



Alcester Town Council

Volunteer Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 We recognise the valuable contribution that volunteers can make to Alcester Town Council (ATC).
- 1.2 Volunteers can bring a richness of skills and experience and can often provide a bridge to community involvement that it is difficult for paid staff or councillors to achieve.
- 1.3 We recognise that volunteers are motivated because it is their choice to volunteer and give of their time freely; in return, we want to provide volunteers with opportunities that will help them to develop new skills and experiences.
- 1.4 This policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and the support and procedures in place for volunteers.

2. Status of volunteers

- 2.1 A volunteer is not an employee and will not have a contract of employment.
- 2.2 We will discuss the role with the volunteer and there will be an expectation that the volunteer will meet the role's requirements.
- 2.3 We will discuss with volunteers the amount of time that they are willing to commit to volunteering, the frequency of their availability and how this will fit in with our needs.
- 2.4 Volunteers are encouraged to let us know as soon as possible if they are not available so that a substitute can be found, or different arrangements can be made.
- 2.5 Volunteers wishing to withdraw from their voluntary role are asked to give their named contact as much notice as possible.

3. ATC's obligations to volunteers

- 3.1 We recognise that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves, to service users and to paid staff.
- 3.2 We will aim to integrate the role of volunteers into ATC's strategic aims and objectives and the aims of the project the volunteer is involved with.
- 3.3 We will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.
- 3.4 ATC staff and councillors will work positively with volunteers.
- 3.5 We recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them

(dependent on the project and volunteer role) to do their volunteer work effectively.

- 3.6 We recognise the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities and we will appoint a project leader to supervise and liaise with all volunteers.
- 3.7 We will cover the costs of involving volunteers, as approved by the Town Clerk.
- 3.8 We will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible and are treated equally, regardless of their gender, race, age, faith/religion, disability or sexual orientation.

4. Recruitment

- 4.1 We will endeavour to recruit volunteers through a range of methods including word of mouth, advertising, talking to other agencies and contacting local volunteering organisations.
- 4.2 We will also endeavour to help any volunteer overcome barriers that may make it difficult for them to volunteer at ATC.
- 4.3 ATC's Equality and Diversity Policy will be adhered to in relation to the recruitment and support of volunteers, a copy of the policy is available at www.alcester-tc.gov.uk
- 4.4 All volunteers will be asked to sign a Volunteer Agreement (appendix 1), which requires them to abide by the policies and procedures of ATC. It sets out what the volunteer and what the project can expect from each other.
- 4.5 DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks and references may be required for some volunteer roles, especially where regular contact with children is necessary. This requirement would be discussed with relevant volunteers. A volunteer will be informed if we intend to apply for DBS checks. DBS checks are not a reflection on the individual, but a legal requirement in certain circumstances.

5. Health and Safety

- 5.1 ATC has responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers and volunteers must follow ATC's Health and Safety policies and procedures, copies of which are available on www.alcester-tc.gov.uk
- 5.2 Volunteers have a duty to take care of themselves and others who might be affected by their actions and should not act outside their authorised area of work.
- 5.3 A risk assessment will be undertaken by the project leader (in line with ATCs Health and Safety Policy and current Health and Safety at Work legislation) in order to identify and manage risks. If an area of activity presents a significant risk, consideration must be given to reducing or stopping the activity. Copies of risk assessments can be provided to volunteers when requested.
- 5.4 Volunteers must report all accidents to the project leader.
- 5.5 The project leader will provide volunteers with an induction appropriate to the work to be undertaken and appropriate guidance on any health and safety issues that arise.
- 5.6 Appropriate clothing must be worn by all volunteers; no clothing should compromise the safe working environment.

6. Safeguarding

- 6.1 ATC takes their role in the safeguarding of volunteers, staff and other members of the public seriously and have a Safeguarding Policy which must be followed - it outlines the responsibility of ATC in relation to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults - a copy is available on www.alcester-tc.gov.uk

7. Insurance

- 7.1 ATC will ensure that volunteers are covered for insurance purposes (Public Liability cover). Reporting and approval in respect of work which is of an ongoing nature is not necessary on each occasion.
- 7.2 The insurance will not cover unauthorised actions or actions outside the volunteering agreement.
- 7.3 Volunteers must only carry out minor and pre- agreed work involving the use of non-powered tools. If using lawnmowers/grass cutting equipment and strimmers, appropriate clothing and personal protection equipment must be worn (e.g. safety goggles in case of using strimmers). Tree work can only be undertaken at ground level and other tree work must be carried out by a qualified tree surgeon with their own public liability cover.
- 7.4 If volunteers use their own tools, ATC cannot be held liable for any injury caused by them through the use of faulty equipment/tools. All such equipment should be PAT tested before use.

8. Induction and training

- 8.1 All volunteers will receive an induction by the project leader to familiarise them with the work of ATC and the project the volunteer will be involved with.
- 8.2 Volunteers must be adequately trained to be able to carry out the role. The exact nature of the training will depend on the role. It is not possible to detail what constitutes 'adequacy' as requirements will vary according to:
- the job or activity;
 - the existing competency of volunteers;
 - the circumstances of the work (e.g. the degree of supervision);
 - the tools and/or equipment being used.

