

Volunteer Policy

How we work with our volunteers
and what can be expected.



3	Foreword by Cllr. John Jupe, Chair of Council
4	Introduction
4	Who is a volunteer?
4	Why do we have volunteers?
5	What can a volunteer expect from us?
5	What do we expect in return?
6	Roles & Responsibilities
6	Guiding Principles
7	Recruitment
7	Induction
7	Code of Conduct
7	Health & Safety
8	Safeguarding
8	Insurance
8	Support & Supervision
8	Recognition

Foreword

I am delighted to be able to introduce this volunteering policy, as it is an area I would like to promote as a volunteer myself. I have gained a great deal of satisfaction and friendship working alongside both council employees and regular volunteers during our conservation and litter picking sessions. We have a lot of fun and working together creates a bond between members.

Volunteering has many benefits. It can achieve projects more quickly, more cheaply and some done when it may not otherwise be done. It also brings benefits to the volunteer, a sense of achievement, pride and belonging in the community as well as an opportunity to make new friends, learn new skills and share and pass on expertise. Hedge End town council want to encourage more volunteers to enhance our community for the benefit of all.

The Town Council runs a lot of services directly for you and your community where you can play an important role in enhancing these services by volunteering with us. You only do what you want to do, I encourage you to try different options to see what you enjoy, progress from there and then help to create a positive community spirit within Hedge End.

As councillors we see the community come together at times of need and in crisis but sometimes people just need a little more at different times in their lives and you could be that person to provide some of that extra support.

We want our communities to thrive and for Hedge End to be an attractive place to visit, live, work and play in, a place where residents and their families can enjoy their time living within this community.



Cllr. John Jupe, Chair of Council

Introduction

We recognise the valuable contribution that volunteers can make to the community of Hedge End and the Town Council. They can bring a richness of skills and experience often providing a bridge to community involvement that it is difficult for paid staff to achieve.

We recognise that volunteers are motivated because it is their choice to volunteer and give their time freely; in return, we want to provide volunteers with the support they need to reach their potential. This may be providing opportunities that will help them to develop new skills and experiences or it may be providing a mechanism to engage with other people that share their passion.

We recognise that volunteers give their time to activities that are important to them and this policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers.

Who is a volunteer?

A volunteer is someone who freely offers to undertake an activity willingly and without payment.

A volunteer is not an employee and will not have a contract of employment. Volunteers will not undertake work of a paid employee; volunteering will always be in addition to the work undertaken by paid employees.

Why do we have volunteers?

The Town Council recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to users of services and to paid staff. A volunteer can bring new ideas, approaches and opinions giving a broader perspective on the overall vision. Sometimes paid staff can get overwhelmed by the scale and quantity of activities and aren't able to focus on the finer details that can make a difference to a community.

Volunteers also build relationships between communities; a cemetery volunteer might stop to chat to bereaved people and make a difference to that person's health and wellbeing. Youth volunteers provide peer support and mentoring if a young person is experiencing issues. A volunteer with the council may not know the wider impact they are having on the people around them.

What can a volunteer expect from us?

- We will discuss the role with the volunteer and there will be an expectation that the volunteer will meet the role requirements.
- We will discuss with volunteers the amount of time that they are willing to commit to volunteering, the frequency of their availability and how this fits with our needs.
- We will ensure that paid staff and councillors work positively with volunteers and where appropriate will actively seek to involve them in their work.
- We will seek to help volunteers to meet their work and personal development needs through the volunteering activity to provide a satisfying and rewarding experience.
- We will ensure that volunteers are supported to undertake the activity they have volunteered for. This will include ensuring they have the skills and information required prior to volunteering with us.
- We recognise that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts.
- We will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible.

What do we expect in return?

- We expect you to follow the organisation's policies & procedures and standards, including Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity, in relation to its staff, volunteers and users of services.
- We expect you to maintain confidentiality of the organisation and users of services. In the course of volunteering, you may be provided or come across confidential information about the project, its staff or users of services. You must respect this confidentiality and not disclose information except where required by law.
- To be aware of the importance of safeguarding policies and procedures and to discuss with your volunteer co-ordinator any safeguarding concerns.
- To meet the time commitments and standards which have been mutually agreed with you and to give reasonable notice when this is not possible.

Roles & Responsibilities

Each defined volunteering role will have a role profile, this will help to assist the volunteer to identify if it is a role they want to do and any considerations they need to participate.

Guiding Principles

Hedge End Town Council aims to support and increase the quality, quantity, impact and accessibility of volunteering in Hedge End.

OBJECTIVES	To improve the quality & range of volunteering opportunities	To improve the number and diversity of volunteers	To help volunteers reach their potential	To support and enhance the delivery of services through volunteers
SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES	Provide a co-ordinated approach across volunteer roles. Ensure consistent quality of experience for volunteers.	Campaigns and events to increase and raise the profile of volunteering. Accessibility of opportunities. Engage with hard to reach groups.	Removing barriers to volunteering. Building skills and experience. Providing learning & development opportunities. Volunteer networking.	Improving the quality & responsiveness of services to the community. Enhancing the role of community interest groups.
SUPPORTING 'INFRASTRUCTURE'	Create and maintain a mechanism to share best practice Develop managers to support volunteers			

Recruitment

- We will endeavour to recruit volunteers through a range of methods including word of mouth, advertising, talking to other business/groups in the area and contacting local volunteering organisations.
- We will also endeavour to help any volunteers overcome barriers that may make it difficult for them to volunteer at Hedge End Town Council.
- All volunteers will be asked to agree the role description and abide by the policies and procedures of the Council. Where the volunteer is working in more than one role description, they will be asked to agree each role.
- DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) checks and references may be required for some volunteer roles, especially where regular contact with children or young people is necessary. This requirement would be on the role description and discussed with relevant volunteers. DBS checks are a legal requirement in some circumstances.
- Hedge End Town Council will adhere to equal opportunities policies.

Induction

All volunteers will receive an induction, to familiarise them with the work of Hedge End Town Council. Training will be offered where it helps fulfil the role

Code of Conduct

Volunteers will be asked to always abide by the Hedge End Town Council Code of Conduct and follow industry best practice.

Health & Safety

- Hedge End Town Council has responsibility for the Health and Safety of volunteers.
- Volunteers should always follow Health & Safety policies and procedures.
- Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who might be affected by their actions.
- Volunteers should not act outside of their authorised area of work.
- Volunteers should report all accidents to the appropriate person and should be recorded in the accident book.
- We will provide volunteers with appropriate guidance on any health and safety issues that arise.

Safeguarding

Hedge End Town Council takes their role in safeguarding seriously and has a Safeguarding Policy to be followed, it outlines the responsibility of volunteers in safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Insurance

- Hedge End Town Council will ensure that volunteers are covered for insurance purposes in respect of personal injury.
- We will also ensure that volunteers are covered by public liability insurance.
- The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the volunteering role.

Support & Supervision

- Each volunteering role will have a named person as their main contact.
- Volunteers will be encouraged to discuss the role and provide feedback on the tasks.
- Sharing of experiences between volunteers will be actively encouraged to promote best practice.

Recognition

The Town Council recognises the important role that volunteers have in the community and for the benefit of the council and seeks nominations each year for the Serving the Community Award.

This award is given to those volunteers that have made a significant contribution to Hedge End. Volunteers are also invited to participate in the Annual Parish Assembly each year.

The Town Council, with your permission, will also use photos and write ups on its social media pages and in the Gazette publication.

