

# **Stanion Parish Council**

## **Volunteer Policy**

**Document Number: 011**

**Version Number: 1.0**

### **Document Information**

**Master Document:** The electronic version of this document is the master. Printed copies may not contain the latest changes and should not be relied upon. The master document is published on the Stanion Parish Council (SPC) website.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Policy is to provide a framework which explains all elements relating to volunteer support and the methods by which that valuable resource may be best utilised and managed.

**Distribution:** this Policy will be made available to all SPC councillors, SPC staff, volunteers, contractors and members of the public, via the SPC website.

**Implementation:** This Policy will be implemented following consideration and adoption by the full Council.

**Review:** This document will be reviewed three years after its adoption, unless there are changes in legislation, or recommended best practice guidelines, in which case, it will be reviewed earlier, to comply with the statutory or recommended changes.

**EIA Requirement:** An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and no adverse impact has been identified.

**Financial Implications:** This Policy has no financial implications for SPC.

### **Policy Statement**

This Policy is a formal, strategic level document, which provides a statement of intent explaining how SPC will comply with the legislation and any related directives of its subject matter. This is a mandatory document and does not allow for variations of practice. It is relevant to all members of SPC, staff employed by SPC. Non-compliance with this procedure may result in formal complaints being registered and/or disciplinary action/or criminal charges being raised.

This Policy provides a corporate framework designed to enable the Parish Council to administer the volunteer application process, manage the volunteer workforce, and oversee work tasks assigned to volunteers. It will be reviewed by a nominated councillor every three years unless there are changes in the legislation, directives, or recommended best practice guidelines that warrant earlier review and amendment. All amendments require the agreement of the full council and for agreement to be formally recorded.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on this Policy.

### **Duty to Undertake an Equality Impact Assessment**

Public sector organisations have a legal duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups. Due regard comprises proportionality and relevance.

### **The EIA Tool**

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool to ensure that we don't unwittingly exclude anybody from accessing the services we provide. Undertaking an EIA involves assessing the likely effects of our policies on people according to their 'protected characteristics'.

These are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy
- maternity
- race
- religion and belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

An EIA should be applied to a Policy, Strategy, Plan, Function, Project, Service and Event. EIAs help to identify any inequalities in the provision of services, employment, or procedural practices, and minimise the risk of exposure to claims of discrimination.

### **Principles**

All Councillors, and staff are required to comply with this policy in its entirety.

## **Introduction**

Stanion Parish Council recognises the valuable and unique role that voluntary activity plays in assisting Members and employees of the Parish Council and in complementing the services and activities offered by the Parish Council. The Parish Council therefore supports and encourages voluntary activity.

Volunteers come from all walks of life and represent the diversity of our community, bringing with them a wide range of skills and experience. They may assist with a number of activities including a planned project, a specific arrangement, or in gaining work experience.

Volunteering provides many benefits to the volunteer, including the opportunity to use current skills and to develop new ones, acquire new interests, meet people, and help to bring about positive change in the local community.

The Parish Council will ensure that volunteers are recognised and thanked for their support and achievements.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Provide a framework for the application process and selection of volunteers and the management of volunteer tasking, and
- Explain the means by which all relevant parties may understand their roles and responsibilities with regard to volunteering

## **Volunteer Requirements**

A person must apply to become a volunteer by completing the Volunteer Application form at Annex A and sending the completed form to the Clerk.

A volunteer must be adequately trained to be able to carry out their role safely and effectively. The exact nature and extent of the training required will depend on the role. However, the training standard will be sufficient to ensure an understanding of the task to be completed, and the health and safety of the volunteer and anyone who might be affected by their work, as far as is reasonably practicable.

Responsibility for providing the training rests with the Parish Council, and the volunteer is under a duty to comply with any training deemed necessary and directed by the Parish Council.

Volunteers work unpaid on behalf of the Parish Council but may be reimbursed in certain circumstances for particular expenses incurred in the course of authorised volunteer work.

## **Management of Volunteer Tasking**

The Clerk to the Parish Council is responsible for the day-to-day overseeing of tasks assigned to volunteers and for:

- Co-ordinating volunteer activities and managing any issues
- Ensuring that volunteers are clear about the task they are being asked to perform
- Providing Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities and Induction briefings
- Keeping an accurate record of all volunteer training and briefings
- Maintaining a file of all required copy documentation relating to volunteers

### **Responsibilities of Parish Councillors**

All Parish Councillors are required to:

- Recognise the potential benefit of volunteer involvement and respect the contribution to the delivery of services and activities that the role provides
- Provide an induction relative to their area of specialism, if so requested by the Clerk
- Provide any necessary help and support to a volunteer who is assisting them in their area of specialism, if that help and support is deemed necessary
- Explain the requirements of the task to be undertaken and supervise the activity if it is deemed necessary to do so
- Report any concerns or issues relating to work undertaken by a volunteer to the Clerk

All Councillors should ensure that volunteers are made to feel welcome, valued, and supported and treated as part of the Parish Council team. And they should be actively encouraged to make suggestions for improvement to working practices and future work projects.

