



Volunteering Policy

Madeley Town Council believes that volunteering offers mutual benefits to all parties involved and provides the opportunity for people to make a valuable contribution to their community in a practical way. Volunteers are highly valued by the Council as they:

- Increase its contact with the local community it serves
- Help ensure its facilities and services reflect the needs of the community
- Increase skills, experience, perspectives and diversity in the workplace.

The Council will ensure that volunteers feel part of the Council's structure by having systems in place to involve volunteers in staff information sessions, and regular supervision. It does not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.

All Council employees will be expected to work positively with any volunteers and where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.

Volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and the Council will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing training for them to do their role effectively.

Volunteers may come through various partner organisations, direct from the community or be students from a local educational institute.

The Council will offer opportunities and support to those who wish to volunteer to help the Council to enhance services for its residents. It will also support its employees who volunteer.

1. Volunteering in Council Services

Madeley Town Council aims to enable and support such volunteers by making the following commitments:

- to give volunteers an introduction to the Council
- to provide support and guidance from a council contact
- to give volunteers a clear idea of the things they are being asked to do and the responsibility that it will mean
- to give training to be able to do the volunteering activity
- to treat volunteers with dignity and respect
- to ask volunteers to do genuine volunteering **not** 'unpaid' work
- to provide appropriate tools and/or equipment
- to give volunteers the chance to discuss any changes which may affect their volunteering.
- to provide volunteers with a reference on the basis of their volunteering activities

2. Supporting employees who are volunteers

It is the Town Council's policy to support employees who wish to undertake volunteering in order to enhance their wellbeing and personal development as well as support and build relationships with the local community. It believes that promoting opportunities for employees to volunteer will help them enhance and develop their skills and abilities which will improve their performance at individual and team level.

The Council aims to:

- Raise employee awareness and understanding of volunteering;
- Enable employees to enhance and develop their skills, support their learning, and increase their well-being by undertaking volunteering activities;
- Encourage and support council employees to volunteer within the borough;
- Contribute to the council's reputation as a good employer in the community

The Council will help employees to find out more about the range of volunteering opportunities available.

The Council encourages volunteering and line managers should be supportive of employees wishing to do so and make every effort to support requests. However, when requests for additional leave or flexible working in order to undertake volunteering are being considered, service quality and availability must also be preserved.

3. Guidance: Volunteering in Council services

Recruiting Volunteers

People can seek to volunteer to work in this Council's services by:

- a. responding to advertisements or campaigns by the Council to recruit volunteers
- b. asking to talk to the Clerk or Councillors about becoming a volunteer

If the potential volunteer is firmly interested and there is a volunteering opportunity available, the Clerk should ask them to complete a **Volunteer Application Form** and invite them to an informal meeting.

Informal Meeting

At this meeting the Clerk should fully discuss with the volunteer the aspects of the role available. Prospective volunteers must be given a clear understanding of what would be expected of them in their voluntary role. The Clerk may wish to develop a job description which clearly sets out the role and responsibilities of a volunteer. It is important the volunteers are not seen as an alternative to employing paid staff.

Potential volunteers should be made aware of key Council policies, regulations and codes of practice and informed that they would be expected to adhere to them. The importance of client confidentiality must be emphasised. The Clerk should also explain what sort of support and training they will offer to the volunteers. Any special requirements or adjustments that the volunteer may require should also be assessed.

The Clerk should ask potential volunteers about their reasons for wanting to volunteer.

When recruiting volunteers to work with children or adults who may be vulnerable the Clerk should ascertain the potential volunteer's motivation for working with the vulnerable client group and assess their ability to form and maintain appropriate relationships and personal boundaries with the clients. The Clerk should also explain any background checks which will need to be completed before the

potential volunteer would be able to start volunteering. A brief note of the informal meeting and any actions agreed should be made and attached to the Volunteer's Application Form.

Background Checks

It may be necessary to seek a check on the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) before agreement can be reached as to whether a volunteer can participate in particular areas working with children and/or adults which may be vulnerable. (Such checks for volunteers are currently free of charge).

If these checks are required the Clerk should also ask the prospective volunteer to give contact details of 2 referees who can provide a reference as to the prospective volunteer's suitability to volunteer with the relevant client group, see (Volunteers Application Form)

Insurance & Travel Expenses

The Clerk must explain the necessity for volunteers to have adequate motor insurance if they are going to be using their cars whilst volunteering and explain which expenses they may claim. The main insurance covers held by Madeley Town Council comprising public liability, employers liability and officials indemnity extend to indemnify volunteers whilst acting on behalf of the authority. If a volunteer, however, is required to use their car, the volunteer must extend their car insurance to include business use on behalf of the Council and written confirmation of this must be provided. Reimbursement for use will be in accordance with the Council's casual car user allowance scheme.

4. Managing a Volunteer

Once an agreement is reached between the Clerk and the volunteer, and any necessary background checks have been completed satisfactorily, the Volunteer Agreement section of the form should be completed. This agreement includes brief details of the particular volunteer role and the volunteering times agreed. It also sets out a named contact for the volunteer. The Clerk should give a copy of the signed agreement to the volunteer. The Clerk should then arrange for the original copy of the agreement and any references obtained to be kept securely for monitoring and contact purposes. Consideration should be given as to whether volunteers will require ID badges.

Supporting volunteers

Depending on the nature of the volunteering opportunity and the individual volunteer different types of support will be appropriate at different times. All volunteers will need an introduction into their role and should be given a named contact person with whom they should meet at mutually agreed times for regular support and guidance and to talk through any issues or problems they may have. In addition there may also be opportunities for informal day-to-day support, for example by checking in with the volunteer at the end of each session and expressing thanks for their input. It is also useful to have mutual telephone contact details in case of emergencies.

