



Tenterden Town Council

Volunteer Policy

Reviewed	Adopted
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Introduction

Tenterden Town Council welcomes volunteers and recognises the contribution that they make. Volunteers can bring a range of knowledge and expertise to particular tasks or projects, to complement that of councillors and staff. This policy sets out how volunteers will be both managed and supported in their roles.

Who is a Volunteer?

Volunteering is an activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the community, the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. A volunteer is not classified as an employee and is not issued with any contract of employment.

Recruitment and Retention

Anyone offering their services to the Town Council as a volunteer will be asked to complete an application form. If suitable, they will be interviewed, and references sought. A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be undertaken, the cost of which will be met by the Town Council. Only relevant information will be requested from applicants during the volunteer recruitment process.

The role of the volunteer will be discussed with them and agreement reached as to the tasks and activities that will be undertaken and where these will take place.

The council will discuss with volunteers the amount of time they are able to commit and their availability to do so, in order for the council to determine whether this meets its needs.

If the Town Council decides that a person is not suitable for the volunteering role they have applied for, or if they become unsuitable for a volunteer role, they will be told why. They may also be advised of other opportunities, as appropriate.

Volunteer Record and Tasks

A volunteer record will be kept. This outlines the tasks allocated (and training given) and undertaken by the volunteer. The tasks and time will be described clearly in order to set boundaries. Any special clothing or equipment needed will be provided by the Town Council.

Volunteers will not be asked to undertake activities which they do not want to do, or given only repetitive tasks. If a volunteer would like changes to be made to their tasks they are encouraged to discuss this with their supervisor. Volunteer activities (both by individuals and by volunteers as a whole) will be reviewed on a regular basis and changes discussed with all staff and volunteers involved, so that changes can be made where necessary.

Volunteers will be fully supervised and supported, and will be entitled to time off whenever they want it.

Induction

Volunteers should have an induction to include the following.

- An introduction to a named contact (their supervisor), other staff and volunteers they will be working with.
- An explanation of the relevant procedures,
- An introduction to a basic code of conduct and expectations in respect of behaviours.
- Health and Safety induction, including reviewing the relevant Risk Assessment for the tasks to be undertaken.
- Being shown where the various facilities are.
- Training for their duties, where necessary.

Health and Safety

Tenterden Town Council has responsibility for the health and safety of its volunteers. It will however, not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside of the volunteering agreement.

The council's expectations of volunteers in respect of Health and Safety, which must be adhered to are as follows.

- a. Volunteers must always follow the Health and Safety policies and procedures of the council.
- b. Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who might be affected by their actions.
- c. Volunteers must not act outside their authorised area of work.
- d. Volunteers must report all accidents to the appropriate person, for recording in the accident book.

Insurance

Volunteers are covered by the local authority's public liability and employer's liability insurance.

Volunteers should not be expected to use their own vehicle for undertaking voluntary duties, such as transporting goods, unless they are appropriately insured and the documentation has been checked.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Our commitment to anti-discriminatory practice extends to volunteers. A diverse group of volunteers helps to make the council more welcoming and representative of the community.

Complaints

Volunteers have a right to use the Town Council's Complaints procedure, if something causes them concern. Similarly, should a volunteer act in an inappropriate manner, a complaint may be made about them. Any complaint should be fully investigated, in accordance with this procedure.

Confidentiality

Volunteers are bound by the same confidentiality requirements as paid staff and the application form includes a confidentiality agreement.

Record Keeping

Each volunteer's application form and record will be retained by the Town Council and kept confidential unless there are exceptional circumstances, in which case the volunteer will be advised (where it is lawful to do so). Volunteers have the right to see any personal information held on our files, and to challenge the accuracy of that information.