



Volunteering Policy

Introduction

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and is relevant to staff, volunteers and elected councillors within the Council. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the management of volunteers.

Our commitments

We recognise the valuable role of volunteers in delivering the activities of Mumbles Community Council. Their contribution supports our mission and strategic aims, and complements the role of paid staff and elected councillors. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the Council, the residents and visitors of Mumbles, and the volunteers themselves.

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 to replace staff.

We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from under-represented groups such as youth, people with a disability, older people and people from black and minority ethnic communities.

We recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and will seek to ensure adequate financial and staffing resources are available for the development and support of volunteering.

We recognise that people have a right to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering and can contribute in many ways. We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

Who is a volunteer?

Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of the Council, unpaid and of their own free choice.

The [Welsh Government Volunteering Policy](#) (2015) defines volunteering as an activity which is:

- Undertaken freely, by choice
- Undertaken to be of public/community benefit
- Not undertaken for financial gain

Date approved _Council 14/03/2023_____

Date of next review ___March 2025_____

Work experience placements and internships are not the same as volunteering. Please refer to HR for further information about these.

Volunteers may be involved on a one-off, short term or on a longer term, regular basis. They may be involved in:

- The direct delivery of our activities
- Community engagement to raise awareness of our work
- One off events and promotional activities
- Our offices or in community venues

Volunteers are valued for:

- Bringing additional skills and new perspectives to the Council
- Enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in our approach
- Championing our cause within the wider community
- Enhancing the quality of our work
- Promoting the wellbeing of staff, local communities and themselves

Standards of good practice

Our management practice is informed by the [Code of Practice](#) for organisations involving volunteers and the [Investing in Volunteers](#) Quality Standard for volunteer management.

Roles and responsibilities

The Clerk has overall responsibility for the development and coordination of voluntary activity within the Council, including volunteering policies and procedures and the welfare of volunteers.

All volunteers will have a designated staff member/volunteer for guidance, support and supervision. Staff responsibilities for volunteers will be explicitly referred to in their job description.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the Council to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits.

However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the Council expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the Council.

The Council expects volunteers to:

- Be reliable and honest
- Uphold the Council's values and comply with organisational policies
- Make the most of opportunities given, eg for training
- Contribute positively to the aims of the Council and avoid bringing the Council into disrepute
- Carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Date approved Council 14/03/2023

Date of next review March 2025

Volunteers can expect to:

- Have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- Receive adequate support and training
- Be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- Be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- Receive out of pocket expenses
- Have opportunities for personal development
- Be recognised and appreciated
- Be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- Know what to do if something goes wrong

Recruitment and selection

Equal opportunities will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted, in English and in Welsh, so as to attract interest from different sectors of the community. Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate.

Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, including written role descriptions which set out the nature and purpose of the volunteering role, key tasks, skills required and benefits. A risk assessment will be undertaken on all volunteer roles.

If appropriate, such as for long term volunteering in a public-facing role, recruitment may involve an informal interview, application form and/or the taking of references; the process will be tailored, clearly defined and consistent for any given role. For many volunteering roles offered by the Council, volunteers will be able to show up on the day and this will be made clear in advertising.

The Council does not offer roles which involve care giving and/or sustained and direct contact with young people or adults at risk, therefore for the vast majority of volunteering roles a DBS disclosure check is not required. Where volunteers are required to have a DBS disclosure check, this will be arranged by the Council. DBS disclosures are dealt with in the strictest confidence. A criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering.

Induction and training

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

Support and supervision

Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include telephone support, group meetings or one to one reviews.

Date approved _Council 14/03/2023_____

Date of next review ___March 2025_____

Recognition

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation's wider staff and elected councillors at appropriate council or staff meetings.

Formal recognition of the contribution of volunteers is expressed through regular newsletters, website articles, social media etc.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity to meet others who volunteer with the Council as part of an annual event that recognises the contribution of volunteers.

Dealing with problems

The Council aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly.

We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty. Where informal resolution is not possible, the Council's 'Concerns and Complaints' Policy will be adhered to.

Volunteers will be made aware of the Council's complaints policy and how to use it. They will also be made aware of how inappropriate behaviour volunteers will be addressed by the Council.

Expenses

Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.

Moving on

When volunteers move on from regular volunteering with us they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully.

Volunteers who have remained with the Council for at least 3 months will have the right to request a reference.

Other relevant documents

Council policies relevant to volunteers include:

- Health & Safety
- Equal Opportunities
- Social Media
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Concerns and Complaints
- Information and Data Protection

Date approved _Council 14/03/2023_____

Date of next review ___March 2025_____