

VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL



Ventnor Town Council, Salisbury Gardens, Ventnor

Health and Safety

VOLUNTEER POLICY DOCUMENT

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Health and Safety

Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement within Ventnor Town Council. It is of relevance to all within VTC, including volunteers, staff, councillors, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility.

This policy is endorsed by Ventnor Town Council and will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of the Council and its volunteers.

Commitment

Ventnor Town Council acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique, and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, councillors, local communities, and the volunteers themselves.

VTC values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

Ventnor Town Council recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who are, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy, and skills to benefit the community.

Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by Ventnor Town Council and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements but does not replace the role of paid staff.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust, and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give, or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise Ventnor Town Council cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what Ventnor Town Council expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of VTC.

Volunteer Co-ordination

All volunteers will have a nominated member of staff or mentoring volunteer to offer guidance and advice to help the volunteer carry out tasks effectively. Volunteers will be informed of who to contact to receive support and supervision.

The nominated post holder with overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities within Ventnor Town Council, is *Tony McCarthy (Community Development Officer)*

This person is responsible for the management and welfare of the organisation's volunteers.

Recruitment and selection

Ventnor Town Council is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups including children. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks. Information about the volunteer not relevant to the performance of the volunteering tasks concerned will be disregarded by Ventnor Town Council in terms of recruitment and selection.

Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted in ways that makes them accessible to all members of the community.

Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement with VTC or referred to the nearest Volunteer Centre.

All volunteers will be asked to produce two references and will be invited to attend an informal interview. If the volunteer will be carrying out activities with vulnerable groups (children and/or adults) there may be other safer recruitment procedures carried out including asking a volunteer to undergo an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) check. More detailed information will be made available specific to legislative requirements and to the particular volunteer position.

Volunteers will have a clear and concise task description, which will be subsequently reviewed every Year. The task description will be prepared in conjunction with the volunteer and the designated person referred to above.

New volunteers will be afforded a proper induction process by Ventnor Town Council.

Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information to enable them to perform with confidence.

Training & Development

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the Ventnor Town Council relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, safeguarding vulnerable groups and equal opportunities.

The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for VTC in order to equip them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks. It will be the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to see that this training is provided. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training.

Training in the supervision of volunteers will be provided for all those who have direct responsibility for volunteers.

Support, Supervision and Recognition

Volunteers will have a named person *Tony McCarthy (Community Development Officer)* to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.

Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements, and identify individual training needs, including that relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated officer referred to above.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with VTC wider staff, at meetings etc.

A process will be developed in order to give formal recognition of the contribution of the Ventnor Town Council volunteers (e.g. internal awards, articles in newspapers and newsletters, thank you letters etc.) or outline any existing process.

Expenses

Ventnor Town Council recognises that the reimbursement of expenses incurred in traveling to and from the place of specific volunteering requests or in the course of volunteering is important from an equal opportunities point of view. This is necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to voluntary opportunities.

VTC volunteers are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. What can be reclaimed from VTC, and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.

Ventnor Town Council has a consistent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which are the same for volunteers, staff, etc. and are as approved by the Inland Revenue.

It is the responsibility of the designated person referred to above to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

Insurance

Ventnor Town Council liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.

VTC does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage

Confidentiality

Ventnor Town Council will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the organisation relating to the volunteer.

Settling Differences

Ventnor Town Council aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively, and consistently. The organisation seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted, and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the VTC guidelines for settling differences.

The designated officer referred to above is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to him/her. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by VTC to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the Ventnor Town Council wider grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to. If a volunteer's behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, they may be asked to change their role, or to leave the VTC volunteering programme.

Rights and Responsibilities

Ventnor Town Council recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- volunteer in a safe environment
- be insured
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses
- receive appropriate training
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development

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Ventnor Town Council expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of Ventnor Town Council
- carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of Ventnor Town Council and not bring it into disrepute
- comply with Ventnor Town Council policies

Important Contacts:

VTC Lead for Volunteering (Community Development Officer)

Name: Tony McCarthy

Email address: tony@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk

Telephone number: 07932890679 / 01983 857856

VTC Volunteering (Health and Safety Officer)

Name: Nigel Slater-Bishop

Email address nigel@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk

Telephone number 07595 432564 / 01983 857856

VTC Principle for Volunteering (Town Clerk)

Name: David Bartlett

Email address: david@ventnortowncouncil.org.uk

Telephone number: 01983 857856