

WHIMPLE PARISH COUNCIL VOLUNTEER POLICY

(Approved by the Council on 22 April 2025)

Introduction

Whimple Parish Council ("the Council") recognises the value that volunteers can make through their contribution to the Council's work in the community and understands the importance of volunteers feeling that the time they give freely is appreciated. A committed group of volunteers is a valuable asset to the village.

Policy Statement

This policy applies to individuals undertaking work or duties on behalf of the Council in a voluntary capacity. It does not apply to councillors, officers or those who have a contractual relationship with the Council. The relationship with volunteers is non-contractual and no working relationship is created or implied at any time, however, the Council recognises the importance of having clear guidelines in place to manage expectations of both the Council and volunteers.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all volunteers remain safe and feel valued when volunteering on Council-led projects. It provides a framework within which the Council will manage volunteers and what volunteers may expect in return, from the Council.

Whilst officers and councillors may identify volunteering opportunities, these must be approved by the Council.

Principles

The Council appreciates that volunteers contribute their time, skills and knowledge freely for many reasons and will support personal aspirations and professional ambitions wherever it is reasonably practicable and appropriate to do so.

The Council values volunteers and recognise that they should be provided with satisfying roles and the opportunity for personal development as well as the support, training and equipment to undertake these tasks effectively and safely. A volunteer coordinator will be appointed for each volunteering activity and will have primary responsibility for volunteers involved in that activity.

Who can volunteer

The Council will not discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation and is committed to providing equal opportunities to all volunteers from all backgrounds and recognises that having a broad, diverse group of volunteers brings a variety of knowledge, skills, creativity and experience and promotes social and community cohesion.

If a volunteering opportunity arises where, for example, reasons of health and safety or safeguarding issues, a volunteer may not be suitable, the Council will make reasonable adjustments, insofar as is practicable. Where it is not possible to place a volunteer in their requested role, efforts will be made to find a suitable alternative.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily preclude anyone from volunteering with the Council however this will depend on the nature of the volunteer role and the nature and circumstances of the offence.

The majority of volunteer roles will not require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. However, should this be a requirement of the volunteer role, the Council will confirm this at the outset.

Recruitment and Induction

The Council may recruit volunteers using a range of methods such as word of mouth, advertising, talking with other organisations. It may also directly approach those who have previously assisted the Council with its work.

All volunteers will be required to:

- Sign a volunteer agreement, attached as (Appendix A)
- Ensure that any changes to their contact details are communicated to either the activity supervisor or the Parish Clerk in a timely manner

All volunteers will receive an appropriate induction prior to commencing the role assigned to them which will include:

- A brief overview of the work and policies of the Council
- A discussion on volunteer code of conduct and confidentiality
- Guidance on health and safety measures and risk assessments associated with their role
- Any task related training that is required to enable them to fulfil their role

Volunteer Support

All volunteers will have a named person as their point of contact.

The Council will invite volunteers to provide feedback on the activity they are engaged in, including evaluation of events and projects and will encourage volunteers to proactively make suggestions for how things might be improved in the future.

Where appropriate, or where required for health and safety purposes or compliance with any other statutory requirement, the Council may offer training to assist volunteers.

Where volunteers are under the age of 18, additional support will be provided and checks undertaken, as necessary.

Health and Safety

The Council has a duty of care to all volunteers and each activity supervisor will complete and share a comprehensive risk assessment.

Volunteers have a responsibility to themselves and others who might be affected by their actions and must always follow the Council's Health and Safety policies and procedures.

Volunteers must disclose to either the Parish Clerk or the activity supervisor, details of any medical conditions that may affect their ability to undertake certain activities.

The Council will always inform volunteers of any specific health and safety measures that must be undertaken during a volunteer activity and, if required, will provide volunteers with the necessary personal protective equipment ('PPE').

Volunteers must report any accidents or incidents to the activity supervisor as soon as practicable.

