

# Policy

## Volunteer Policy

This Procedure is a document that sets out Billingham Parish Council's approved and agreed practices. Any deviation must be discussed with the originating author.

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### **THIS IS A CONTROLLED DOCUMENT**

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## 1. DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

<b>Purpose of document:</b>	To provide a framework for recruitment and management of volunteers and to ensure consistency.
<b>Dissemination:</b>	This policy will be disseminated to all staff and council members and be made available on the parish website
<b>Implementation:</b>	This document will be accessible via the parish council website and is applicable to all staff and council members.
<b>Review:</b>	This document will be reviewed in 2024 unless there are significant changes in legislation or practice in which case it will be reviewed earlier.
<b>Documents replaced or superseded by this document:</b>	
<b>This document supports (enter Standards and Legislation:</b>	Equality Act 2010 Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
<b>Key related documents:</b>	Health & Safety Policy PCSD0011 Whistleblowing Policy PCD0014 Communication Policy PCD0020
<b>Financial Implications:</b>	This document has no financial implications for the Billingham Parish Council.
<b>Key word search</b>	Volunteer, volunteers, voluntary, recruitment, selection

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## **3. INTRODUCTION**

a. Billingham Parish Council (hereinafter called 'the Council') recognise the valuable and unique role which voluntary activity plays in assisting members of staff and complementing the services offered by the Parish Council. The Council therefore supports and encourages voluntary activity. Volunteers come from all

walks of life, and represent the diversity of our community, bringing with them a wide range of skills and experience.

b. In order to safeguard the Council all volunteers must be cleared via the same checks as employees before any volunteers are allowed to work on Council premises or undertake Council activities.

#### **4. VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS**

a. 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:

- i. The job or activity.
- ii. The existing competency of volunteers.
- iii. The circumstances of the work (e.g. the degree of supervision).
- iv. The tools and/or equipment being used.

b. 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 Council to undertake the work / duty.

c. 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 Council to undertake the work.

d. 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.

e. 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 the induction rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided by the Council to undertake the work.

#### **5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARISH CLERK OR NOMINATED DEPUTY**

a. The Parish Clerk will hold day to day responsibility for volunteers and will commit to:

- i. Co-ordinate the day to day activity of volunteers and manage issues.

- ii. Ensure that volunteers carry out activities in line with the role description.
- iii. Ensure that volunteers are not asked to take on tasks formally undertaken by employees or to operate in ways that would result in a decrease in paid employment.
- iv. Ensure staff within the department are clear about the role of volunteers and promote good relationships with volunteers.
- v. Commit resources (eg staff time) to support volunteers.

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAFF OPERATING ALONGSIDE VOLUNTEERS**

- a. The Council employees and councilors commit to:
  - i. Recognise the potential benefit of volunteer involvement and respect the role volunteers provide.
  - ii. Report any concern/issues regarding volunteers to the parish clerk.
  - iii. Explain specified duties of a volunteer.
  - iv. Provide a local induction, including fire, safety and accident/incident reporting.
  - v. Provide help, advice and support to the volunteer

## **7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS**

- a. All volunteers must agree to abide by current policies, role descriptions, and abide by this Volunteer Policy.
- b. Each volunteer is accountable to the Parish Clerk who will oversee their volunteering activity. It is a requirement for all volunteers to treat information in a confidential manner and use it solely for lawful purposes.
- c. All volunteers of the Council are responsible for ensuring that their own behaviour is in accordance with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. In particular, each volunteer should:
  - i. Not discriminate in the course of their duties nor induce or attempt to induce others to do so.
  - ii. Not victimise, harass, bully or intimidate other staff or induce others to do so.

iii. Inform Parish Clerk if they suspect that discrimination is taking place in the working environment.

iv. Inform the Parish Clerk of any criminal convictions.

## **8. LOWER AGE LIMITS**

a. The lower age limit for volunteers is 15 years. A full risk assessment will be carried out in line with the Health and Safety (Young Persons) Regulations 1997 and shared with the parent or legal guardian of the young person.

## **9. UPPER AGE LIMITS**

a. There is no upper age limit if the volunteer is judged to be capable of carrying out the allotted task.

## **10. VOLUNTEERS WITH ANOTHER ROLE**

a. Volunteer candidates who have another role which may conflict with the volunteering role and / or with the Council business in any way must declare this to the Parish Clerk. The volunteer's application may be rejected if their dual role could be considered to be confusing or a conflict of interest.

## **11. VOLUNTEERS RELATED TO EMPLOYEES**

a. Volunteers closely related to present employees or council members might be considered inappropriate volunteers within the interest of good employee relations. The Parish Clerk must assess any potential risks.

## **12. HEALTH AND FITNESS**

a. Each volunteer must be able to meet the demands of the role without risk to their physical or mental health and wellbeing. If there are any changes to the health and fitness of the volunteer (e.g. pregnancy, injury, etc) the volunteer must make this known to the Parish Clerk and a review of the volunteering activities undertaken.

## **13. REFERENCES**

a. Checks will include information from two referees whom they have known for at least three years and who are not family members. A minimum of two satisfactory references are required.

## **14. CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS**

a. Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (Amendment) Order 2020, volunteers are required to declare all previous convictions unless specifically stated in the Order 2020 that this is not required. This information will be confidential and will not necessarily prejudice the volunteer being accepted;

however when the volunteer activity will involve access to children and vulnerable adults, further checks will be made.

b. All posts exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act will be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, unless stated to the contrary in the Order 2020. (DBS checks cover what were previously a standard or enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check and a check of the ISA Children's barred list and/or the ISA Vulnerable adults barred list) for posts identified as Regulated or Controlled Activity, as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

## **15. WHISTLEBLOWING**

a. The Parish Council takes wrongdoing seriously. Therefore, if a volunteer, or any employee, believes they have witnessed any wrongdoing in the workplace then the Council's Whistleblowing Policy (PCD0014) must be followed. This policy provides a process to protect the volunteer and to enable the volunteer to inform the organisation about any wrongdoings

## **16. ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

a. The use and misuse of alcohol, drugs, or other substances, can have a detrimental effect on any person's ability to perform tasks, impairing the individual's capacity to work safely. For these reasons the volunteer must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst on duty. The consumption or misuse of drugs or alcohol in the Parish environment is prohibited.

## **17. RISK MANAGEMENT**

a. Volunteers undertaking agreed activities on behalf of the Council will be covered by our existing insurance arrangement. Where volunteers, in the course of their authorised voluntary activity, suffer loss or damage, the Council will act towards them as it would towards its paid staff. It is the responsibility of the Parish Clerk to identify and assess possible risks and apply the principles they have in place locally.

b. 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 Council, through the office of its Clerk or other person(s) as advised, must receive a copy of such risk assessment records.

c. Responsibility for undertaking the risk assessment rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided by the Council to undertake the work. Risk assessments and their associated paperwork must comply with current Health and Safety at Work legislation.

## **18. LIABILITIES**

a. The Council accepts no responsibility for articles of personal property, which may be lost or damaged by fire, burglary or theft. In so far as insurance is

concerned, on condition that volunteers are working at the sole request of and under the sole control of the Council then they will be insured under the Council's Public Liability and Employers' Liability cover.

b. Reporting to the Council in respect of work which is of an ongoing nature is not necessary on each occasion and does not require formal approval of the Council on each occasion.

c. Volunteers may only carry out less hazardous work involving non powered hand tools, unless qualified to do so; for example, path maintenance, sand clearance, tree planting etc.

d. Minimum levels of PPE (suitable footwear, gloves, safety goggles 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.

## **19. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

a. The Council attaches the greatest importance to the safety of people on their premises, and endeavors to do all within its power to prevent accidents and injuries.

b. Employees and volunteers work together to reduce personal injuries and hazards to a minimum. Volunteers are therefore asked to co-operate and report any dangerous equipment or conditions, so that preventative measures can be taken before an accident occurs. Volunteers are expected to comply with safety procedures so as to minimise the likelihood of accidents to themselves or others

c. The use of cleaning materials must not be stronger than those available on shop shelves and chemicals should not be mixed. No weed killers can be used in or around any Parish Council properties. High visibility vests or other appropriate clothing must be worn where appropriate.

d. Jewellery, necklaces, watches and the like must not be worn where they compromise the safe working environment for the volunteer.

e. Trainers, open-toed shoes, heeled shoes or sandals must not be worn if the safe working environment for the volunteer is compromised.

f. Long hair must be tied up if it is deemed that it could compromise health and safety requirements.

g. All work undertaken by volunteers shall have regard to the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and all other Health and Safety Legislation.

## **20. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION**

a. It is a requirement for all volunteers, just as it is with employees, to treat information in a confidential manner, and use it solely for lawful purposes in



accordance with acts of legislation and national guidance, specifically the General Data Protection Regulation 2018 and the Common Law of Duty of Confidentiality. All volunteers must maintain confidentiality of Council business.

## **21. DRIVERS**

Volunteers using their own vehicle to carry out Council business are required to:

- i. Produce a valid driving licence (it is the responsibility of the volunteer to inform the Parish Clerk of any changes to their driving status).
- ii. Provide confirmation from the insurance company that the car is covered for volunteer or business activities.
- iii. Inform the Parish Clerk of any changes in their medical fitness which may affect their ability to drive.

## **22. PROBLEMS AND / OR CONCERNS**

- a. The Council makes every effort to maintain harmonious relations with volunteers and invites their co-operation. When problems or concerns exist around the volunteer then they will be addressed sensitively. Confidentiality will be maintained.

## **23. VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE LEAVING**

- a. Volunteers are free to stop volunteering at any time without notice. However, it is appreciated if they can give as much notice as possible before leaving so that alternative arrangements can be made.

## **24. TERMINATION OF SERVICE**

- a. The Council reserves the right in exceptional circumstances to end a volunteering placement or to stop an individual volunteering.