

# **Fawley Parish Council**

## **VOLUNTEER POLICY**

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## **1. Policy Control**

Version 1.0 Draft Volunteer Policy Date 17 January 2022

## **2. Mission Statement**

To develop and sustain a sense of community within the parish of Fawley by addressing environmental, economic and social issues and delivering quality services to our Parishioners

### **About us**

Fawley Parish Council is one of the largest Parish Council in the New Forest with 15 Councillors around 36 permanent staff and boasts some impressive facilities and amenities which can be viewed on our web site [www.fawley-pc.gov.uk](http://www.fawley-pc.gov.uk)

The Parish is made up of Fawley, Blackfield, Calshot, Langley, Holbury and Hardley villages with a population of around 15,000 people and is in the most southerly area of the Waterside within the New Forest with its shoreline opening onto the Solent.

The Council is committed to the provision of facilities and resources to its residents and is developing a range of events, activities, and new projects to bring the community together and develop local networks.

### **3. Purpose of this policy**

- To provide a framework for all staff across the Council in considering involving volunteers in their work
- To provide a foundation on which our involvement of volunteers will be based
- To help ensure fairness and consistency when involving a diverse group of people.

Being able to refer to a written policy ensures that decisions are not made on an ad-hoc basis

### **4. Vision for Volunteering**

- The Senior Management Team (SMT) will consider involving volunteers when planning, contracting, monitoring revising and providing services
- Involving volunteers will become an integral part of the Council's culture, 'leading by example'
- Volunteering will become a key method in the Council's wider stakeholder engagement

### **5. Definition of a volunteer**

A 'volunteer' is defined as someone who commits time and energy for the benefit of others, who does so freely, through personal choice and without financial remuneration, except for the payment of actual out of pocket expenses.

Fawley Parish Council actively encourages the engagement and involvement of volunteers across all areas of the Council. It is acknowledged that volunteer engagement is crucial to the success of the Council and that without the personal generosity of people working for no personal compensation, the Council would not be able to deliver the range of services that it currently offers.

It is not the intention of Fawley Parish Council to use volunteers as a replacement to paid staff but as complimentary to the professional staff team in place.

Where paid staff express a wish to volunteer in addition to their role, this is done outside of the scope of their normal duties and hours of paid employment.

As part of its commitment to volunteers an agreement is entered into at the start of the relationship. It is accepted that the volunteer can terminate this agreement without notice at any time and similarly Fawley Parish Council can decide to terminate the role if it is no longer required.

### **6. Recruitment, Induction and Training**

All volunteer recruitment will be co-ordinated through the service leads of the Senior Management Team. For a detailed breakdown of the procedure see Appendix 1 (Recruitment and selection process).

## **7. Confidentiality**

When working within the Council it may be possible that volunteers will see confidential information during their work. Within the induction process confidentiality will be discussed and any breach of this will result in the termination of the volunteer's placement and could result in criminal charges being brought by the police.

## **8. Equal Opportunities and Diversity**

Fawley Parish Council is fully committed to Equal Opportunities and has a statement to this effect within the volunteer agreement as well as a separate policy promoting Equal Opportunities and Diversity.

Volunteer placements within the Council are subject to the Council's Equal Opportunity Policy and will be open to all individuals irrespective of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age, religious belief, marital status, or other protected characteristics covered under the Equalities Act (2010), this list is not exhaustive. Fawley Parish Council will actively encourage volunteers from all sections of the local communities in which it operates.

All volunteers will be required to acknowledge they have read and understood Fawley Parish Council's Equal Opportunity Policy. If a volunteer is unwilling or unable to model the behaviours and values set out in the equal opportunities policy, then this will be the subject of discussion between the volunteer and the responsible manager and may result in the termination of the volunteer placement. If a volunteer feels subject to discriminatory behaviour during their placement with Fawley Parish Council, the volunteer has recourse to the "problem solving" procedure and "whistle blowing" procedure as appropriate.

We are committed to supporting the rehabilitation of offenders where appropriate (i.e. activities not exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders 1974) across the Council's activities. For roles where a DBS check is required having a criminal record will not necessarily prevent an individual from volunteering within the Council. Only relevant convictions will be taken into consideration when assessing an individual's suitability for a voluntary role.

We are fully committed to equality and diversity in all areas of our work and feel we are better able to meet the needs of stakeholders and users as a direct result working within anti-discriminatory framework.

## **9. Expenses**

We recognise that we benefit greatly from the vast amount of time, expertise, and skill that our volunteers bring to our Council. Therefore, we encourage the claiming of out of pocket expenses in line with the guidance from HMRC.

## **10. Insurance**

Volunteers are covered by Fawley Parish Council's insurance policies including public liability and, where appropriate, professional indemnity for advice services.

## 11. Health & Safety

There is a separate policy that covers the Health & Safety within the Council and volunteers will be made aware of this as part of their induction. It is the responsibility of the volunteer's responsible manager to make volunteers aware of the necessary risk assessment for their workplace and ensure that PPE is provided as required.

