

# **Owmbly by Spital Parish Council**

## **Volunteers Policy**

OWMBY BY SPITAL Parish Council (hereinafter called OPC) recognise the valuable and unique role which voluntary activity plays in assisting councillors and complementing the services offered by OPC. OPC therefore supports and encourages voluntary activity. OPC would not be able to undertake projects without the involvement of volunteers and is always grateful for this help.

Volunteers come from all walks of life, and represent the diversity of our community, bringing with them a wide range of skills and experience. In order to safeguard OPC all volunteers must be cleared via the same checks as employees before any volunteers are allowed to work on Parish Council premises or undertake Parish Council activities.

The ideas and views of volunteers working on a project are valuable and every effort will be made to include consultation with volunteers during planning. Where feasible volunteers will be involved in decision making.

### **OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for the recruitment and management of volunteers. The OPC's objective is to ensure that all relevant parties understand their roles and responsibilities with regard to volunteering. OPC aims to ensure that all volunteers are treated fairly, consistently and with respect regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief.

### **VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS**

Volunteers must be adequately and appropriately trained to be able to carry out the role. The exact nature of the training will depend on the role. It is not possible to detail what constitutes 'adequacy' as requirements will vary according to:

- the job or activity.
- the existing competency of volunteers.
- the circumstances of the work ( e.g. the degree of supervision);
- the tools and/or equipment being used.

The training standard, however, must be sufficient to ensure the Health and Safety of volunteers and any people who might be affected by the work, as far as reasonably practicable.

Responsibility for providing training rests with OPC. Volunteers, if working for only a few hours to help at an event or similar, must be informed about the task and its purpose, health and safety and supervision arrangements. Responsibility for this rests with OPC or another person/s to whom authority has been provided by OPC to undertake the work.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCILLORS OPERATING ALONGSIDE VOLUNTEERS**

OPC councillors commit to:

- Recognising the potential benefit of volunteer involvement and respect the role volunteers provide.
- Report any concern/issues regarding volunteers to the parish clerk or another person delegated to the role by OPC.
- Explain specified duties of a volunteer.
- Provide a local induction, including fire, safety and accident/incident reporting.
- Ensure that volunteers comply with the procedures as written in the Safeguarding policy.
- That Volunteers are aware of who are the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Deputy Safeguarding Lead.
- Provide help, advice and support to the volunteer.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS**

All volunteers must agree to abide by current policies, role descriptions, and abide by this Volunteer Policy. Each volunteer is accountable to the Parish Clerk or other persons as delegated by OPC who will oversee their volunteering activity. It is a requirement for all volunteers to treat information in a confidential manner and use it solely for lawful purposes.

All volunteers of OPC are responsible for ensuring that their own behaviour is in accordance with the Parish Council's Equal Opportunities Policy. In particular, each employee should:

- Not discriminate in the course of their duties nor induce or attempt to induce others to do so;
- Not victimise, harass, bully or intimidate other staff or induce others to do so;
- Inform Parish Clerk if they suspect that discrimination is taking place in the working environment.
- Each volunteer has a duty to inform the parish clerk of any criminal convictions.

## **LOWER AGE LIMITS**

The lower age limit for volunteers is 15 years. A full risk assessment will be carried out in line with the Health and Safety (Young Persons) Regulations 1997 and shared with the parent or legal guardian of the young person.

## **UPPER AGE LIMITS**

There is no upper age limit if the volunteer is judged to be capable of carrying out the allotted task

## **CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS**

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) Exemption Order, volunteers are required to declare all previous convictions. This information will be confidential and will not necessarily prejudice the volunteer being accepted; however, when the volunteer activity will involve access to children and vulnerable adults, further checks will be made.

All posts exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act will be subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. (DBS checks cover what were previously a standard or enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check and a check of the ISA Children's barred list and/or the ISA Vulnerable

adults barred list) for posts identified as Regulated or Controlled Activity, as defined by the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

### **Disclosure and Barring Service checks**

Volunteers working with or supervising Children and Young People must have a DBS check that is known and recorded by the Parish Council.

Volunteers need to have read and understood the Safeguarding Policy and where possible received Safeguarding training.

### **WHISTLEBLOWING**

OPC takes wrongdoing seriously. Therefore, if a volunteer believes they have witnessed any wrongdoing in the in the course of their volunteering project/work they must inform OPC about any wrongdoings.

### **ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE**

The use and misuse of alcohol, drugs, or other substances, can have a detrimental effect on any person's ability to perform tasks, impairing the individual's capacity to work safely. For these reasons the volunteer must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst on duty. The consumption or misuse of drugs or alcohol in the Parish environment is prohibited.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Volunteers undertaking agreed activities on behalf of OPC will be covered by our existing insurance arrangement. Where volunteers, during their authorised voluntary activity, suffer loss or damage, OPC will act towards them as it would towards any paid staff.

It is the responsibility of the Parish Clerk or other person/s identified by OPC to identify and assess possible risks and apply the principles they have in place locally. A risk assessment must be undertaken in order to identify risks that might be faced and how they will be managed. If an area of activity presents a significant risk, consideration must be given to reducing or stopping the activity which gives rise to the risk.

The Parish Council, through its Clerk or other person(s) as advised, must receive a copy of such risk assessment records. Responsibility for undertaking the risk assessment rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided by OPC to undertake the work. Risk assessments and their associated paperwork must comply with current Health and Safety at Work legislation.

### **LIABILITIES**

OPC accepts no responsibility for articles of personal property, which may be lost or damaged by fire, burglary or theft. In so far as insurance is concerned, on condition that volunteers are working at the sole request of and under the sole control of the Parish Council then they will be insured under OPC's Public Liability and Employers' Liability cover. Reporting to OPC in respect of work which is of an ongoing nature is not necessary on each occasion and does not require formal approval of OPC on each occasion.

Volunteers may only carry out less hazardous work involving non powered hand tools, unless qualified or trained to do so; for example, path maintenance, sand clearance, tree planting etc.

Minimum levels of PPE (suitable footwear, gloves, safety goggles etc.) must be worn when undertaking such activities. Prior to work commencing, a visual inspection must be carried out to ensure that there are no obvious hazards such as litter, glass or stones.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

OPC attaches the greatest importance to the safety of people working on its behalf, endeavours to do all within its power to prevent accidents and injuries. Councillors and volunteers work together to reduce personal injuries and hazards to a minimum. Volunteers are therefore asked to co-operate and report any dangerous equipment or conditions, so that preventative measures can be taken before an accident occurs. Volunteers are expected to comply with safety procedures so as to minimise the likelihood of accidents to themselves or others

Any cleaning materials used must not be stronger than those available on shop shelves; and chemicals should not be mixed.

No weed killers can be used in or around any Parish Council properties unless they are administered by a licensed contractor appointed by the Parish Council.

High visibility vests or other appropriate clothing must be worn where appropriate. Jewellery, necklaces, watches and the like must not be worn where they compromise the safe working environment for the volunteer.

Trainers, open-toed shoes, heeled shoes or sandals must not be worn if the safe working environment for the volunteer is compromised.

**PROBLEMS AND/OR CONCERNS**

The Parish Council makes every effort to maintain harmonious relations with volunteers and invites their co-operation. When problems or concerns exist around the volunteer then they will be addressed sensitively. Confidentiality will be maintained.

All work undertaken by volunteers shall have regard to the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and all other Health and Safety Legislation.

**This policy will be reviewed annually.**

Signed .....Graham Crompton Howe.....

Date May 2023

Review Date May 2024

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Document Control			
Version	Author	Date	Changes
1.0	D LEAH	14/02/2022	Disclosure and Barring Service checks
