**Volunteer Policy**

**Introduction**

Upper Beeding Parish Council (UBPC) acknowledges and values the support volunteers provide to the community. This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in activities overseen by UBPC.

This policy applies to volunteers working on behalf of UBPC, not those employed by UBPC or members of the Council.

Volunteer roles will complement paid staff. UBPC will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.

**Aims**

UBPC aims to encourage voluntary activity by:

* Matching time and skills to volunteering opportunities.
* Ensuring volunteers receive adequate and appropriate training and support.
* Fostering a friendly and supportive atmosphere.
* Ensuring good working relationships between volunteers, staff, councilors and other stakeholders.
* Recognising the benefits volunteers bring.
* Endeavouring to recruit and involve volunteers from a range of backgrounds and abilities.
* Ensuring volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible.
* Resolving any complaint made by a volunteer in a timely manner.

**Management of Volunteering Projects**

* The scope of the project must be agreed with the Clerk.
* A Project Leader will be assigned to each project.
* The Clerk will review feasibility will be reviewed and obtain the relevant permissions.
* A Risk Assessment (RA) must be completed by the Project Leader and approved by the Clerk prior to work being started.
* A register of volunteers will be kept for each project.
* On completion of the work the Project Leader will complete a summary of the work and undertake a short review which will include a review of the RA

**Who is a volunteer?**

A volunteer is any individual who undertakes unpaid activities on behalf of our organisation of their own free choice. Volunteers may be involved in short or long-term activities or as a one off. Typical activities may include:

* Litter Picking
* Maintenance Projects
* Support at events

**Roles and Responsibilities**

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no contractual obligation for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks. However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability and a reciprocal set of expectations:

**Volunteers can expect:**

* To have clear information about what is and is not expected of them.
* To be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment.
* To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner.
* To receive reimbursement for reasonable expenses.
* To be recognised and appreciated.
* To be able to say ‘no’ to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable.
* To know what to do if something goes wrong.

**UBPC expects volunteers:**

* To be reliable, open and honest
* To comply with UBPC policies and risk assessments
* To contribute positively to projects and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute.
* To carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

**Recruitment**

Recruitment will usually involve a standard application form and an informal interview. Some roles may not require a formal application, however, will always involve an informal meeting with the project leader.

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to.

**Induction and Training**

Volunteers must be adequately trained, briefed or be provided with instructions on how to carry out the task for which they have volunteered.

**Data Protection and Confidentiality**

UBPC are bound by Data Protection Regulations. Only staff who need to see information for purposes related to volunteer involvement will be able to access it. We will not pass information on without permission. Personal information will be kept for the duration of a volunteer’s time with UBPC and for a further three years.

**Expenses**

Reasonable expenses will be paid on the production of receipts and with the prior agreement of the Project Leader.

**Problem-solving Procedure**

UBPC acknowledges that sometimes problems do arise. Any volunteer with a complaint or concern should bring it up with the Project Leader, Clerk, or the Chair of the Council who will aim to resolve the issue informally. If the issue cannot be resolved by informal discussion, then it can be taken up formally through the grievance procedure.

**Health and Safety**

UBPC appreciates that all staff and volunteers have the right to work and volunteer in a safe environment. Therefore, all staff and volunteers must carry out their duties in line with UBPC’s Health and Safety Policy whilst engaged in their work/volunteering activity.

Volunteers are covered by UBPC’s Public Liability Insurance but if they wish to use their car to carry out any aspect of their volunteering role, the onus is on the volunteer to notify their insurance company to ensure that they are covered on their vehicle insurance.

Only volunteer work that has been authorised by UBPC will be covered by the Council’s insurance.

**Diversity**

All volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of and commitment to equal opportunities and diversity. Should they require any training in this area it will be provided by UBPC.

UBPC is very sensitive to different cultures, lifestyles, backgrounds and languages and strives to ensure equality of opportunity to ensure that individuals are given equal access to information, services etc and requires all staff and volunteers to follow these principles. We will strive to provide extra support and make reasonable adjustments, if needed, for volunteers with additional needs including disability, language or mental health.

**Moving on**

When a volunteer leaves, they will be asked for feedback on their volunteering experience.

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