## 12. Problem-solving procedures

If a volunteer wishes to make a complaint this should in the first instance be discussed with their supervisor.

### [If a volunteer makes a complaint](#)

This part of the problem-solving procedure gives the volunteer the right to complain if they believe they have been unfairly treated.

#### Stage 1 - Oral complaint

Initial complaints, whether against a member of staff, the Council, or another volunteer, should be discussed with the volunteer. If the complaint is about the volunteer's manager, then the matter should be referred to the Clerk to the Council. During this meeting the volunteer can be accompanied by a nominated person of their choice. If the issue cannot be resolved at this stage then the volunteer should make a formal complaint in writing to the Clerk.

#### Stage 2 - In writing

Volunteers making a complaint in writing should do so within 3 weeks of meeting with the Manager/Clerk. The Clerk will consider the matter and respond in writing to the volunteer within 3 weeks of receiving their letter. The Clerk may convene investigatory meetings with the parties involved all of whom can have a nominated person attending with them.

#### Stage 3 - Right to appeal

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome, then they can appeal to the Chairman of the Council. At the Chairman's discretion this may be delegated to a Committee Chair of the Council. The volunteer can have a nominated person present at this meeting but the decision of the Chairman (or his/her representative) is final. Volunteers have no rights under employment law unless they can prove that they are in fact employees.

### [If there is a complaint about a volunteer, or the behaviour of the volunteer in the opinion of the Volunteer's Manager is unacceptable.](#)

This part of the problem-solving procedure gives the volunteer the right to be told why action is being taken, the right to state their case and the right to appeal.

#### Stage 1 – Oral discussion

The volunteer's manager will discuss with the volunteer the nature of the complaint, the reasons why and then to identify any remedial action e.g., training, change of role etc. A deadline for reviewing the situation will be set. If someone else raised the complaint, where appropriate the third party will be kept informed of the action taken.

### Stage 2 – Written warning

If the issue hasn't been resolved at stage one, the volunteer's manager will issue the volunteer with a warning in writing outlining the reason(s). The volunteer has the right to state their case to their manager or if there is an issue with the volunteer's manager to the Clerk - the volunteer has the right to be accompanied by a person of their choice to any such meeting. Depending on the nature of the complaint, further objectives could be set, and help offered to the volunteer. However, if the Council decides to require the volunteer to leave, then the volunteer has the right to appeal. The decision to require a volunteer to leave should be a last resort.

### Stage 3 - Right to appeal

If a volunteer has been required to leave then they may appeal in writing to the Chairman of The Council. The volunteer can have a nominated person present at any meeting called. The Chairman's decision is final.

### Exceptions

There are some occasions on which a volunteer can be suspended immediately while an investigation is carried out. These include, but are not limited to, acts that are deemed equal in nature to gross misconduct, e.g. theft, assault, act of violence, malicious damage, and deliberate falsification of documents, harassment or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The decision to suspend a volunteer's activity needs to be confirmed to the volunteer in writing.

## **Appendix A – Recruitment and selection process**

Volunteers will be selected through the following process:

- A Role Description, outlining the specific tasks, responsibilities desirable skills and knowledge will be drawn up and agreed.
- A Person Specification outlining the specific skills and abilities required for the role will be drawn up and agreed.
- The vacancy will be advertised via the local networks and media and the Council's website
- Once a prospective volunteer has been identified the volunteer will be invited to complete a volunteer application form.
- Using the Role Description and Person Specification, the potential volunteer will be invited to an informal discussion on the proposed role, its requirements and establish each other's expectations, with a view to assessing mutual suitability. Following the meeting the responsible manager will decide within one week regarding the individual's suitability for the role and inform the volunteer.
- Individuals who are not seen as appropriate for a volunteer role are entitled to receive either verbal or written feedback as to why they were not deemed suitable.
- For specific roles a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check may be required.
- This information will be included in any advertisement and any placement will be subject to satisfactory completion of a DBS.
- Prior to commencing their volunteering Fawley Parish Council reserve the right to ask successful volunteers to provide referees, excluding relations, who can attest to their suitability for the position.
- A volunteer arrangement setting out what the volunteer can expect from Fawley Parish Council and its expectations of the volunteer is signed by both the service manager and volunteer on commencement of the volunteer's work. This is not intended to be a contractual agreement.
- Upon joining the Council, the volunteer will be invited to participate in an induction programme the content and duration of which will depend on the hours and complexity of the role.
- The volunteer will have a one-month probationary period after which the volunteer and their manager will meet, discuss the period, and decide whether both parties wish to continue with the arrangement, terminate the arrangement, or extend the probation as appropriate.

- If a volunteer feels the demands/tasks requested of them are unrealistic then the volunteer has the right to refuse them and discuss the issue with the appropriate Manager. If the issue is unresolved refer to the 'problem solving procedure'.

Once started the volunteer's manager will then provide feedback on an on-going basis to the volunteer. This feedback will include support, development assistance, ensuring the correct resources are available, updates to information necessary to perform the role and team meetings.