Insurance

Volunteers are covered by the Council's insurance policy whilst undertaking official duties on behalf of the Council. Insurance cover is not provided for unauthorised actions or any actions undertaken outside of the volunteer agreement. Volunteers should be aware that the Council's insurance does not cover them for loss of earnings should they sustain an injury.

Data Protection

Personal information recorded about volunteers (via the volunteer agreement) is stored and maintained in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, the Council's Data Protection Policy and General Privacy Notice (both of which are available on the website).

The Parish Clerk will contact individuals that have not carried out any voluntary work in a 6 month period to ascertain if they wish to have their volunteer agreement and personal information removed from the Council's records and securely destroyed.

When an individual notifies the Council that they no longer wish to volunteer, their volunteer agreement and personal information will be removed from the Council's records and securely destroyed.

All volunteers agree to allow their photographs, videos, and voice media taken during the volunteer activity to be used in Whimple Parish Council publications, Whimple News and digital media (such as the Council website and Facebook Page), unless the Council is otherwise notified in advance.

Time Commitment

The Parish Council recognises that the amount of time an individual may be able to commit to volunteering will vary. Volunteers may only undertake tasks by prior arrangement and wherever possible the arrangements should be made between the volunteer and their point of contact at least 48 hours in advance.

Expenses

Volunteers will be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the Council where this has been approved in advance. Receipts must always be provided.

Any allowance for mileage will be paid at the appropriate HMRC approved rate.

Volunteer Conduct

Volunteers represent the Council and must comply with the following:

- Undertake volunteering duties to the best of their abilities
- Treat other volunteers, members of the public and anyone else they encounter in the course of volunteering, fairly and courteously
- Adhere to decisions taken by the Council or its officers and follow all reasonable instructions
- Comply with all health and safety procedures and wear and PPE provided
- Wear appropriate clothing, including footwear, provide identification if required and take necessary steps to protect themselves in the environment they are working in. For example, through the use of sunscreen and a hat
- Not behave in a way that could bring the Council into disrepute, this includes behaving in an appropriate manner online and when using social media.
- Return any equipment / clothing supplied at the end of their volunteer activity

Volunteers may, from time to time, have access to personal data or sensitive information about the work of the Council, its volunteers and staff and other organisations. Volunteers will only be given access to personal or sensitive information if it is required to fulfil the specific activity for which they are volunteering and any such disclosure will be approved, in advance, by the Parish Clerk. It is an absolute requirement, both during and after volunteering, that confidentiality is maintained and that no information is passed to another individual or third party, unless required to do so by law.

In the event of a serious complaint or inappropriate or dangerous behaviour, the nominated activity supervisor will discuss this directly with the Parish Clerk, who will advise on an appropriate course of action.

The Council reserves the right not to assign further activities to a volunteer if, in the absolute discretion of the Parish Clerk, it is considered in the best interests of the volunteer, the Council or the wider public. The Council will always act transparently and fairly.

Right to Leave

Volunteers are not contracted and are under no obligation to give notice if they no longer wish to give their time. However, it is greatly appreciated if volunteers can provide advance notice if they are unable to undertake their volunteer role or wish to end their volunteer agreement with the Council. This not only means the Council is able to reallocate the task but also provides the Council with the opportunity to thank the individual for their volunteer contributions.

VOLUNTEER CONSENT FORM

Contact details:

Name:

Address:

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Telephone Number:

Email Address:

Date of Birth:

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Consent:

By signing this form you consent to participate in any of the volunteer activities authorised in the Whimble Parish Council Volunteer Policy.

You further agree to abide by the terms of the Volunteer Policy and follow any instructions and safety briefings provided by the activity leader(s).

You further agree to seek any medical advice before undertaking any activities you feel will be physically demanding for you. In return, we will provide necessary protective clothing, first aid kits, guidance, manual tools and insurance.

Please tick this box to confirm you have read and understood these requirements.

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Your information:

Whimble Parish Council will store the information you have provided in order for you to carry out your role as a volunteer. All data will be securely stored and only shared with other organisations with your permission, or as necessary (e.g. with the Council's insurance company or organisations organising volunteer activities).

You have the right to view the data we hold about you, or request that some or all of your data is deleted at any time. Copies of the Council's Data Protection Policy and General Privacy Notice are available on the website if you require further clarification.

If you are happy for Whimble Parish Council to keep a record of your information and contact details, please tick the box to give consent.

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You can withdraw your consent at any time by emailing
clerk@whimpleparishcouncil.gov.uk

Volunteers Name:

Volunteers Signature:

Date:

Volunteer Activities – Example Risk Assessment

Activity undertaken:

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Conducted by:

Date:

Risk	What could happen?	Who could be hurt or impacted?	Action needed
Slips, Trips, falls	An individual could slip, trip or fall during activities causing injury	Volunteers, councillors, council employees	Safe working briefings before activity commences. Sensible clothing, boots, shoes. Site assessment – avoidance of dangerous sites. Working in pairs or a small group. First aid kit. Emergency numbers and procedure.
Strains and muscular injury	An individual could suffer strains and muscular injury while undertaking tasks	Volunteers, councillors, council employees	Safe working briefings before activity commences. Volunteer fitness declaration. First aid kit. Emergency numbers and procedure
Cuts and bruises	An individual could suffer cuts and bruises while undertaking tasks	Volunteers, councillors, council employees	Safe working briefings before activity commences. First aid kit. Emergency numbers and procedure
Serious injury caused by unsafe operation of machinery	An individual could suffer serious injury.	Volunteers, councillors, council employees	Safe working briefings before activity commences. Annual machinery inspection and maintenance. Machinery operated by approved individuals. Licenses, certification and training for operatives. Supervision during operation – exclusion zones, etc. First aid kit. Emergency numbers and procedure

Risk	What could happen?	Who could be hurt or impacted?	Action needed
Contact with hazardous materials	An individual might be affected by hazardous materials, chemicals or bio-hazards (viral and bacterial)	Volunteers, councillors, council employees	Safe working briefings before activity commences. Protective clothing – gloves, masks, litter pickers and bags. Site assessment – avoidance of dangerous sites. Volunteer briefing. Working in pairs or small groups. First aid kit. Emergency numbers and procedure
Loss of property	An individual could lose property or items may be stolen	Volunteers, councillors, council employees	Safe working briefings before activity. Safe storage of valuables
Road accidents	An individual may be involved in a collision with a vehicle	Volunteers, councillors, council employees	Safe working briefings before activity. No working alongside A and B roads without necessary road signage and barriers approved by the Highways Authority or Police.
Damage to third party property	Accidental damage to property	Third party property owners	Safe working briefings before activity. Site assessments and third-party property identification
Violence and intimidation	Volunteers subjected to intimidation and violence	Volunteers, councillors, council employees	Safe working briefings before activity. Emergency numbers and procedure
Victimisation or harassment	Volunteers subjected to abuse relating to a protected characteristic	Volunteers, councillors, council employees	Safe working briefings before activity. Activity supervision by leads. Reporting procedure to Parish Clerk. Equality statement.
Safeguarding	Vulnerable volunteers subject to physical or psychological abuse	Volunteers, councillors, council employees	Safe working briefings before activity. DBS process and checks, if role appropriate. Reporting procedure to the Parish Clerk. No under 16s to be involved other than when supervised by a parent, guardian or sponsor organisation.

Risk	What could happen?	Who could be hurt or impacted?	Action needed
Working near water	Volunteers could fall into the water and drown	Volunteers, councillors, council employees	Safe working briefings before activity commences. First aid kit. Emergency numbers and procedure
Medical emergency	Volunteers could have a medical emergency	Volunteers, councillors, council employees	Safe working briefings before activity commences. Leader to know where the defibrillator is. Leader to carry a mobile phone Emergency numbers and procedure