

FARINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

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Clerk: Sally Thurston



Volunteer Policy

Faringdon Town Council recognises that engaging volunteers can enhance the services the Council provides, increase our contact with the local community and bring new skills and perspective to the work the Council does.

Faringdon Town Council ensures its volunteers are clear about what their roles and responsibilities are. It is committed to ensuring fairness and consistency so that volunteers are treated equally and fairly and supported well.

This policy applies to all volunteer roles within the Council.

This policy sets out and explains:

- How we recruit, induct and train volunteers
- Where volunteers stand so that they know what they can expect
- Where they can turn to if they feel things are going wrong

Recruitment of Volunteers

- We will draw up a description of the tasks or role that we need the volunteer to perform. This will help identify the skills, experience or qualifications (if relevant) that are needed. It will help volunteers understand how they fit into the Town Council's activities.
- We will use this information when we advertise and recruit volunteers to make sure applicants are aware of what is expected.
- We will use our Equality & Diversity Policy to make sure the role and tasks are appropriate.
- We will use appropriate means to advertise for volunteers locally that take into account the principles of our Equality & Diversity Policy.
- The potential volunteer will be asked to complete a short application form. Help can be given with this if necessary. The form is designed to be as simple and accessible as possible.
- The potential volunteer will be interviewed (by the appropriate person) and, if this is successful, the two references asked for on the application form will be taken up.
- A criminal records check with the Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS) will be undertaken where required. DBS checks will be repeated every two years. It is the responsibility of the Safeguarding Officer to see the certificate. Until it is seen, a volunteer should not have responsibility for, or be left alone with, any young or vulnerable people.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act refers to the holding of information on living persons, which can include both paid staff and volunteers. It gives people the right to know what information is held about them and sets out rules to make sure that this information is handled properly. Only relevant information about a volunteer will be held.

Records held for the purposes of recruitment of volunteers should be destroyed either as soon as a decision has been taken on whether or not to take the person on or within six months.

Appropriate information regarding the DBS check is added to the volunteer's file. In general, the information acquired from the application form is transferred into the volunteer's file.

Retaining Records

We keep records of volunteers who have left for a period of 18 months.

Non-starters

We follow-up all registrations where the volunteer does not start volunteering. If we get no response from a letter or telephone call, it is our policy to dispose of these records 3 months after the registration date.

Induction and Training

An induction will be prepared for all volunteers and delivered by a member of Town Council staff relevant to the volunteer's role. This will include:

- Tour of the venue(s) and explanation of health and safety instructions, reporting of accidents, first aid procedures and fire evacuation procedures.
- The role of the volunteer – their duties and responsibilities.
- Meeting staff, volunteers and other appropriate stakeholders.
- Copies of all the relevant policies including this Volunteer policy, Confidentiality, Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities and Diversity and Safeguarding.
- Codes of conduct for volunteers.
- Essential procedures, i.e. timekeeping, rota etc.
- Other information as appropriate.

For permanent volunteers there will be a trial period of 26 weeks to give both the Town Council and the volunteer time to discover if they are suited to each other. A review will be made midway through this period and also at the end.

Expenses

We value our volunteers and want to make sure that there are no barriers to their involvement. All out-of-pocket expenses, if required, will be reimbursed, including expenses for travel, and meals if volunteering for a period of 6 consecutive hours or more. In order to claim expenses, an expenses form must be completed and given to the Town Clerk.

Support

The volunteer will be offered support by Town Council staff in the area relevant to the volunteer's role. This involves having regular meetings to discuss any problems or issues that may arise.

Insurance

Faringdon Town Council has a valid insurance policy which everyone is advised to read.

Confidentiality

If necessary for the role they are undertaking, volunteers will be required to read and sign the confidentiality policy and observe it at all times.

Resolving Problems

Faringdon Town Council is committed to maintaining standards in its services and also in making sure that everyone who volunteers enjoys making their contribution to this service.

If an individual's role as a volunteer does not meet with the services' standards, it will be dealt with in the following way:

- Initially with a meeting with the lead staff member in the area the volunteer is working in who will explain the concerns.
- If this does not resolve the concern, then a meeting with the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk will be convened.
- If the work still does not meet with our standards, then we shall have to stop using the volunteer's services.
- At all times a volunteer will be able to freely state his/her case and can have a friend to accompany him/her.

If a volunteer is dissatisfied with any aspect of his/her work, he/ she should:

Initially explain the dissatisfaction to the lead staff member in the area they are working or the Deputy Town Clerk. If that does not resolve the concern, then a meeting with the Town Clerk should be convened. If that does not resolve the issue, then a formal meeting with the Chairperson of the Communities and Partnerships Committee should follow.

If, after this, the dissatisfaction remains unresolved and we are unable to resolve the grievance, then it would be inappropriate for the individual to continue to be a volunteer. At all times a volunteer will be able to freely state his/her case and can have a friend to accompany him/her.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

- Respect the dignity, rights and worth of every person who engages with the Council services.
- Treat everyone equally regardless of age, gender, sexual, orientation, religion, race, nationality or disability.
- Not allow any form of discrimination to be condoned or go unchallenged.
- Not use, possess or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs at any time.
- Respect confidentiality and uphold the trust placed in you.
- Not use profane or abusive language.
- Have high standards of language, manner and what you wear.
- Follow safe practices, including reporting accidents, injuries, and unsafe situations.
- Assist in the delivery of activities that are safe, fun and enable everyone to have the chance to participate.

This policy adopted at the Communities and Partnerships Committee Meeting on 8th October 2019 and will be reviewed annually.

I have read and understand the Volunteer Policy and agree to adhere to it at all times.

Signed:

Date: