

Reviewed and approved at full council meeting of 21st April 2022.

To be reviewed May 2023.

Bentham Town Council Volunteer Policy and Process

Bentham Town Council values the support and benefit that comes from volunteers within the community. This policy sets out the principles of volunteering within events and activities overseen by the council and explains the processes behind the recruitment, selection, management and support that the council will offer volunteers.

Volunteer policy

Bentham Town Council (BTC) understands the invaluable contribution that volunteers make across our community. This includes those who offer help independently and those sought by Bentham Town Council. It includes ongoing and one-off roles. People volunteer for a variety of reasons and for a variety of timescales. This document relates to volunteers involved directly with events and activities that are the responsibility of and predetermined by the council.

BTC is strongly committed to the equality and diversity principles defined within all our policies and practice. As such, volunteers will be assigned tasks based on the individual's compatibility with the role, regardless of race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins, gender, marital status, sexual orientation or disability. Full Council or a sub-committee will decide what skills and knowledge are necessary for a particular task that has been identified. Potential volunteers can then be approached by a councillor who volunteers to undertake this. If a potential volunteer approaches the council in writing with a resume of their skills and knowledge this resume will be communicated to the council by the clerk at a full council meeting. The resume will be kept on file. If a potential volunteer makes a verbal approach to the council this will be communicated to the council as an agenda item at a full council meeting. They will then be approached by a councillor who volunteers to undertake this task and a resume of their skills and knowledge will be attained. The resumes will be kept on file and referred to as and when the Council identifies tasks that are compatible with the potential volunteers' skills and knowledge.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure a consistent approach in the recruitment, development, support and management of volunteers and of those involved in the volunteer relationship
- Be clear about the nature of volunteering within the council, as a role where there is no obligation on either party to offer or accept work
- Outline our commitment and responsibilities toward volunteers
- Outline our expectations of volunteers

Definitions

A volunteer is someone who wishes to undertake a defined role at the direction of and on behalf of Bentham Town Council. The volunteer enters into the role with the understanding that there will be no monetary compensation or other compensations, other than those agreed and defined in the volunteer / council agreement.

Arrangements such as work placements or student work experience will not be defined as constituting a volunteer opportunity.

The Volunteer status

A volunteer is not employed by the council and will not be paid a salary. There is no obligation from either party to provide opportunities or to accept a volunteer role.

Volunteers will be treated as valuable contributors to the overall aims of the council and as such, be treated with respect and integrity.

Volunteers who are not employees of the council will be managed by a councillor or councillors who volunteer to fill this role. This councillor or councillors will be responsible for reporting to full council or a sub-committee.

Volunteers who are also employees of the council will be managed as a volunteer whilst in a volunteer role and preferably by a manager who is not responsible for them in their employment. Prior to any arrangement such as this being agreed any potential conflicts of interest will be addressed and managed suitably. They will be managed and any potential conflict of interest will be managed by a councillor who undertakes to fill this role.

Volunteers do not have the same legal status as employees but are expected to have the same protections where applicable. This includes suitable management of health and safety, knowledge of and access to grievance processes and the opportunity to approach a named councillor or named councillors around any aspect of the role, organisation or delivery of the project within which they volunteer. Volunteers are expected to adhere the policies and procedures of Bentham Town Council that are provided to them as part of the induction process. Potential volunteers will be provided with at least, The Volunteer Policy and other policies as applicable. The councillor or councillors who undertake to supervise and manage the volunteers will decide if any other policies are relevant.

Volunteers will have a written agreement, outlining expectations of the role and clarifying the role. This agreement will include details of the role, timings, support offered and similar but will not imply a contract. This agreement will be drawn up by the councillor or councillors volunteering to supervise and manage the volunteer(s), discussed and agreed between both parties.

Identifying suitable volunteer roles

Volunteers are a valuable addition to BTC, but will not be used to replace paid staff. Volunteers are people who want to help. Volunteer roles will be identified and agreed prior to any individual taking up a volunteer role. These roles will be identified at full council or sub-committee meetings.

Potential volunteer roles:

- May be identified as part of a project planning process
- May be developed prior to the project commencing, with agreement and all relevant paperwork completed in advance (paperwork is the agreement referred to in the final paragraph of the section entitled 'The Volunteer Status')
- Bring added value to the project
- Will be agreed by the Council
- May be advertised following a process agreed at full council meeting, ensuring engagement with the widest possible range of candidates
- May be identified by a volunteer approaching the Council

Appointing volunteers

Volunteers will be assigned tasks by the named councillor or councillors who have volunteered to manage and supervise a volunteers or volunteers for a specific project which has been identified in a full council or sub-committee meeting.

The Volunteer status

A volunteer is not employed by the council and will not be paid a salary. There is no obligation from either party to provide opportunities or to accept a volunteer role.

Once agreed, the volunteer(s) will be provided with an agreement, detailing the role and expectations and a date for undertaking an induction will be arranged.

Supporting volunteers

Once a volunteer is appointed, an induction process will take place. This will be conducted by a named councillor or councillors who volunteer to undertake this role. This should include, as a minimum;

- Introduction to Bentham Town Council
- Introductions to relevant councillors and staff
- Induction into the main place of work
- Explanation of the project alongside discussion of the role they will be undertaking
- Health and Safety issues, boundaries, safeguarding and any other relevant policy and procedure relating to the role
- Line management processes

It is important that volunteers are correctly inducted, are aware of the limitations and expectations of the role / project /organisation and are ready when the role commences.

The role and the volunteer will be reviewed through discussion with the volunteer and the named councilor or councillors.

Volunteers will be treated fairly and in line with BTC's policy.

Our expectations of volunteers

These will be communicated to potential volunteers by a councillor who volunteers to undertake this role. Volunteers will be expected to adhere to the tasks agreed between them and the named councillor(s). They will be expected to communicate with the council through the named councillor.