



WEXHAM COURT PARISH COUNCIL

VOLUNTEER POLICY 2024

Introduction

This Policy sets out the Parish Council's position about the engagement of volunteers. This can cover support in the Council Offices, around the Parish and at events. This policy highlights the benefits of using volunteers for the Parish Council but also for the volunteers.

Collaborating with volunteers must not be taken lightly and there should be procedures in place to ensure volunteers receive the best possible management support and the Parish Council receives maximum benefit from a volunteer's contribution. This should include what is expected from the volunteer during their contribution (i.e., performing the required duties/tasks adequately) but also what the volunteer will gain from the experience (i.e., increased knowledge and/or quality of life).

By producing this policy, it demonstrates the Parish Council's commitment to volunteering by recognising and appreciating their support through their involvement in the work of the Parish Council for the benefit of the Parish.

Volunteers are also covered by the Council's adopted policies on Equality and Diversity, Dignity at Work and Safeguarding Policies.

The Benefits of Engaging 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.

Undertaking voluntary work provides:

- 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 the wellbeing by:

- Improving health and fitness, particularly with outdoor activities.
- Reducing depression and combating stress.
- Build on self-esteem.

Collaborating with Volunteers

We should engage with volunteers regularly to ensure the best working practices are in place. The Council will provide all 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 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. In addition, where a volunteer makes us aware of a preexisting 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. Engagement of volunteers is covered by the Parish Council's insurance whilst working on projects initiated and supervised by Parish Council staff.

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;
- Planned in advance for sufficient notification.
- Offered as widely as possible.
- Duties/tasks clearly identified.

The Parish Council will ensure all volunteers are:

- Fully supervised.
- 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.

Adopted: March 2024