



## **VOLUNTEERS POLICY**

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| <b>Approved by members on:</b>        | <b>Adopted at Finance Policy &amp; Resources<br/>Committee on 12th September 2013 then<br/>ratified at full Town Council on 24th September<br/>2013</b> |
| <b>Reviewed by:</b>                   | <b>Finance Policy &amp; Resources Committee on 11th<br/>June 2015 and ratified at Town Council on 23rd<br/>June 2015</b>                                |

## **INTRODUCTION**

This policy has been prepared for the benefit of members of the public who may volunteer their time for Billingham Town Council. This policy does not apply to the Council's relationship with voluntary organisations where other arrangements could apply.

Billingham Town Council appreciates that volunteers contribute valuable assistance and experience that would otherwise not be available and in turn can themselves gain valuable working experience that can enhance their skills and enable self-fulfilment. It is therefore important that the Town Council encourages the participation of volunteers under supervision, whilst ensuring the safety and security of all parties.

The Executive Officer is responsible for the implementation of this policy.

## **DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEER**

A volunteer is a person who freely undertakes to perform a service task or function that is not normally or traditionally performed as a full job and who does so without financial reward.

A clear distinction exists between volunteers and those who are given a financial reward, e.g. wage or allowances at special rates in return for casual services.

## **RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

Whatever tasks are identified for voluntary work, it is important to match the volunteer to the work. In order to achieve this, prospective volunteers should be subject to references and an interview in all cases. Where the volunteer is going to be in contact with vulnerable groups or individuals, it will be necessary to obtain a disclosure check with the Disclosure and Barring Service. Care should be taken to consider all equality issues.

## **AGREEMENT**

All volunteers should be issued with a role description and a written agreement (see appendix 1), which clarifies the intentions and expectations of both parties in order to avoid subsequent disputes and which uses terminology like "hopes and expectations" instead of "requirements". Without a clear understanding of what is expected of the volunteer confusion and misunderstanding is likely to arise.

## **TRAINING**

Volunteers should receive training directly related to the tasks they undertake.

An induction process, including health and safety, should be followed in every case to ensure volunteers understand the environment they are to work in. Training will help clarify how the volunteer is expected to carry out their tasks

## **EXPENSES**

Although the council does not presently operate an expenses system for volunteers, this does not exclude occasions when the council feel it necessary to reimburse out of pocket expenses. The Executive Officer as Manager will use discretion on the above when required.

## **LIABILITY**

For any council activity undertaken by a volunteer the Council's public liability insurance will apply. Volunteers should be aware that this insurance does not cover them for loss of earnings should they sustain an injury.

## **EQUALITY**

The Council's commitment to diversity and equality applies equally to volunteers. The Town Council values the contribution made by everyone and especially that made by unpaid volunteers.

## **SUPERVISION & SUPPORT**

Every volunteer should have a nominated supervisor someone who they can have regular access to with queries or problems arise or when help is needed. This is also important for feedback so volunteers know how they are performing. Should volunteers' performance fall below the required level steps should be taken to remedy this. Standards need to be established and maintained regardless of the status of the individual.

Situations of misconduct need to be similarly managed. Being a volunteer does not excuse poor behaviour.

However, it must be remembered that volunteers are not bound by contractual obligations.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

All volunteers will have access and adhere to the Council's Health and Safety Policy and Procedures.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY & DATA PROTECTION**

Billingham Town Council will expect a volunteer to maintain strict confidentiality at all times.

## APPENDIX 1

### VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Thank you for volunteering with Billingham Town Council. For your information and safety we ask you to read and sign this agreement before commencing duties.

Volunteering is undertaken freely and not in return for wages. We hope that your voluntary work will give you a sense of achievement, work experience, a chance to build on your skills and learn new ones as well as a chance to strengthen your confidence.

As a volunteer you will not do the work of paid staff, but complement the services offered by Billingham Town Council.

You will be supervised by the Executive Officer who will issue you with a role description which specifies what your contribution is expected to be, place of work, hours volunteered etc. You will be expected to fulfil your agreed commitment and should inform the Executive Officer as soon as possible should you not be able to do so.

You will be expected to follow the policies and procedures referred to in your induction programme including health and safety and diversity and equal opportunities.

Billingham Town Council reserves the right to ask a volunteer to withdraw their services. Any disciplinary or grievance situation will be dealt with in accordance with the Town Councils policies.

**I agree to abide with this agreement.**

**Signed .....**      **Date .....**

**Signed .....**      **Date .....**

**On behalf of Billingham Town Council**

**Dianne Rickaby**

**Executive Officer & Responsible Finance Officer**