



TRAWDEN FOREST
PARISH COUNCIL

Volunteer Policy

Prepared by : Adele Waddington
Trawden Forest Parish Clerk and RFO

Adopted by all Councillors at the meeting on :
Review and re-approval Date : April 2024

Policy Statement

This policy applies to volunteers undertaking work or duties on behalf of but not directly employed by the parish Council.

1. Introduction

Trawden Forest Parish Council recognise that more people want to be involved with the project/s in their local community and are committed to developing volunteering opportunities that will allow this to happen.

2. Our Aims

The Parish Council aims to:

- Encourage people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to volunteer their skills and time;
- Be clear about what role volunteers will play;
- Ensure that volunteers are adequately trained to be able to carry out the role;
- Use examples and principles of best practice in the recruitment and management of volunteers.

3. What is Volunteering?

Volunteering is defined in the Volunteering Compact Code of Good Practice as:

- An activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) closer relatives.
- The commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, and can take many forms. It is freely undertaken and not for financial gain.

The Code also highlights four principles fundamental to volunteering:

- **Choice:** Freedom to volunteer also means freedom not to become involved.
- **Diversity:** Volunteering should be open to all, no matter what their background, race, nationality, religion/faith, ethnic or national origins, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability.
- **Mutual Benefit:** Volunteers offer their time unwaged, but they should benefit in other ways, such as gaining a sense of achievement, having fun, learning new skills etc.
- **Recognition:** Recognition of the value of the contribution of volunteers is fundamental. This includes recognising the contribution to the organisation, the community, the social economy and wider social objectives.

4. Identifying Volunteer Roles

We will produce role descriptions, in liaison with the Lead Councillor/Project Leader/Volunteers, as appropriate to ensure that roles are clearly defined and which skills and knowledge may be required to fulfil them. **(SEE APPENDIX A)**

5. Publicising Volunteering Opportunities

We will use a variety of methods to publicise and promote volunteering opportunities including:

- Posters and leaflets;
- Electronic media;
- Approaches to organisations who already work with people we want to reach e.g. schools, colleges, local clubs/societies;
- Approaches to people who have the professional skills we need;

6. Recruitment and Training

Prospective volunteers will be recruited by the project leader on an ad-hoc basis.

Volunteers may also need to undergo an induction and 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 volunteering role or activity;
- The existing competency of the volunteer;
- The type of role/work involved and the degree of supervision that is required;
- The tools or equipment being used.

The training standard must, however, be sufficient enough to ensure the Health and Safety of volunteers and any people who may be affected by the work, as far as reasonably practicable.

On acceptance of the role, both the project leader and the Volunteer will sign the Volunteer Agreement – setting out what the Council and Volunteer expects and agrees to (**Appendix C**).

There may also be occasions when it is not possible to accept an offer to volunteer. If this is the case, we will inform the individual quickly and try to signpost them to other organisations to help them find an alternative role.

7. Health and Safety, Assessing Risk and Personal Safety

A risk assessment will be undertaken, for all volunteering roles, to identify any risks that might be faced and how they will be managed. This includes an assessment of Health and Safety risks which must comply with current Health and Safety at Work legislation. Generally, these assessments will be undertaken by the project leader in conjunction with the Lead Councillor, as deemed appropriate, by the Council.

A lone working statement will also be agreed with all volunteers at every incidence of lone working. Minimum levels of Personal Protective Equipment (**PPE**) such as: suitable footwear, gloves, high visibility vests etc., must also be worn when undertaking activities, where appropriate. The Council cannot be held liable for any injury caused by the use or misuse of tools or faulty equipment.

Volunteers may only carry out less hazardous work involving non powered hand tools, for example: path maintenance, weeding, tree and bulb planting, beck clearance.

Prior to commencing work, a visual inspection must be carried out of the work area to ensure that there are no obvious hazards e.g. glass or sharp instruments. If hazards are identified these should be recorded and reported to the Council to enable remedial action to be taken, as appropriate.

