

Volunteering Policy



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VOLUNTEERING POLICY

Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in Kegworth Parish Council. It is of relevance to all within the Council, including volunteers, staff, councillors, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility. This policy is endorsed by Kegworth Parish Council and will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of Kegworth Parish Council and its volunteers.

Commitment

Kegworth Parish Council recognises the right that people have to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering. It also acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, their contribution is unique, and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. Kegworth Parish Council values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

Kegworth Parish Council recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

Statement of Values and Principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by Kegworth Parish Council and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements, but does not replace, the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise the Council cannot be compelled to provide either regular work or payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

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

Volunteer Co-ordination

All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff or volunteer to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact to receive support and supervision.

The nominated post holder with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within the Council is the Clerk. They are responsible for the management and welfare of the Council's volunteers

Recruitment & Selection

Kegworth Parish Council is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups including children. 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 agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by the Council in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will be offered alternative voluntary involvement with the Council where possible.

If the volunteer will be working with vulnerable groups (children and/or adults) there may be other safer recruitment procedures carried out including asking a volunteer to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check. More detailed information will be made available specific to legislative requirements and to the particular volunteer position.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, which will be subsequently reviewed. The task description will be prepared in conjunction with the volunteer and the designated person referred to above.

New volunteers will be properly inducted by the Council. Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

Training & Development

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the Council's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, safeguarding vulnerable groups, and equal opportunities. It will be the responsibility of the designated person to provide any necessary training and support for volunteers in order to equip them with the information and skills to carry out their tasks.

Support, Supervision and Recognition

Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

Volunteers will have access to regular support. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor 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 sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated officer referred to above.

A process will be developed in order to give formal recognition of the contribution of the Council's volunteers (e.g. articles in newsletters, thank you letters etc).

Expenses

The Council's volunteers are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to prior approval and subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. What can be reclaimed from the Council and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.

The Council has a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which are the same for volunteers, staff, etc. and are as approved by the Inland Revenue.

It is the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

Insurance

The Council's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them. The Council does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

Confidentiality

The Council will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the Council relating to the volunteer.

Settling Differences

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

The designated officer referred to above is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to them. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the Council to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the Council's wider disciplinary, grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to.