



# **LEEK TOWN COUNCIL**

## **VOLUNTEERING POLICY**

Approved 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025

### **1. Volunteering for Leek Town Council**

- 1.1 We are proud that there is a vibrant culture of volunteering in Leek. The Council recognises and supports this through voluntary sector grant-funding and by providing support to voluntary sector organisations and supporting volunteering opportunities.
- 1.2 As in the rest of the UK, the context for volunteering in Leek is changing, with people less likely to volunteer than in previous generations due to time available, an increase in paid work outside the home, additional caring responsibilities within families and other time pressures.
- 1.3 As volunteers add value to the work of the Council, we believe that they should gain from their volunteering experience and therefore we are committed to managing volunteers in a way that ensures this happens.

### **2. Introduction**

- 2.1 This policy is designed for volunteers working directly with Leek Town Council for an event or activity run by Leek Town Council. The policy has been developed based on good practice and advice about volunteering in the sector.
- 2.2 A volunteer is someone who chooses to commit their time and energy to a project for the benefit of others. This is given freely without expectation of financial reward or mutual obligation. A volunteer is not an employee, a worker or a contractor providing services and there is no contractual relationship between the two parties.
- 2.3 A key principle is that volunteering with the Council is not about replacing paid staff but about complementing and adding value to the work we

already do. Volunteers bring specialist knowledge and skills to their roles and the Council recognises that some of the work it does would not be possible were it not for volunteers.

2.4 Providing a strong consistent approach to volunteering fits well with Leek Town Council's vision and values. Our vision is for Leek to be the Best Town in the Staffordshire Moorlands by growing the economy, and building a sustainable future.

2.5 There are three main ways to volunteer with the Council. This is important because the policy and procedures are different for the different types of volunteering:

- Individual volunteers working under the supervision of a Leek Town Council Officer (e.g. Appropriate member of staff employed by Leek Town Council, Events etc)
- Groups of private business employees carrying out voluntary work for Leek Town Council
- Voluntary and Community groups carrying out voluntary work for Leek Town Council

### **3. Aims**

3.1 This policy forms part of the Council's aim to develop a strategic approach to Health and Safety of volunteering. This policy aims to:

- Provide a single corporate framework for volunteering with the Council that is clear, consistent and fair.
- Involve and encourage volunteers who reflect the diversity of our Town.
- Ensure that volunteering with the Council is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.
- Ensure the safety of all those volunteers involved.
- Recognise the contribution of volunteers to the Council by supporting development and other opportunities.
- Ensure that the benefits of volunteering and working with volunteers are actively promoted throughout the Council, ensuring that the Council staff are aware of, and appreciate the role of volunteers.

3.2 Leek Town Council will achieve its aims by ensuring that:

- There is a clear, consistent and fair approach to recruiting and managing volunteers within the Council.

- Potential barriers that people may face when trying to volunteer with the Council are identified and work is done to try and remove/ reduce them.
- Guidance and best practice is provided to Council staff working with volunteers and for the volunteers themselves.
- Clear role descriptions are provided for volunteers and necessary training/ induction plans are in place, including health and safety. - Council volunteers are provided with relevant opportunities, experience, supervision, training and support in order to carry out their duties and provide personal development.
- Feedback is encouraged from volunteers to help improve service delivery and further develop volunteering guidance.
- The contribution and investment provided by volunteers is recognised in supporting the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to the local community, through events and other methods of recognition.

## **4. Individual Volunteers**

4.1 All volunteers, engaging as an individual, will be asked to complete a personal information form. Other forms may be required, dependent on the role.

4.2 Potential volunteers will be invited to a meeting with the Council Volunteer Supervisor responsible for the volunteer role. This is an opportunity for both parties to determine if the particular volunteer role, or activity, is suitable. The meeting should be structured and organised without being unnecessarily formal.

## **5. Business or Voluntary Groups**

5.1 Business groups can get involved by contacting the Council who will advise of opportunities available, or work with the organisation to create a specific team building day. Business groups can also express their interest via the Town Council website.

5.2 If the volunteers are engaging as a voluntary group or business organisation the expression of interest form will need to be completed by the appropriate lead member.

5.3 On meeting with the Council Volunteer Supervisor they will complete the relevant Health and Safety Application Form.

5.4 Organisations volunteering for the Council may be required to carry out their own risk assessment and provide their own insurance to cover their team whilst engaging in activities. This will be discussed with the Council's Volunteer Supervisor and, if required, copies of the relevant documents must be provided to, and agreed by, the Council prior to the commencement date.

## **6. Safeguarding**

6.1 The Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. Whilst the Council seeks to uphold the principle of equality of opportunity, it is mindful of its responsibility to protect children, young people and adults at risk.

6.2 Each project will be assessed to ascertain whether it is deemed suitable for volunteers under 18. If a volunteer aged 14-17 should wish to be involved in a project, then a risk assessment for that project should take this into account. This is unless they are volunteering as part of a bigger group such as Scouts/Guides or a business group on specific project-based events, in which case suitable documentation (group insurance etc.) will be required.

## **7. Health and Safety**

7.1 The Council has a duty to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of all our volunteers is maintained. Any officer approached by a volunteer, voluntary group or organisation must follow the process outlined in the information pack provided for the event.

### **7.2 Individual Volunteers**

- 1 Risk assessments will be carried out by the appropriate Council Officer for all project roles that individual volunteers undertake and volunteers will be notified of any key points at the beginning of each volunteering session. The Risk Assessment will be readily available for any volunteer to read upon request.
- Where deemed necessary, volunteers must ensure that they have suitable clothing and protective footwear at all times; they will be responsible for this. These will be identified through the project risk assessment, and volunteers will be advised prior to the session of any specific needs (PPE). Measures taken to reduce sun exposure (e.g. sunscreen) are also recommended.

- The Council will provide protective equipment such as gloves, goggles and hard hats should they be required. Some tools will be provided, and these will be in working order and fit for purpose, however if volunteers have their own preferred tools they may be able to bring them along to use. If personal equipment is used, the responsibility of the maintenance of such tools remains the responsibility of the volunteer. All equipment provided by the Council must be returned to the Council should the activity come to an end.
- In the event of an accident the volunteer will seek assistance from a member of Council staff or group representative.

### 7.3 Business or Voluntary Groups

- Organisations volunteering for the Council may be required to carry out their own risk assessment and provide their own insurance to cover their team whilst engaging in activities. This will be discussed with the Council's Volunteer Supervisor (see health & safety application form) and, if required, copies of the relevant documents must be provided to, and agreed by, the Council prior to the commencement date.
- Supervision of volunteers should be discussed and agreed with the Council's Volunteer Supervisor prior to activities taking place.
- If groups are made up of more than 15 individuals, they will be required to provide their own first aider to be on site at all times.
- In all cases groups are expected to supply and maintain a first aid kit whilst carrying out their volunteering duties with the Council.