

# **Ashdon Parish Council Volunteer Policy**

Whatever the reason for volunteering, the benefits are many, providing challenging and rewarding experiences. Ashdon Parish Council is committed to encouraging and enabling volunteers in the Parish.

## **1. Vision for Volunteering**

1.1 The Council has a vision of thriving communities where volunteers play an active role in shaping local service delivery, promoting community cohesion and positively influencing decision making.

1.2 The Council will work with our local community and partners to develop a diverse range of suitable volunteering activities that are relevant for all people.

## **2. Why Volunteer?**

People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons, for example:

- To socialise and get to know the local community
- To put something back into society and make a difference
- To regain or learn new skills
- As a route to employment
- To help the environment

## **3. Volunteering with Ashdon Parish Council**

3.1 The Council regards volunteering as an activity where someone freely gives their time to help an organisation or an individual who they are not related to. In other words, volunteers are not paid staff and do not have a legally binding contractual relationship with the Council.

3.2 Volunteers bring a range of expertise to particular tasks or projects.

## **4. Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers**

Volunteer role descriptions, registration forms, policies and other documents will be available on the Council website. More detailed information will be available from the Parish Clerk.

## **5. Induction**

The Council will provide all volunteers with the information needed to complete tasks.

## **6. Health and Safety**

The Council has a duty of care to avoid exposing our volunteers to health and safety risks. All volunteers will be made aware of our Health and Safety Policy and any practical safety concerns as part of their induction. Volunteers are expected to comply with the Council's Health and Safety Policy. All volunteer roles will be risk assessed, covering both the tasks involved and the environment in which they will be conducted. In addition, where a volunteer makes us aware of a pre-existing medical condition or disability, an individual risk assessment may also be necessary. All work undertaken by volunteers shall have due regard to the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, any other health and safety legislation and Parish Council policies relating to health and safety.

## **7. Confidentiality and Data Protection**

Volunteers will be made aware of the Council's Confidentiality and Data Protection Policies. If their role requires, volunteers must receive appropriate training.

## **8. Safeguarding**

8.1 The Town Council will ensure that volunteers are aware of, and have received appropriate training in the Council's Safeguarding Policy on Children and Adults.

8.2 Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks will be carried out on any volunteer who in the course of their activity has regular, unsupervised, contact with the same group of children or young people. An Enhanced DBS check will also need to be carried out on volunteers who care for or deal with the personal affairs of any adult. Further guidance can be found in the Council's safeguarding policies and procedures.

## **9. Equal Opportunities**

The Council is fully committed to equality and will proactively offer volunteering opportunities to people from different backgrounds as a contribution to developing and maintaining an organisation where differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute. The Parish Council operates an Equality Policy.

## **10. Ongoing Support**

All volunteers will receive appropriate support and supervision in their activity. The level of supervision will match the nature of the role and the experience of the volunteer. All volunteers will have a nominated Volunteer Supervisor (ordinarily a

member of the Council or a longer serving volunteer), someone they can have regular access to if problems arise or when help and support is needed.

## **11. Expenses**

The Council is committed to paying reasonable 'out of pocket' expenses ensuring that potential volunteers are not excluded due to financial reasons. However, these need to be agreed in advance with the Council, via the Volunteer Supervisor, before the volunteer commences their activity. Where expenses are not agreed, volunteers must be made aware of this at the first opportunity in the recruitment process.

## **12. Volunteers in Receipt of benefits**

It is the responsibility of the volunteer to establish whether volunteering is going to affect their entitlement to any social security benefits. Further advice should be obtained from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP), Job Centre Plus, or Citizens Advice Bureau.

## **13. Insurance**

13.1. All volunteers are required to sign the volunteer registration form on the first day of induction. This provides them with basic accident cover and also indemnifies the volunteer against any claim made against them or the Council whilst carrying out their activity. Volunteers over the age of 80 must also complete the medical disclosure form (this is a requirement from the Parish Council's insurers).

13.2 Where volunteers drive as part of their voluntary activity, and use their own vehicle, they must ensure they possess the relevant class of insurance. Further guidance should be sought from the Volunteer's own insurance company. Supervisors must check and record this documentation if required.

## **14. Complaints**

14.1 As volunteers are not employees, they are unable to use the Council's Grievance Policy and Procedure. However, they are entitled to use the Parish Council's Complaints Procedure.

14.2 Complaints by volunteers should be raised in the first instance with a member of the Parish Council staff and dealt with informally where possible. Where appropriate, the complaint will be investigated fully by the Parish Clerk and Chairperson.

14.3 If a complaint is brought against a volunteer, this will be investigated by the Parish Clerk and Chairperson. Every attempt will be made to resolve the matter as quickly and informally as possible. If the issue cannot be satisfactorily resolved, then

the Parish Council reserves the right to tell the volunteer that their services are no longer required with immediate effect.

## **15. Moving On**

15.1 The Parish Council welcomes feedback and encourages volunteers to offer ideas for improvements. Volunteers who choose to stop volunteering at any time will also be invited to provide feedback before they move on.

15.2 Volunteers who are leaving the organisation and who have made a regular commitment to it should be offered an exit interview, reference and/or statement of their achievements to ensure that their services are properly and formally appreciated.

## **16. Termination of Activity**

Where appropriate, the role and placement of the volunteers may be terminated by the Parish Clerk or Chairperson at one week's notice, or immediately where inappropriate behaviour has occurred. In all cases, the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken.

## **17. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

**Adopted: September 2024. To be reviewed: September 2026.**