All accidents should be reported, to the Project Leader/Lead Councillor as soon as possible. First Aid boxes and Incident Record Forms are available from the Project Leader/Lead Councillor and all accidents will be recorded in the Council's Accident Book. In the event of a Serious Accident as defined by the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) the Project Leader will notify the Lead Councillor member, after dealing with any immediate problem.

8. Insurance

The Parish Council will take steps to ensure that Volunteers working at the sole request of and under the sole control of the Council are insured under the Council's Public Liability and Employers' Liability cover.

9. Criminal Records

In the event that the volunteer role involves unsupervised access to children, young people or vulnerable adults the volunteer will be asked to disclose extra information and/or provide a valid Disclosure and Barring Service check.

10. Record Keeping

We will keep the following basic information about volunteers:

- Name and full contact details;
- Emergency contact details;
- Information about any medical conditions or allergies which may be important in connection with the work;

All of the information that you give us is confidential and will not be passed on to third parties.

11. Support and Supervision

The Council believes that good support and supervision is essential for a positive volunteering experience. We also encourage volunteers to tell us how it's going, other things that need doing or if things can be done better. If a volunteer has concerns or the Council receives a complaint about a volunteer the parties may raise concerns using the process as set out in the Volunteer Complaints Procedure. **(Appendix D)**

12. Volunteer Expenses

Out of pocket expenses will not be paid to any volunteer or group without prior permission being granted. Where expenses are agreed by the Clerk, receipts and a claim form should be submitted.

APPENDIX A

VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTION

(Existing content for example purposes only)

Volunteer role description to be completed by the Lead Councillor/Project Leader, to suit the role.

Role title	Say what it is - don't just put 'volunteer'. After-school group leader, sports coach, befriender, treasurer, driver, carer... Do you need to use the word 'volunteer' at all?
Purpose	Why this role/work is important – what difference does it make?
What you will be doing	Describe the main tasks/activities of the role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it involve working on their own, or as part of a team, or assisting someone else...? • What does it involve – e.g. travel, caring, manual work, organising, assisting, leading, teaching, customer service, computers, fundraising, arts, sports...? Indoors or outdoors? • What are the specific tasks? • If the role involves direct work with service-users/customers, give relevant information about their needs.
Skills, experience and qualities needed	Be clear and realistic about the minimum level of skill/experience required to start this role, (e.g. a community transport driver might need a clean driving licence and good people skills). Although it might be tempting to compile a long list of the qualities of your 'ideal' volunteer, try to focus on what's really important to get them started in the role. For example, asking that people have a commitment to your aims and objectives at this stage (when they barely know what you do) could be quite off-putting to someone who's only just heard of your organisation. Commitment will develop if volunteers are valued and treated with respect. If the role is suitable for absolutely anyone, say so. Consider what support you could offer to help people develop once in the role.
When and where	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Times/days needed – what days, what time of day, how often, how much flexibility is there? • Where will the volunteer be based? Is this different from the main organisational address? Will they work from home?
Support offered	Give information about expenses, induction and training, supervision/line management, insurance cover etc.
What you could get out of it	What are the benefits of volunteering with your organisation? E.g. job satisfaction, a supportive environment, training, learning new skills, using existing skills, chance to get out in the fresh air, meet new people, be part of something worthwhile...
Other information	Do volunteers need to be able to commit to a certain level of training? Will they need a DBS check because this role is 'regulated activity'? What is involved in your application/selection process?
What to do if you're interested	Contact details of a named person – give more than one method of contact. Explain the process – what will happen next?

APPENDIX B

Lone Working Statement for Volunteers (& risk assessment to be developed to reflect the individual role(s) identified)

- Avoiding lone working/volunteering wherever possible.
- Identifying risks that may arise from lone working/volunteering. Discussing risks associated with lone working/volunteering and how to reduce/manage them the Project Leader.
- Taking every day precautions to ensure their own safety.
- Setting up a buddy system.
- Complying with any precautionary measures agreed.
- Report lone working/volunteering incidents or near misses to the Project Leader/Lead Councillor.

