

Horrabridge Council

Volunteer Policy

INTRODUCTION

This policy has been prepared for the benefit of members of the public who may volunteer their time for Horrabridge Parish Council. This policy does not apply to the Horrabridge Parish Council's relationship with voluntary organisations where other arrangements could apply.

Horrabridge Parish Council appreciates that volunteers contribute valuable assistance and experience that would otherwise not be available and in turn can themselves gain valuable working experience that can enhance their skills and enable self-fulfilment. It is therefore, important that Horrabridge Parish Council encourages the participation of volunteers under supervision, whilst ensuring the safety and security of all parties.

The Clerk is responsible for the implementation of this policy. The Clerk is responsible for ensuring that this policy is up to date and updated guidance from the Health and Safety Executive when managing volunteers.

DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEER

A volunteer is a person who freely undertakes to perform a service, task or function that is not normally or traditionally performed as a full job and who does so without financial reward.

A clear distinction exists between volunteers and those who are given a financial reward, e.g., wage or allowances at special rates in return for casual services.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Whatever tasks are identified for voluntary work, it is important to match the volunteer to the work. In order to achieve this, prospective volunteers should be subject to references and an interview in all cases. Where the volunteer is going to be in contact with vulnerable groups or individuals, it will be necessary to obtain a criminal record disclosure check with the Disclosure and Barring Service. No road or traffic management can be conducted unless the volunteer has completed the Devon and Cornwall Accredited Police Volunteer Scheme and the Chief Constable has accredited APV to the individual. HPC accept no responsibility for members of the public conducting any road traffic management without the authority of HPC or the relevant training. Care should be taken to consider all equality issues.

AGREEMENT

All volunteers should be issued with a role description and a written agreement (see appendix 1), which clarifies the intentions and expectations of both parties in order to avoid subsequent disputes and which uses terminology like 'hope and expectations' instead of 'requirements.' Without a clear understanding of what is expected of the volunteer confusion and misunderstanding is likely to arise.

TRAINING

Volunteers should receive training directly related to the tasks they undertake.

An induction process, including health and safety, should be followed in every case to ensure volunteers understand the environment they are to work in. Training will help clarify how the volunteer is expected to carry out their tasks.

EXPENSES

Although Horrabridge Parish Council does not presently operate an expense system for volunteers, this does not exclude occasions when it feels necessary to re-imburse out of pocket expenses.

LIABILITY

For any council-led activity undertaken by a volunteer, Horrabridge Parish Council's public liability insurance will apply. Volunteers should be aware that this insurance does not cover them for loss of earnings should they sustain an injury.

EQUALITY

Horrabridge Parish Council's commitment to diversity and equality applies to volunteers. Horrabridge Parish Council values the contribution made by everyone, especially that made by unpaid volunteers.

SUPERVISION

Every volunteer should have a supervisor who they can go to with queries or problems. This is also important for feedback, so volunteers know how they are performing. Should volunteers' performance fall below the required level steps should be taken to remedy this. Standards need to be established and maintained regardless of the status of the individual.

Situations of misconduct need to be similarly managed. Being a volunteer does not excuse poor behaviour.

However, it must be remembered that volunteers are not bound by contractual obligations.