



DRAFT VOLUNTEERS POLICY

Introduction

West Horsley Parish Council believes that volunteers can contribute in many ways to the Council's activities, giving their time, skills and experience in an unpaid capacity to benefit the local community. Roles can range from supporting the work of the Council's Committees, Sub-Committees and Task Groups, to volunteering at Council-led community events and initiatives. This policy applies to volunteers working on behalf of the Parish Council, not those employed by the Council or Members of the Council.

Where appropriate, the Parish Council will seek to involve volunteers to:

- Ensure our services respond to, and meet the needs of our community
- Provide new skills and perspectives
- Increase our engagement with the community we serve

The Parish Council recognises the valuable contribution volunteers make and will, with the volunteer's permission, promote their contribution to the community.

Collaborating with volunteers must not be taken lightly. There should be procedures in place to ensure volunteers receive the best possible support, and the Parish Council receives maximum benefit from a volunteer's contribution. This should include not only what is expected from the volunteer during their contribution, but also what the volunteer will gain from the experience.

The Benefits for Volunteers

Volunteering provides the opportunity to use current skills and develop new ones, acquire new interests, meet people, become active in bringing about social change, and to get involved in the local community.

Undertaking voluntary work can provide:

- Enjoyment and personal satisfaction
- A chance to meet people, make new friends and associates and get involved in the community
- Gain valuable work experience and training
- A chance to use and learn new skills
- A change from the normal routine
- Recognition and a chance to build up confidence

Volunteering can also improve wellbeing by:

- Improving health and fitness, particularly with outdoor activities

- Improving mental health and combating stress through community engagement and helping others
- Building self-esteem

Collaborating with Volunteers

The Parish Council will engage with volunteers regularly to ensure the best working practices are in place. Where appropriate, the Parish Council will provide volunteers with an introduction to the organisation, as well as any induction or training required for the volunteering opportunity.

- All volunteers will be made aware of our Health and Safety Policy and Safeguarding Policy, and any practical safety concerns as part of their induction.
- All roles will be risk assessed, covering both the tasks involved and the environment in which they will be conducted. Additionally, where a volunteer makes us aware of a pre-existing medical condition or disability, an individual risk assessment may also be necessary.
- All volunteering undertaken shall be conducted in line with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, any other health and safety legislation and the relevant Parish Council policies.
- Volunteers supporting Youth Council-led projects will be asked to obtain an Enhanced DBS.
- Engagement of volunteers is covered by the Parish Council's insurance whilst working on projects initiated and managed by Parish Council staff and/or Councillors.

What Should Be Expected by Volunteers

Anyone can be a volunteer – whether it is on a planned project, work experience or specific arrangement. The engagement of volunteers should be encouraged and offered as widely as possible in the community, with duties and tasks clearly explained.

The Parish Council will ensure all volunteers are:

- Given the appropriate supervision
- Treated as a co-worker and not just free help, in doing so ensuring they are part of the process, free to make suggestions, and respected for their views and opinions
- Provided with any required training
- Provided with adequate tools and equipment to undertake their duties/tasks
- Covered by health and safety legislation, which is in place and enforced
- Recognised for their support and achievements

Preparing for Volunteers

Before involving volunteers in any role, the Parish Council will ensure that the following are in place to ensure their safety and efficiency:

- All volunteers will be provided with either a written or verbal role description that explains the role purpose and main duties/responsibilities
- Where required, volunteers will be provided with any training necessary for the role
- A risk assessment will be undertaken for the volunteer activity
- The Parish Council will ensure that volunteers have access to the necessary equipment to carry out their duties/tasks, including personal protection equipment (PPE) if appropriate

- Each event and initiative will have a designated Volunteer Lead who will be responsible for the management of volunteers. She/he will ensure that volunteers have access to this policy and other relevant policies and handbooks.

Insurance

West Horsley Parish Council's insurance policy covers the activities of volunteers and liability towards them, on condition that the volunteer is working at the sole request and under the sole control of the Council. To this end, every activity that is carried out by the volunteer requires approval prior to the activity taking place. The Parish Council does not insure a volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to inform their motor insurance company if they are using their car in the act of volunteering.

Expectations of Volunteers

West Horsley Parish Council expects volunteers to:

- Be reliable and honest
- Respect confidentiality
- Comply with Council policies and procedures
- Carry out their volunteering tasks as agreed and in a way that reflects the Council's values and not bring it into disrepute
- Not publicly express personal views on Parish Council matters that are contradictory to the Council's aims and objectives

Policies and Procedures

West Horsley Parish Council recognises that volunteers are a part of the team and should be protected and bound by the Parish Council's policies and procedures that are designed to keep all interested parties safe and ensure work is carried out to a high and consistent standard. A number of policies are in place to protect staff and volunteers, including:

- Data Protection Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Volunteers Policy

These can be viewed on the Council's website at [Strategic Plan & Policies - West Horsley Parish Council](#).

Data Protection

The Council may need to create a volunteer database that records volunteers and some basic contact details; GDPR policies will apply to the storing and retention of data.

For consideration/adoption on 15 September 2026