If you have a group of volunteers they may find it useful if it can be arranged for them to meet and share ideas and experiences for peer support. An experienced volunteer may also be willing to help the Clerk support a new volunteer. All volunteers will require the necessary training and equipment to do their role safely and effectively and the Clerk will need to ensure this is arranged. Volunteers should also be kept informed of any proposed changes in their service areas and consulted on how these may affect their roles. A volunteer's support needs may change during their involvement with the service so the Clerk should regularly review and adapt the support they are providing for volunteers. The Clerk must also be prepared to give volunteers a reference based on their volunteer role as required.

Misconduct of volunteers

If the Clerk has any concerns about the conduct of the volunteer, these should be explored and addressed immediately. Advice should be sought on individual cases and may involve referral to the Staff and Personnel Committee. If it is decided that the volunteer cannot continue to work with children or vulnerable adults, they should be informed of this. Checks should be made as to whether the individual is volunteering in other areas of the borough. People Services should also be informed in order that other agencies can be informed if necessary.

Ending Voluntary Activity

A volunteer can decide not to volunteer at any point and does not have to resign from their position nor does the Council need to give notice to the volunteer if his or her services are no longer required. It is recommended that an exit interview is held to gather useful information that might assist volunteers in the future and promote continued improvement.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Arrangements should be put in place by the Clerk to ensure that the council's policy commitments to volunteers are honoured. It is also important that volunteers understand their responsibilities.

	Responsibilities
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake volunteering in accordance with this council's codes of practice, policies, aims and objectives. • Meet with the Clerk at mutually agreed times. • Participate in relevant training opportunities and activities. • Notify the Clerk of any absence and provide reasonable notice if they intend to stop volunteering. • Respect the privacy of staff and service users and maintain confidentiality at all times. • Carry out agreed activities to the best of their ability. • If they have been required to have a Disclosure and Barring Service check as a volunteer, tell the Clerk should they receive any criminal cautions, convictions or reprimands or if they are subject of any allegations or investigations relating to the safety or welfare of others.
The Council recruiting volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep a record of the volunteer agreement securely. • Treat volunteers with dignity and respect. • Ensure that volunteers have an introduction to the Council and receive ongoing support from paid staff with whom they meet on a regular basis. • Explain what is required and the responsibility it means including any relevant council policies. • Provide appropriate training, tools and equipment. • Only ask volunteers to do genuine volunteering activities. • Discuss any changes which may affect them and listen to their views. • Provide a reference on the basis of the volunteering activity completed. • Ensure that full and accurate details of volunteering opportunities are publicised (e.g. dates, particular skills needed, etc). • Keep a record of the volunteers and provide this information, when required to do so, for monitoring purposes. In particular, record the number of council employees who take part.

6. Guidance: Supporting employees who volunteer

Promoting volunteering opportunities

This will be done by:

1. Promoting volunteering opportunities. These opportunities will be advertised to all employees throughout the year and interested employees should complete the **Volunteer Application Form** required by the recruiting officer for the volunteering opportunity.
2. Signposting to other volunteering opportunities. The Council will promote volunteering opportunities within the area, which are coordinated by individuals or organisations external to the council, but are linked to delivering council priorities.

Time off to volunteer

Flexible working arrangements will assist employees who wish to volunteer. Some activities have separate arrangements for time off. These include acting as: a magistrate, elected member of a local authority, member of statutory tribunal, member of a health authority, member of a health service trust, member of a family practitioner committee, a governor of a school or college, a member of a youth offending panel, a member of the board of visitors to prisons and remand homes.

Disclosure & Barring Checks and References

If volunteering it may be necessary to seek a check on the Disclosure and Barring Service and/or it may be appropriate for a reference to be requested before agreement can be made for an employee to start as a volunteer.

Employees volunteering for another organisation should seek guidance from them on any checks they require. Checks for volunteers are currently free of charge.

Insurance & Travel Expenses

The main insurance covers held by Madeley Town Council comprising public liability, employers liability and officials indemnity extend to indemnify volunteers whilst acting on behalf of the authority.

Employees volunteering for another organisation are often covered by that organisation's insurance, however, employees should check with the organisation to ensure it has appropriate insurance cover.

If required to use their car when acting as a volunteer for the Council, the employee must extend their car insurance to include business use on behalf of the Town Council and written confirmation of this must be provided. Reimbursement for use will be in accordance with the Council's casual car user allowance scheme (even if the employee is an essential car user in their post).

Employees volunteering for another organisation should check with their motor insurance provider that they are covered if using their car to volunteer.

Support for employees who volunteer in Council Services

Employees who volunteer in council service areas can expect and are entitled to the same level of support and they will have the same responsibilities as other volunteers

7. Roles and responsibilities

It is important that there are clear roles and responsibilities for the employees and Councillors to make volunteering operate effectively:

	Responsibilities
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Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think through the any implications of volunteering e.g. their work commitments during the period that the volunteering take place, their suitability for the particular volunteering role. • Be fully committed to the volunteering role and to represent the council in a professional manner. • Undertake their volunteering in accordance with Madeley Town Council's codes of practice, policies, aims and objectives or the Organisations policies that they are volunteering for.
The Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure their team are aware of the volunteering scheme and how to view the opportunities. • Be supportive of the scheme. • When considering any request, consider workloads, planned or potential absences of other team members, timescales and dates, any additional costs that might be incurred by releasing the employee. • Consider requests for volunteering reasonably and to explain their decisions, providing feedback and justification when they are unable to accommodate a request for volunteering. • Ensure service needs are maintained.

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