



BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

VOLUNTEER **MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Adopted 4th NOVEMBER 2019

DATE ADOPTED	22nd August 2019	FREQUENCY OF REVIEW	3 years or legislative changes
REVISED DATE/S	4th November 2019		

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT POLICY

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BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL
VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement with Braunstone Town Council's services, projects and initiatives. It is of relevance to all within the organisation.

This policy is endorsed by the Town Council and will be reviewed every three years or as the result of legislative changes to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of the Town Council and its volunteers.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both what the Town Council expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the Town Council.

Braunstone Town Council is committed to involving volunteers directly within the services, projects and initiatives in which there are involved to:

- contribute ideas for improvements
- Make sure we are responsive to the needs of our users.
- Provide different skills and perspectives.
- Offer opportunities for participation by people who might otherwise be excluded.

Volunteers will be welcome to attend the Town's Citizens' Advisory Panel to contribute ideas.

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers. A Volunteer Handbook will be produced and regularly updated by the Council's Management and will provide further details about the role and duties of volunteers, along with the support and procedures in place.

2. PRINCIPLES

Braunstone Town Council recognises the value of volunteering and realises that it is a commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community. The Town Council seeks to involve volunteers in ways that further its work and enhances its services. In turn, it expects its volunteers to uphold its values, objectives, policies and procedures.

Volunteering should be a fulfilling experience. Through adequate support and supervision, volunteers should be able to develop, expand and change their area

of volunteering where appropriate. Volunteers can therefore expect to be given support, access to appropriate training and to have their rights as individuals upheld.

Braunstone Town Council aims to:

- match the time, skills and experience of volunteers to a suitable volunteering opportunity
- ensure each volunteer receives appropriate training and support
- resolve any complaints raised by a volunteer in a timely fashion
- ensure that each volunteer is supported by a contact in the Organisation to provide advice and guidance
- foster a friendly and supportive atmosphere for volunteers and make volunteering a positive experience
- reimburse reasonable expenses incurred. These expenses must be agreed up front with the contact person and are payable against a valid receipt.
- recognises that the benefits that voluntary work brings to volunteers themselves, to service users and to the organisation.
- ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the Town Council's work
- endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure its volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible.

In return, the Town Council asks the following of volunteers to:

- maintain and uphold the good name and reputation of the Town Council, its aims and objectives
- treat all members, officers, service users and members of the public with respect and dignity
- adhere to the Town Council's policies and procedures.

3. RECRUITMENT

Recruitment of volunteers will generally be from all sections of the community, and will be in line with the Town Council's Equal Opportunities Policy.

The relevant Service Manager will prepare a role description outlining volunteer task roles, which will include the nature of the activity and the skills required. The role description will be subject to the approval of the Council's Management Team. Once approved, the document will be used to advertise roles.

Anyone who wishes to become a volunteer will need to complete a standard volunteer registration form:

- depending on the nature of the volunteering opportunity, a volunteer may be required to provide the names of two referees who have agreed to provide a reference on behalf of the volunteer;

- volunteers working with children, directly with the public or vulnerable adults will always be requested to provide referees; and
- depending on the nature of the volunteering opportunity, the Town Council may need to understand specific health issues in order to assess whether reasonable adjustments can be made.

The Council will undertake Disclosure Barring Service checks for those who will be working with children and/or vulnerable adults.

The information asked for is on a 'need to know' basis, is regarded as confidential and is used to find out more about the potential volunteer and their volunteering preferences.

Volunteers will also be invited to attend an informal interview to discuss opportunities, find out more and outline their aspirations for a role.

Providing good support and supervision, appropriate training and maintaining regular contact are always important especially if volunteers work with vulnerable people. Any issues of suitability that cause concern will be referred to the relevant Service Manager for additional support and guidance.

Decisions about a volunteer's suitability for a placement will be taken by the relevant Service Manager and the only information remaining on file should relate to the outcome and not the details of the check. Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will, where possible, be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the Town Council.

The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out the tasks set out in the approved role description.

Sometimes it is not possible to accept every offer of volunteering help. This can be for a number of reasons e.g. lack of space or accommodation, sufficient volunteers doing that activity or no opportunity available for the type of activity he or she wishes to do. In some cases, the volunteer may not be suitable for the activity.

The Town Council will inform the potential volunteer of its decision within a reasonable period of time and in an honest, but sensitive manner and state how his/her offer of help is appreciated. Any reason(s) why s/he may not be involved should be explained clearly, but tactfully and if possible, the reasons given.

4. VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS AND WORK OUTLINES

Volunteers will have a clear and concise role description. It might be a volunteering placement is established in agreement as a trial period and there will be an opportunity for both the volunteer and the Town Council to review progress during the trial period.

All volunteers will be offered regular contact meetings with their supporting officer.

The Town Council expects volunteers to:

- be reliable and honest
- work within agreed guidelines
- seek adequate support in their volunteering
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a professional way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- respect the work of the organisation
- comply with policies such as equal opportunities, smoking and health and safety
- make supervisors aware of any potentially dangerous or hazardous conditions
- respect confidential information
- report any issues or concerns in accordance with the Town Council's policies and procedures
- not undertake actions that bring the Town Council into disrepute.

5. INDUCTION AND TRAINING

New volunteers will be properly inducted into the role, the service and the organisation. This includes being properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence. Volunteers will also be introduced to all key contacts they will see on site.

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the Town Council's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health and safety, safeguarding and equality and diversity. Note, that the Town Council's staffing policies are not applicable to volunteers.

The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the Town Council in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks.

6. SUPPORT

Volunteers will have a support officer as the named contact person who will provide regular support. This support will provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue about the development of the volunteering role and any advice and guidance as needed.