### **Responsibilities of Volunteers**

All volunteers are required to abide by current Stanion Parish Council policies, procedures, Standing Orders and Regulations that govern the duties and responsibilities of the work of the Parish Council.

Volunteers are required to treat any information gained during their tenure as a volunteer in a confidential manner and to use that information solely for lawful purposes.

All volunteers are required to abide by the Parish Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and Health & Safety Policy and, and in particular they should:

- Not discriminate in the course of their duties, nor induce or attempt to induce others to do so
- Not victimise, harass, bully or intimidate others, or induce others to do so
- Inform the Clerk if they suspect that discrimination is taking place in their work environment
- Accept responsibility for keeping themselves safe in their volunteer activities and not act in a way that would endanger themselves or others

### **Age Limits**

The lower age limit for a volunteer is 15 years. A full Risk Assessment will be undertaken in line with the Health & Safety (Young Persons) Regulations 1997 and shared with the parent or legal guardian prior to acceptance of the young person as a volunteer.

There is no upper age limit. All adult volunteers will be assessed to determine that they are capable of carrying out the allotted task, and if deemed fit to do so, will be permitted to undertake the task.

The Clerk is responsible for undertaking the Risk Assessments in these matters.

### **Applying to Become A Volunteer**

Volunteers are required to complete the application form at Annex A, and to forward the completed application form to the Clerk.

Under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974) Exemption Order, volunteers are required to declare all previous convictions. This information will be kept confidential and may not necessarily prejudice the volunteer being accepted. However, the Parish Council reserves the right to undertake any checks it deems necessary and appropriate in light of the disclosure. Any application subject to such additional checks will be suspended until the results of such additional checks have been received.

In addition, if volunteer activity involves work in a regulated activity within the Parish Council, for example, work that provides access to children and/or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be made in all cases. Determination of an application subject to such check will be suspended until the results of the check have been received by the Parish Council. The cost of such checks will fall to the Parish Council.

Any volunteer candidate who carries out another role, which they believe may conflict with their volunteering role or the work of the Parish Council, in any way whatsoever, must declare that role to the Clerk. The candidate's application may be rejected if the Parish Council consider the declared role to be one that poses a conflict of interest. If a candidate is in doubt as to whether a conflict of interest may exist, they are requested to discuss the matter with the Clerk before submitting their completed application form.

There is no ban on an application being presented by a family member of a Member of the Parish Council or a Parish Council employee. All applications will be considered on their merits.

Volunteers are required to provide the name and contact details of one referee on their application form. Applications that do not provide that information will not be processed. References from family members will not be accepted.

### **Health & Fitness**

A volunteer is required to be able to meet the demand of the role or task assigned to them without risk to their physical or mental health and wellbeing. If there are any changes to a volunteer's health and fitness, the volunteer is required to make the fact known to the Clerk without undue delay. The Clerk is responsible for undertaking a review of the activities

undertaken by the volunteer and for recommending actions to be taken to reduce any risk to the volunteer and for reporting such to the Parish Council.

### **Alcohol and Substance Abuse**

The use and misuse of alcohol, drugs, or other substances can have a detrimental effect on a person's ability to perform tasks, impairing the person's capacity to work safely. For these reasons, a volunteer must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst on duty. The consumption of or misuse of alcohol or drugs in the Parish Council's work environment is prohibited.

### **Volunteer Tasks & Risk Management**

It is the responsibility of the Clerk to identify and assess potential risks in tasks to be undertaken by a volunteer and to put in place mitigation measures to reduce the level of risk to the lowest possible acceptable level. Where mitigation measures cannot be employed to meet an acceptable level, the task is to be abandoned.

Volunteers are to be briefed on the risk assessment for the task they are being requested to perform, and of the safe working methods to be employed in undertaking the work.

The Clerk is responsible for making the Parish Council aware of all risk management activities and for maintaining the records of such.

### **Insurance**

On condition that a volunteer is working on behalf of the Parish Council and at their direct request, then they will be insured under the Parish Council's Public Liability and Employer's Liability cover.

