receipt and no more than £5.00. Any travel expenses carried out on behalf of the Town Council would also be met.

With prior agreement of the Town Clerk, reasonable personal expenses may be reimbursed on a case-by-case basis to enable volunteers to overcome financial barriers to volunteering.

Induction and training

All volunteers will receive an induction into Flitwick Town Council and their own area of work. Training will be provided as appropriate. Where possible, volunteers will be entitled to receive additional training on the same basis as paid staff.

Support

All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact. They will be provided with regular supervision to feed back on progress, discuss future development and air any problems.

The Volunteer's Voice

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning Flitwick Town Council and its work to staff, Councillors and to their main point of contact.

The Council welcomes volunteers proactively providing feedback and making suggestions for how things may be done differently in future. The Council wishes to identify and resolve any problems at the earliest possible stage and volunteers are encouraged to raise any grievance or complaint with their named person or the Town Clerk.

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by Flitwick Town Council's insurance policy whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any work on our behalf.

Health and Safety

The Council has responsibility for the health and safety of its volunteers and will undertake a risk assessment of all volunteering activities. Volunteers must always follow the Council's health and safety policies and procedures; they have a duty of care to themselves and others who might be affected by their actions.

Volunteers may also need to disclose any medical conditions which affect their ability to undertake certain activities. The Council will inform volunteers of any specific health and safety measures which must be taken during a voluntary activity and volunteers must wear any PPE as required

Volunteers are covered by Flitwick Town Council's Health and Safety Policy, a copy of which will be available to each volunteer. Volunteers will be made aware of the Council's Child and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedures and where necessary DBS checks, and training will be undertaken.

Equal Opportunities

Flitwick Town Council operates an Equality Policy in respect of both paid staff and volunteers. A copy will be provided. Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of and commitment to our Equality Policy.

Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults

If the volunteer is to work in a regulated activity within the Council, the Council will carry out enhanced DBS checks and ensure the volunteer is not on the Barred list with the Disclosure and Barring Service. The Council will ensure there is a proportionate balance between civil liberties and safeguarding vulnerable groups, including children.

Problem Solving

We aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage, either by or about volunteers.

Confidentiality

There is an absolute requirement both during and after volunteering with the Council to maintain confidentiality and not pass on information to any individual or third-party organisation unless required to do so by law.

Right to Leave

The Council recognises that volunteers give their time freely and are under no obligation to give notice. However, it is greatly appreciated if volunteers can provide advance notice if they are either unable to attend their volunteer role or wish to end their volunteering arrangement with the Council.

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