The volunteer should be clear about the tasks associated with their voluntary role and be willing to undertake them. This role description will clarify the role the volunteer has agreed to do, the hours that they will be volunteering and what training, support and supervision will be provided. It should also give details

about their named support officer, Service Manager and location of the activity. All volunteers will be introduced to their support officer to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

Risk assessments are undertaken for all of the Town Council's activities and volunteers should familiarise themselves with the relevant risk assessments applicable to the tasks they undertake. Volunteers will also be required to attend relevant health and safety inductions and refresher sessions.

A record will be kept of training undertaken by the volunteer.

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision from the support officer. This will enable both the volunteer and the named contact person to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these support sessions will vary and should be negotiated between the volunteer and the named support officer.

7. THE VOLUNTEER'S VOICE

Volunteers will be consulted on decisions which affect them. The Town Council is committed to developing consultation and representational procedures for volunteers. Volunteers are welcome to participate in the Town's Citizens' Advisory Panel.

8. RECORDS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Everybody can be affected by confidentiality issues and it is important that volunteers should realise that it is not only service users and organisation information that this applies to but also to volunteer issues.

Information that volunteers have access to whilst volunteering is confidential. Volunteers must not give away any information about service users, volunteers, organisation finances or any other business either directly or by talking to someone. It is especially important that volunteers keep sensitive information to themselves. However, if volunteers find something out that might be a risk to others then they need to report in accordance with the relevant policy, to their support officer or relevant Service Manager.

The holding, processing or disclosure of information on individuals which volunteers may handle in the course of their role is subject to the General Data Regulation 2018, which covers personal information held in any medium.

It is the responsibility of all volunteers to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to prevent personal information (in whatever format) from being accidentally divulged to unauthorised persons, and that appropriate care is taken in disposing of printed information containing personal information.

It is suggested that certain information, for example health information in the case of conditions like heart problems, epilepsy and diabetes, should be revealed to the support officer so that should any problem occur can be dealt with promptly.

All volunteers are asked to complete an Emergency Contact Form, so that the Town Council has a record of who to contact. Volunteers will also be asked to notify staff of any changes to personal details, such as address, telephone number and email. This information is also kept confidential and is not accessed until needed.

9. EXPENSES

The Town Council will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system to enable volunteers to claim out of pocket expenses.

The Town Council believes volunteers should not be out of pocket as a result of undertaking volunteering activity. It is acknowledged that some volunteers feel that they do not wish to claim reimbursement - but it is important for volunteers to be able to claim expenses. In addition, claiming expenses can, in some cases, mask the true costs of involving volunteers within a project.

What can be reclaimed from the Town Council and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses. All claims must be agreed in advance with the support officer or relevant Service Manager.

10. INSURANCE

Volunteers will be covered by insurance while carrying out agreed duties.

Volunteers must behave responsibly, but beyond any acts, omissions or negligence on their part, their activities are insured. Volunteers have a responsibility to follow guidance and not act in a negligent manner.

The organisation's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them. However, it is the volunteer's responsibility to make their own insurance arrangements for their travel to the site of volunteering and between volunteering sites.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY

The Town Council will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the volunteers' health, safety and welfare while at work in accordance with the Organisation's Health and Safety policy.

The Town Council carries out risk assessments for each activity. This includes the action for mitigation of the risks.

The Town Council also has a Health & Safety Consultative Group, which includes representatives from each of the Town Council's service areas.

12. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Town Council is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion and political beliefs.

Volunteers and staff will work in accordance with the Town Council's Equal Opportunities Policy in order to prevent discrimination on any grounds.

13. PROBLEMS

The Town Council seeks to deal with any problems arising with volunteers, both in terms of concerns raised by the volunteer and any concerns the Organisation may have with the performance of the volunteer. In line with this approach, volunteers have the right to discuss any concerns they may have with their support officer.

Braunstone Town Council aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The Town Council seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution.

Initially, if a volunteer finds that they have a grievance, a complaint or that there is a problem with the volunteer work placement for whatever reason, then they should ask for help or guidance from their support officer. By discussing it openly with people directly involved, then it may be resolved quickly and a small change may prevent the problem from escalating.

The relevant support officer will be responsible for handling disputes and complaints should they arise. If there is a dispute between the volunteer and their support officer, then the volunteer should approach the relevant Service Manager.

If necessary, the Service Manager will assign someone to mediate and seek a resolution. This could cover a volunteer's complaints about their experience, or complaints about a volunteer's conduct. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible.

If problems are ongoing or the volunteer is not happy with how they have been handled, then the volunteer should put the details in writing to the Executive Officer & Town Clerk, who will review the handling of the dispute or complaint. The Executive Officer & Town Clerk's decision is final.

The Town Council has a policy on how it will deal with any grievance and disciplinary issue regarding a volunteer and these procedures are set out in the Volunteer Handbook.

14. ENDINGS

When volunteers move on from their role at the Town Council they will be asked to provide feedback on their volunteering experience with their support officer.

On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference.

The Town Council has a policy on how it will deal with any disciplinary issue, including acts of gross misconduct, regarding a volunteer and these procedures are set out in the Volunteer Handbook.

15. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Town Council will monitor and evaluate its use of volunteers with reference to this Volunteer Management Policy. This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required to do so by legislative or policy changes.

16. CONTACT DETAILS

Please contact us if you have any questions about volunteering or our Volunteer Management Policy, or if you have any queries or complaints at:
Customer Services, Braunstone Civic Centre, Kingsway, Braunstone Town, Leicester, LE3 2PP.
Tel: 0116 289 0045
Email: enquiries@braunstonetowncouncil.org.uk