However, the Parish Council does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage, and if a volunteer uses their own tools or equipment when undertaking authorised work, the Parish Council will not be held liable for any injury, loss or damage arising from a fault or defect in that equipment.

### **Health & Safety**

The Parish Council attaches the greatest importance to the safety of people undertaking work on their behalf, and endeavours, through its policies and work directives, to prevent accidents and injuries to those engaged in such activity.

All work undertaken by a volunteer shall have regard to the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974, and all other related health and safety legislation in force at the time.

Volunteers may not carry out hazardous work of any kind. Less hazardous work that requires the use of non-powered hand tools, for example, path maintenance or tree

planting, is permitted, and minimum levels of PPE (suitable footwear, gloves, safety goggles etc.) must be worn when undertaking such activities.

Volunteers are required to report to the Clerk any equipment that they believe to be non-working or dangerous, or any working practices or conditions that they believe are dangerous or unsafe.

All volunteers are required to comply with safety procedures when undertaking work on behalf of the Parish Council, to minimise the likelihood of accidents to themselves or others.

### **Safe Working Practices**

All volunteers are to wear high visibility vests when undertaking work in close proximity to a road. High Visibility vests will be provided for use by the Parish Council and remain the property of the Parish Council.

Prior to work commencing, a visual inspection is first to be undertaken by the volunteer to ensure that there are no obvious hazards in the area of the work, such as litter, glass or large stones or rocks.

The use of any cleaning material used in the course of any volunteer task must not be stronger than those available for retail to the general public in shops and stores. **Under no circumstances are chemicals to be mixed and bleach is not to be mixed with any substance other than plain water.**

The use of weed killers in and around any Parish Council property is strictly prohibited.

Volunteers are advised that:

- Jewellery, necklaces and watches are not to be worn where the possibility exists that they may compromise the safe working environment
- Trainers, open-toed shoes and sandals, or heeled shoes are not to be worn if the possibility exists that in the wearing of such, they compromise the safe working environment.
- Long hair is to be tied back if the possibility exists that in failing to do so, it may compromise the safe working environment

### **Consideration for Others**

Volunteers are requested to respect the needs of neighbours and residents when carrying out voluntary work on behalf of the Parish Council. If the nature of the work is such that it is potentially disruptive to others, it should only be carried out during sociable daylight hours.

### **Expenses**

Expenses will only be paid with the prior approval of the Parish Council, and after receipt by the Parish Council of paper receipts in respect of the claim. Provision of any safety equipment or clothing needs that are identified during the risk assessment process must be authorised in advance by the Parish Council.

### **Confidentiality & Data Protection**

All volunteers are required to treat any information they become privy to during the course of their work in a confidential manner, and to use such information solely for lawful purposes, in accordance with all relevant legislation, and specifically, the Data Protection Act 2018, and GDPR, and to have regard to the Common Law Duty of Confidentiality. All volunteers are under a duty to maintain confidentiality of Parish Council business.

### **Drivers**

A volunteer who uses their own vehicle to carry out Parish Council business is required to:

- Produce a valid Driving License to the Clerk who will retain a copy on file
- Provide confirmation of insurance cover that shows that the vehicle is covered for volunteer or business activities to the Clerk, who will retain a copy on file
- Inform the Clerk of any changes in their medical fitness, which may affect their ability to drive
- Note that reimbursement for mileage for journeys undertaken on Parish Council business will only be authorised if the request for reimbursement is approved in advance by the Parish Council

### **Problems or Concerns**

The Parish Council will endeavour to maintain harmonious relations with all its volunteers and invites their co-operation in achieving this aim.

If a volunteer wishes to raise a concern about any aspect of their role, they should contact the Clerk in the first instance. Concerns will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially will be maintained at all times.

### **Ending Your Volunteer Service**

Volunteers are free to end their service at any time without notice to the Parish Council.

### **Termination of Service**

The Parish Council reserves the right in exceptional circumstances to terminate a volunteer placement, or to stop a person from volunteering.

### **Equality & Diversity**

The Parish Council will ensure that the volunteer application process and the Volunteering Policy are applied in a fair and reasonable way.

Signature: Signed on original

Date: 11.3.19

### STANION PARISH COUNCIL VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

This form is to be used by anyone wishing to apply for a voluntary position within the Parish of Stanion

Full Name:	
Address: (including post code)	
Telephone:	
Mobile Number:	
E mail:	
<b>Application Details</b>	
Position applied for: <i>(if specified)</i> or Work you would like to do:	
Days and times that you are available:	
Information in support of your application (experience, skills, qualifications, etc.)  <i>Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary</i>	



