

Starcross Parish Council

Volunteer Policy/Guidelines

1 Introduction

Starcross Parish Council's work is a partnership between Volunteers and Staff. As a Volunteer, your gift of time, skills and experience is valued and will extend the capacity to provide valuable services to residents of Starcross. By doing so it is the Parish Council's aim that Volunteers gain satisfaction from this partnership and that the relationship is one of mutual benefit.

If so desired by the Volunteer, Starcross Parish Council will assist the individual in maintaining appropriate records of their volunteering experience that will assist the Volunteer in their own development (future career opportunities, both paid and unpaid).

This document sets out the principles, practices and procedures which Starcross Parish Council will follow in the appointment and management of Volunteers.

2 Definition

2.1 Volunteers may be described as individuals who put their experience, knowledge and skills at the disposal of an organisation, free of charge, with the primary aim of helping the organisation to achieve its service objectives and / or with the primary aim of bringing some benefit to the local community. In this sense, Volunteers are to be distinguished from students, other work placements and secondees, where the primary aim is usually for the student or secondee to obtain certain work experience or to carry out work or research in certain areas.

2.2 When you volunteer with Starcross Parish Council it is our aim that:

- You can make a difference to the lives of residents in Starcross.
- Your gift of time, skills and experience will be used well.
- Your volunteering will be appreciated and recognised including the provision of testimonials if required.
- You will be provided with all the appropriate information, guidance and training required for you to carry out your volunteering.
- You will be encouraged to develop in your volunteering role.
- You will be given opportunities to keep up to date with Starcross Parish Council's work.
- You can expect Starcross Parish Council to seek your views on its work and on your volunteering.
- You will volunteer in an organisation that is striving to be non discriminatory and diverse.
- You will volunteer in an environment that is safe.

3.Principles

3.1 In appointing a Volunteer, Starcross Parish Council will adhere to the following principles:-

- (a) A Volunteer will not be engaged in work which facilitates the loss of an existing employee's post, nor on any tasks or projects which (within the past two years) were done by paid employees whose posts have since been deleted.
- (b) A Volunteer will not be used to do the work of paid staff during an industrial dispute.

4 Recruitment of Volunteers

4.1 Volunteers will be selected through the following process:

4.2 STEP 1:

The following items must be agreed by Starcross Parish Council, before a proposed Volunteer placement is implemented:-

- (a) A *Role Description*, outlining the specific tasks, responsibilities and reporting lines of the Volunteer;
- (b) *Terms and conditions* including the duration, hours, expenses, insurance, etc., relating to the placement;
- (c) A *Specification*, outlining the relevant experience, skills, knowledge, abilities and equal opportunity awareness necessary to carry out the role effectively.

4.3 STEP 2:

Using the *Role Outline* and the *Specification* the parties will engage in a two-way discussion of the proposed role, of its requirements and of each other's expectations, with a view to assessing mutual suitability. Following the discussion the Starcross Parish Council's representative will make a decision within one week regarding the individual's suitability for the particular role.

4.4 STEP 3:

Prior to commencing their placement with Starcross Parish Council successful, where working with children or vulnerable adults, Volunteers must provide two references from suitable people (excluding relations) attesting to their character and suitability for the position. They will also undertake appropriate DBS disclosure if it is required for this post.

4.5 STEP 4:

Once appointed Volunteers will receive (the Chairperson of the relevant committee being responsible) the following:

- A planned induction;
- 3 monthly supervision and support sessions;
- Supportive feedback on their contribution;
- Adequate resources to perform their tasks effectively.

5 Equal Opportunities

5.1 Starcross Parish Council recognises that the activity of volunteering can provide a Volunteer with experiences and opportunities for self and career development. In accordance with Starcross Parish Council's Equal Opportunity Policy, volunteer placements will therefore be open to individuals irrespective of race, gender, disability, sexuality, age or marital status. In addition, the *Specification* must set out the equal opportunity dimension and any specific equality requirements of the role. Where, during the discussion a prospective Volunteer demonstrates hostility to, or a clear lack of support for the equal opportunity policy, she/he will be deemed automatically to be unsuitable for a Volunteer position with Starcross Parish Council.

6 Health and Safety

6.1 You will receive adequate training and feedback in support of our health and safety policy, a copy of which is published on the Starcross Parish Council website.

7 Termination

7.1 A Volunteer may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to sever their relationship with Starcross Parish Council. Notice of such a decision should be communicated as soon as possible to the Volunteers line manager. However to avoid disruption to the service Starcross parish Council offers to residents of Starcross it would be welcomed if the Volunteer could give reasonable notice so that other arrangements can be made.

7.2 Where appropriate, the role and placement of the Volunteer may be terminated by the Starcross Parish Council at one week's notice, or immediately, where behaviour equivalent to gross misconduct (as defined within the Starcross Parish Council's Disciplinary Guidelines) has occurred. In all cases the Volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken.

8 Discipline and Grievance

8.1 Volunteers will not be subject to Starcross Parish Council's disciplinary procedures. Correspondingly, Volunteers will not have access to Starcross Parish Council's grievance procedures. However, Volunteers will be entitled to use Starcross Parish Council's Complaints Procedure. Where appropriate, the complaint will be investigated fully by the Chair or her/his representative.

9 Expenses

9.1 Volunteers will be entitled to reimbursement of previously authorised actual out-of-pocket expenses by submitting receipts to Starcross Parish Council. An expense is any cost that a Volunteer has to pay out that they would not have incurred if they had not been volunteering, this could be money spent on travel (Starcross Parish Council's mileage rate or public transport where ever possible), food bought while volunteering, special equipment and, where

agreed, the actual cost of crèche, childminding fees or other dependant costs incurred in order to be available for voluntary work.

10 Insurance

10.1 Volunteers will be covered by Starcross Parish Council's Employers and Public Liability insurance, whilst they are undertaking Volunteer work for Starcross Parish Council but The Organisation does not provide any form of Personal Accident cover. If a Volunteer considers such insurance to be important, it can be obtained via any broker or company conducting such business and will then provide cover not just for their volunteering but for all their activities at all times.

11 Training and Involvement

11.1 Where a Volunteer is based at Starcross Parish Council on a day to day basis she/he will be expected to be involved and included in general staff activities, such as staff meetings and to have general access to Starcross Parish Council offices. All Volunteers will be provided with thorough induction on the work of Starcross Parish Council, its staff and the volunteering role. The volunteer will also after consultation with their line manager agree the training they need to meet the responsibilities of this role.

12 Monitoring and Review

12.1 It will be the responsibility of Starcross Parish Council to regularly review the operation of the Volunteer Policy to ensure that it is in accordance with Starcross Parish Council Equal Opportunity Policy.

13 Statement

13.1 This is a statement of what will happen ideally and it is not legally binding, which means that it is not a contract or relationship of employment.