

LEIGH-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

VOLUNTEER POLICY – SEPTEMBER 2015

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Leigh-on-Sea Town Councils Mission Statement is “to promote, represent and provide for the community of Leigh-on-Sea” and its main strategic aim is “to promote the well being and quality of life” of that community.

To that end, Leigh-on-Sea Town Council believes that a volunteering programme serves to

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

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council expects this programme to benefit volunteers, the wider community and the Council alike, and provide increased opportunities for interested residents to make a valuable contribution to their community in a practical way.

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

The Council aims to provide volunteers with satisfying roles and the opportunity for personal development. The Council will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing training where necessary in order for volunteers to carry out their role effectively.

The Town Council will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.

Guidelines

The following guidelines deal with practical aspects of volunteering with the Town Council. The Council is working towards the provision of a volunteer handbook but in the meantime copies of relevant staff policies are available.

Recruitment

All prospective volunteers will be invited to an informal discussion to fill out a registration form and for the volunteer coordinator to find out what they would like to do, their skills, suitability and how best their potential might be realised.

Two references will be sought for each volunteer, we appreciate that checks of any kind can appear a very intrusive process but feel they are necessary for a number of reasons:

- It takes account of the Town Council's responsibility to the public and the community
- It gives the volunteer a degree of credibility
- It reassures colleagues

If the volunteer is to work in a regulated activity (as determined by the Disclosure and Barring Service) with or on behalf of the Council, the Council will carry out DBS checks.

Information about previous criminal convictions will be requested but this is purely designed to assist the selection process and will only be taken into account when the conviction is considered relevant to the role of volunteer.

Volunteers will need to be over 16 years of age to volunteer independently with Leigh-on-Sea Town Council and under-18s will be asked for parental consent. Younger people may get involved in some aspects of volunteering with the Council if they are accompanied by a responsible adult, or if they are part of a wider organisation that is volunteering with the Council. The Council does not have an upper age limit for volunteers but there may be situations that require the volunteer coordinator to ask someone to stop volunteering – for example when health issues are considered a risk to the person concerned or others around them.

Equal Opportunities

The Town Council operates an Equality and Diversity Policy in respect of both paid staff and volunteers, a copy is available to volunteers. The Council will do everything in its power to ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect at all times and expects volunteers to do the same.

Induction and training

All volunteers will receive an induction into the Town Council and into specific volunteer roles where applicable.

Training will be provided if necessary.

Expenses

The Council will reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel costs and, if volunteering for more than four hours in one session the cost of a sandwich lunch or equivalent up to £3 will be reimbursed. Payment of reasonable expenses will be authorised by the volunteer coordinator in advance and receipts or tickets will be required.

Health and Safety

The Town Council has a legal obligation to ensure it complies with health and safety legislation and has a duty of care to avoid exposing volunteers to risks to their health and safety.

Practical issues will be discussed as part of a volunteer's induction and a copy of the Town Council's Health and Safety Policy is available on request.

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by the Town Council's insurance policy whilst they are on Town Council property or engaged in any volunteering on behalf of the council.

Confidentiality

The Council and the Volunteer Programme take great care to protect the volunteer's information as part of our data protection responsibilities. As a volunteer we expect you to protect any personal and/or confidential information to which you may have access.

The Volunteer's Voice

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning the Town Council facilities and services to the volunteer coordinator.

Problem Solving

We aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage. If a volunteer has a problem with a task, a member of staff or another volunteer they should first discuss it with the volunteer coordinator, as should a member of staff or councillor if they have a problem with a volunteer

If the issue is not resolved, or the complaint is with the volunteer coordinator, then it can be taken to the Town Clerk.

And finally

The volunteer programme is designed to benefit Leigh-on-Sea, its residents and Council. Whilst we also hope that your experience volunteering is beneficial to you, the volunteer, we do understand that volunteers are not employees but are giving their time, unpaid to help others and we appreciate it.

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council Volunteer Agreement

This agreement is intended to confirm Leigh-on-Sea Town Council's commitment to making a volunteers experience productive and rewarding.

The Town Council agrees to accept the services of
..... (Volunteer)

The Town Council commits to the following:

- To provide adequate information, training and assistance for the volunteer to be able to meet the responsibilities of their position
- To ensure diligent supervision to the volunteer and to provide feedback on their performance
- To treat the volunteer with respect and without discrimination
- To provide access to all policies and procedures relating to their role and duties with the Town Council when requested

I agree to serve as a volunteer and commit to the following:

- To perform my duties to the best of my ability
- To adhere to the Council's policies and procedures

Signed.....

Signed

Date.....

Date

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

Volunteer

This agreement can be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either of the parties, but will expire automatically on the resignation, whether voluntarily or involuntarily of the volunteer.

This document is not intended to form a contract; Leigh-on-Sea Town Council has no intention of creating a contract with any volunteers.