Trawden Forest Council Volunteer Agreement - (Appendix C)

We appreciate your commitment to us and will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us enjoyable and rewarding. To make sure you have the best possible experience we have created this agreement which sets out our commitment to you and what we hope you can contribute.

TFPC is committed to:

- Ensuring our volunteering experiences align with current safety guidelines.
- Giving you a great experience.
- Being responsive to your requirements.
- Providing you with an induction.
- Providing support throughout your volunteer experience.
- Explaining the standards, we expect and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them.
- Providing adequate tool & equipment safety awareness training and ensure you know what to do to stay safe.
- Providing adequate insurance to cover for volunteers whilst undertaking volunteering approved and authorised by us.
- Ensuring that all volunteers are treated fairly.
- Trying to resolve fairly any issues or difficulties you may have before they become problems. In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issue in accordance with the Volunteer Complaints Procedure.
- Follow up on any feedback or questions you may have.

I agree to volunteer with Trawden Forest Parish Council and I am committed to the following:

- Performing my volunteering role to the best of my ability.
- Following reasonable instructions from my Project Leader.
- Familiarising myself with the purpose and methods of the volunteering project.
- Not working under the influence of alcohol and drugs
- Working safely as advised by the Lead Councillor/Project Leader

I have had the opportunity to read the Volunteer Policy

Please sign below – electronic signature will be fine thanks.

Name: **Signed:**.....
(Volunteer)

Date:

Name: **Signed:**.....
(Project Leader)

Date:

APPENDIX D

TRAWDEN FOREST PARISH COUNCIL - VOLUNTEER COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

For The Volunteer:

If, as a volunteer you have concerns about any aspect of your volunteering experience with Trawden Forest Parish Council, then please follow the procedure below.

Stage 1: Raise the issue with the Lead Councillor

Stage 2: Raise the matter with the Parish Clerk.

Stage 3: If this does not improve matters, or if the complaint is against the Parish Clerk you should request a meeting with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council and put your complaint to them. The person you are complaining about will have the opportunity to respond, and to take steps to improve the situation if necessary.

Stage 4: If, after a reasonable time, there is still reason for complaint, then you should put the complaint in writing to the Council's HR Committee – excluding individual Councillors who were involved in the initial complaint e.g. stage 2. The Panel will investigate the problem and let you know the outcome within a reasonable time of receiving your complaint.

For Trawden Forest Parish Council:

If a complaint is made against a volunteer, then this will be investigated in a fair and transparent way.

Stage 1 – as above will always be an informal discussion, with the Lead Councillor. If the problem continues then the following procedure will be followed.

Stage 2: Raise the matter with the Parish Clerk. They will arrange a formal meeting to discuss the problem, with the Chair or Vice-Chair also in attendance, to give the volunteer the chance to respond. An informal warning may be made and steps agreed to change the volunteer's behaviour.

Stage 3: If there are further grounds for complaint, a formal meeting will be arranged between the Volunteer and the Parish Clerk, with the Chair or Vice-Chair in attendance. A formal warning may be issued, and the volunteer made aware that if the volunteer repeats the behaviour they will be asked to leave.

Stage 4: If the offending behaviour is repeated, the volunteer will be asked to leave.

In the case of serious misconduct (for example: aggression, violence or theft) the volunteer may be suspended immediately while an investigation takes place. The investigation will be carried out by the Council's HR Committee and a decision made within a reasonable time. The Panel will not include any individual Councillor(s) who has already been involved in the initial complaint e.g. stage 2. If the complaint is upheld, the volunteer will be asked to leave.

Volunteers will have the right:

- To be accompanied at meetings at any stage by a friend of their choice;
- To appeal against any decision made. The appeal will be heard by the full Parish Council.

The appeal should be made in writing to the Parish Council and the volunteer will have the opportunity to put their case in person to them. A decision will be made within a reasonable time and will be final.