

## **MARDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

### **VOLUNTEER WORKER AND ASSOCIATED EXPENSES POLICY**

Adopted on 13 September 2021

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Marden Parish Council (PC) recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers may be able to make. It is, therefore, its aim to ensure that a person's volunteering experience is as positive and beneficial as possible to both the individual and to the parish.

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 and contribute to the community.

#### **THE POLICY**

1. This policy sets out the principles for voluntary involvement in activities authorised by Marden PC, which acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, and that volunteering can benefit the council, local communities and the volunteers themselves.
2. This policy applies to volunteers working on behalf of, but not employed by, the PC. Volunteers are unpaid and contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community of their own free will.
3. Only volunteer work that has been authorised by the Council will be covered by the Parish Council's insurance, however the council does not insure volunteers' personal possessions.
4. Parish Council volunteer opportunities are advertised through Parish media, including Marden News and Views, PC notice boards and website.
5. Other volunteering opportunities that arise from the community must be authorised by the PC.
6. 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. There is no upper age limit if the volunteer is judged to be capable of carrying out the allotted task.
7. Each volunteer must be able to meet the demands of the role without risk to his/her physical or mental health and well being. If there are any changes to the health and fitness of the volunteer (e.g. pregnancy, injury, etc) the volunteer must make this known to the Parish Clerk and so a review of the volunteering activities can be undertaken.
8. Volunteers are requested to respect neighbours and residents when carrying out voluntary work. If the nature of the work is such that it is potentially disruptive to others, it should only be carried out during sociable daylight hours, unless agreed with the council.
9. The Council has a zero-tolerance policy about abuse of any variety directed at PC volunteers. The Council will make every effort to resolve such a situation and facilitate suitable apology to the volunteer concerned. If considered necessary by the Parish Council, abuse will be reported to the police.

10. Volunteers will be treated equally, regardless of their gender, race, age, faith, disability or sexual orientation.
11. Volunteers must inform the Parish Clerk in writing of work they intend to carry out, and receive confirmation, before commencing such work.
12. Volunteers must be adequately trained to be able to carry out the role required. The exact nature of the training will depend on the role and the findings from the required risk assessment. The PC will work with the individual authorised to undertake the work to assess training needs and provide appropriate training as required.
13. It is not possible to detail what constitutes 'adequacy' as requirements will vary according to:
  - a) The job or activity
  - b) The existing competency of volunteers
  - c) The circumstances of the work (e.g. the degree of supervision)
  - d) The tools and/or equipment being used.
14. 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 the individual to whom authority has been provided by the PC to undertake the work.
15. Volunteers, if working for only a few hours to help at an event or similar, must still be informed about the task and its purpose, health & safety and supervision arrangements. Responsibility for this rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided by the PC to undertake the work.
16. A risk assessment will be undertaken in order to identify any risks that might be faced and how they will be managed. The Clerk of the Council is to receive a copy of the risk assessment prior to the work being undertaken. Visual inspections of the work area must be carried out and recorded prior to work commencing.
17. The risk assessment should include as a minimum:
  - a) The job or activity
  - b) The existing competency of volunteers
  - c) The circumstances of the work (e.g. the degree of supervision)
  - d) The tools and/or equipment being used
  - e) Training requirements.
18. The training standard must be sufficient to ensure the Health and Safety of volunteers and any people who might be affected by the work.
19. Volunteers must be informed about the task and its purpose, health, safety and supervision arrangements. Responsibility for this rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided for by the PC.
20. All works undertaken by volunteers shall have regard to the Health & Safety at Work Act. Volunteers will not be authorised to carry out work that the Council considers hazardous, or would contravene the principles of the Health and Safety at Work Act, taking into account the competence of the volunteer(s) carrying out the proposed work.

21. Volunteers must carry out only less hazardous work involving use of non-powered tools where possible. However, if using powered lawn mowers or other grass cutting equipment, stout footwear must be worn. Sensible and appropriate protective equipment should be worn including stout footwear, safety goggles, high visibility vests.
22. All volunteers must have due regard to the fact that they are carrying out authorised work on behalf of Marden PC and as such are representing the Council, both in quality of work and possible interaction with the public.
23. Where necessary, DBS checks will be organised and funded.
24. All volunteers must agree to abide by current policies, role descriptions, and abide by this Volunteer Policy.
25. Each volunteer is accountable to the Parish Clerk 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.

#### **EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT**

26. Where necessary personal expenditure up to a maximum of £50 in any one transaction may be expended and reclaimed as expenses; any need to incur personal expenditure shall be authorised in advance by email or signed letter from the Clerk.
27. The Clerk may only authorise expenses where:
  - a) There is sufficient budget to cover the cost after all expected costs at that time are accounted for
  - b) The expense is reasonable for the requirements of the tasks and is reasonable in terms of costs of the goods/service
  - c) An invoice for the work directly charged to Marden PC is not possible (i.e. the spend is urgent or so minimal that the company will not raise an invoice)
  - d) A receipt has been produced and VAT is shown where applicable.
28. All expense claims shall comply with the relevant PC procedure and must be processed with other payments arranged by the Clerk and must be approved as part of a list of payments in a meeting of the full Council. The payment will be made by cheque, the Clerk will notify the claimant when the cheque has been approved.
29. A copy of this policy must be given to all volunteers.

Review date: September 2022

Signed:

Chair of Marden Parish Council

Date: