



Flitwick Town Council

Volunteers Policy

1. Purpose

Flitwick Town Council (FTC) recognises volunteers' valuable contribution to its community work and how vital they can be for project and event success.

This policy will guide the Council and Officers in facilitating volunteering opportunities and ensure that volunteers are safe and appreciated by FTC. It is designed to provide a framework for how FTC will manage volunteers and what volunteers can expect from the Council; it sets out the principles and practices by which FTC will involve volunteers.

This policy applies to all volunteers undertaking work or duties on behalf of FTC in a voluntary capacity. It does not apply to the following:

- FTC Paid Officers
- FTC Elected Members
- Contractors

Requirements associated with these individuals are detailed in relevant adopted policies or agreed contracts of the Council, for example, in Standing Orders.

2. Principles

FTC believes that volunteering opportunities should not be exploitive or used to replace paid employment. All Officers are expected to work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, actively seek to involve them.

The personal benefits to individual volunteers are significant, as well as the community benefits. Personal benefits include an increase in skills, experience, perspectives, and diversity in the workplace. These benefits and associated learning can increase individuals' employability and personal satisfaction. FTC benefits from volunteer participation by ensuring service demands reflect the community's needs, temporarily increasing the Council's capacity, and increasing its contact with the local community.

FTC recognises that volunteering opportunities will differ from year to year depending on the prioritised services identified in the Corporate Strategy and the current community needs.

3. Opportunities

Many of FTC's activities involve working in partnership with community and voluntary groups, which generates volunteering opportunities.

Volunteers work directly with our team on two types of opportunities:

i) Regular Volunteering

Opportunities include (but are not limited to):

- Food Collections for Flitwick Community Fridge
- Assisting with the Forget Me Not Group – a support group for those with memory problems or Dementia
- Assisting with Lunch Club – a monthly activity for Over 60's

For regular volunteering opportunities, the following guidelines will be followed:

- Each volunteer will have an agreement establishing what FTC undertakes to provide for them.
- 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).
- Each volunteer will be given an information pack about FTC.
- The service manager will implement inductions in FTC's working methods, and the area of work and relevant training will be given if appropriate. Where possible, volunteers will be entitled to additional training on the same basis as paid Officers.
- The application form will include pronoun preferences for volunteers and a section for declaring any health issues the Council should be aware of that may affect their role.
- For any roles that involve handling sensitive information, it will be at the Town Clerk's discretion whether the Council requires a Non-Disclosure Agreement to be signed.
- Additional provisions for opportunities will be included in the FTC insurance policy if appropriate.

ii) One-off Volunteering Opportunities

One-off voluntary roles will be available as part of FTC's schedule of activities and events. Below is a list of the types of one-off volunteering opportunities available:

- Litter Pick Events
- Tree Planting
- Event Support – examples of tasks include marshaling, collecting entry monies, selling raffle tickets, and so on.

A more informal arrangement than that stated for regular volunteering is necessary for one-off volunteering opportunities. The following guidelines will be followed:

- A conversation or email correspondence will set out the volunteers' and FTC's expectations. Volunteers will be given a task description either verbally or in writing.
- Volunteers to be briefed on any associated risk assessment.

4. Recruitment

FTC may recruit volunteers using various 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. FTC will endeavour to help volunteers overcome barriers that may make volunteering difficult.

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

5. Expenses

Volunteers working a minimum of five hours per day can claim lunch expenses (excluding alcohol). These expenses would be paid against a receipt signed by the Service Manager and for no more than £5.00 in value.

Any travel expenses carried out on behalf of the Town Council will be paid to volunteers at the earliest convenience by FTC after the volunteer has completed a Mileage Claim form signed by the service manager. The rate for this is set at 0.45p per mile from start to end of a direct route. Please refer to the Fridge Volunteer Handbook for the Community Fridge volunteering expenses.

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.

6. Approval

Officers may identify the opportunity to volunteer with the Council, but the Town Clerk must approve all volunteering opportunities in consultation with the HR Committee.

7. Support

All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact as per the service area. They will be provided with regular supervision to give feedback on progress, discuss future development, and air any problems. Any exceptions that do not require regular supervision, e.g. Duke of Edinburgh volunteers, will have their

support requirements reviewed on a case by case basis by the Service Manager for approval by the Town Clerk.

8. The Volunteer's Voice

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views concerning FTC and its work to staff, Councillors, and their main point of contact.

FTC welcomes volunteers who proactively provide feedback and suggest ways to improve in the future. The Council wishes to identify and resolve any problems as soon as possible, and volunteers are encouraged to raise any grievance or complaint with their named person or the Town Clerk.

A copy of the complaints/grievance procedure will be issued to those doing regular volunteering as part of their information pack (see section 3i).

9. Insurance

The FTC insurance policy covers all volunteers while on the premises or engaged in any work on the Council's behalf. The one exception to this rule is for volunteers collecting food for the Community Fridge, where if an accident were to occur while driving, the individual would be covered by their personal car insurance.

10. Health and Safety

The Council is responsible for its volunteers' health and safety 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.

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. Problem-Solving

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

14. Confidentiality

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

15. Right to Leave

The Council recognises that volunteers give their time freely and are not obligated to give notice. However, it would be greatly appreciated if volunteers could provide advance notice if they cannot attend their volunteer role or wish to end their volunteering arrangement with the Council.