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.

- 8.3 Appropriate clothing and personal protective equipment must be worn as identified in any risk assessment.
- 8.4 Training will be offered where it helps to fulfil the role.

9. Support and supervision

- 9.1 All volunteers will have a named person (the project leader) as their main contact.
- 9.2 Volunteers must inform the project leader of the work they intend to undertake before commencing such work.

- 9.3 Volunteers will be given regular feedback and provided with an opportunity to discuss how things are going and air any problems with their project leader.
- 9.4 Meetings between volunteers and project leaders will be developed to encourage peer support and share experiences.
- 9.5 The Project Leader will report project outcomes and volunteer feedback to the next appropriate Committee meeting overseeing the project. Volunteers are also welcome to attend any Committee meetings.

10. Expenses

- 10.1 Volunteers will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred on behalf of ATC if approved in advance by the project leader.
- 10.2 Receipts will be required.

11. Grievance

- 11.1 The relationship between ATC and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and it does not imply any contract.
- 11.2 ATC aims to maintain an acceptable provision of services and facilities and it is important that volunteers should enjoy making their contribution to this service.
- 11.3 If, in their role volunteering for us, a volunteer does not meet our standards, their case will be dealt with in the same manner as paid staff.
- 11.4 If a volunteer has any concerns regarding our treatment of them and this has been fully discussed with the project leader, and they are still not satisfied, any complaint may be taken to the Committee managing the project.

12. Corporate Volunteers

- 12.1 Corporate Volunteers are defined as volunteers who are employees of a third party organisation but who are volunteering with ATC on a pre-agreed basis on behalf of their employer.
- 12.2 For Corporate Volunteers, ATC will require confirmation of public liability and employer's liability insurance cover from the third party organisation.
- 12.3 All tasks undertaken by Corporate Volunteers will be subject to a separate written agreement between the third party organisation and the Town Clerk detailing the work to be undertaken, risk assessment and Health and Safety procedures.

Reviewed by F & GP Committee – 12th December 2023

Approved by Full Council – 9th January 2024

Due for review December 2025

Appendix 1 - Volunteer Agreement

This volunteer agreement describes the arrangement between Alcester Town Council (ATC) and you. We appreciate your time and acknowledge that you are using it to volunteer with us and we will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience enjoyable and rewarding.

Purpose of role: *[Insert project name and what role volunteers are playing in the project]*

Possible tasks: *[Insert all tasks that will be undertaken by the volunteer]*

Part 1: What can you expect from Alcester Town Council

ATC will provide you with:

- Contact information (name and contact number) for ATC's project leader who will supervise, explain and discuss your volunteering work.
- Encouragement and support in your volunteer role.
- Agreed training identified and related to your responsibilities as a volunteer with this project in relation to ATC's policies.
- Insurance cover for ATC authorised volunteer work.
- Reimbursement of any specific expenses incurred for ATC which has been previously approved by the project leader and authorised by the Town Clerk, with receipts.

Part 2: Volunteer expectations

The project leader will discuss with you the amount of time that you are willing to commit to volunteering, the frequency of your availability and how this will fit in with the project's needs.

If, for any reason, you will not be attending a previously agreed volunteering session please let the named contact know via telephone or email. If we have no work for you, we will let you know as soon as possible. We expect you:

- To perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability
- To follow the organisation's policies & procedures and standards, including Health and Safety Policy, Safeguarding Policy and Equality and Diversity Policy (copies of which are available on www.alcester-tc.gov.uk). If you have any queries or concerns regarding your role with the Council and these policies, please discuss them with the project leader.
- To maintain the confidential and personal information of the organisation and of its users as appropriate. When you are volunteering you may come across information about the project, its staff, and its customers. You must respect this information and not disclose it except where required to do so by law.
- Either you or ATC can terminate this agreement with or without notice at any time. This agreement is binding in honour only. It is not intended by the parties to be a legally binding agreement nor is it intended to create an employment relationship between us now or at any time in the future. It may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party.

PLEASE RETAIN THIS SECTION OF THE DOCUMENT FOR YOUR RECORDS

PLEASE COMPLETE THE INFORMATION BELOW, SIGN AND RETURN TO THE TOWN COUNCIL

We need to keep some contact information for you. In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations, by signing the agreement to volunteer you are also agreeing that we may hold your details for the sole purposes of administering ATC volunteers.

Personal details

First nameSurname

Current address:

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.....

Date of birth

Email address

Tel no Mobile no

Emergency contact information:

Name

Contact number

Photography and video consent

Alcester Town Council often take photos and video for publicity purposes. These images may be used in our printed media, our website or our social media. We require your permission to use such images. Please indicate below if you consent to the use of your image.

Yes/No

Signed, printed name and date - Volunteer:

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.....Date.....

Signed, printed name and dated - ATC project leader:

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.....Date.....