**Volunteer policy**

**Introduction and scope**

Pickmere Parish Council recognises the vital role and contribution of volunteers. This policy aims to ensure that all volunteers can work with us in a safe and supported environment.

Volunteering with the Parish Council will be guided by the following principles:

* Tasks to be performed will be clearly defined so everyone is sure of their role and responsibilities.
* The Parish Council will comply with the Data Protection Act (2018) and UK GDPR when processing volunteers’ data.
* Volunteering opportunities will complement rather than replace the work of paid staff or the responsibilities of Cheshire East Council.
* Parish Council staff and Councillors will work positively with any volunteers.
* Volunteers will be provided with opportunities to share ideas/ concerns with a named contact.
* Volunteers will be provided with all the information they need to enable them to fully participate in the activity.

**Policy aims**

This policy sets out the principles for voluntary involvement in activities authorised by Pickmere Parish Council, who acknowledge that volunteers contribute in many ways and that volunteering can benefit the council, local communities and the volunteers themselves.

This policy applies to volunteers working on behalf of the Parish Council, not those employed by the Parish Council, or Parish Councillors.

**Volunteer Work**

Volunteering opportunities must be formally developed and approved by the Parish Council before recruitment is commenced.

Such work needs to be set out in a clear and understandable format.

The final decision about the type of work and its execution lies with the Parish Clerk.

All potential volunteers will be required to read this policy, complete a volunteer form and send this to the Clerk before volunteering.

**Risk Assessment**

A Risk Assessment will be undertaken, by the Parish Clerk, to identify any risks that might be faced and how they will be managed.

The risk assessment should include as a minimum:

* A full description of the volunteering activity
* The date/s, time/s and specific location/s (including postcode) where the activity is taking place.
* An assessment of the site detailing any risks and how they will be managed.
* How First Aid will be accessed.
* Details of any tools and/or equipment being used.

All volunteers must be over 18 years of age.

Where appropriate, volunteers will be provided with any necessary PPE, tools and training to enable them to carry out agreed tasks. If volunteers provide their own tools, they do so at their own risk. Pickmere Parish Council cannot be held liable for any injury caused by inappropriate use of any equipment/tools, or the use of faulty equipment/tools provided by volunteers.

Volunteers must be informed about the task and its purpose, health and safety issues and general arrangements.

**Health & Safety**

All works undertaken by volunteers shall have regard to the Health & Safety at Work Act. Volunteers will not be authorised to carry out work that the Council considers hazardous or would contravene the principles of the Health and Safety at Work Act, considering the competence of the volunteer(s) carrying out the proposed work.

All volunteers are covered by Pickmere Parish Council’s insurance policy whilst they are on the Parish Council’s premises or engaged in any Parish Council volunteering work. Only registered volunteers carrying out volunteer work that has been authorised by the Parish Clerk will be covered by the Parish Council’s insurance, however the council does not insure volunteer’s personal possessions.

**Expenses**

Expenses will not be paid. In circumstances where volunteers are required to purchase items, this must only be done with the prior approval of the Parish Clerk.

**Council Business**

All volunteers must have due regard to the fact that they are undertaking authorised work on behalf of Pickmere Parish Council and as such are representing the Council, both in quality of work and possible interaction with the public.

**Responsibility**

This policy will be approved and reviewed by the Parish Council on a regular basis. Implementation and adherence to this policy is the responsibility of all staff, Councillors and volunteers within the Parish Council. Overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy lies with the Parish Clerk.

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