



Leigh-on-Sea Town Council

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VOLUNTEER POLICY

ADOPTED: SEPTEMBER 2022

TO BE REVIEWED: SEPTEMBER 2026

1. POLICY STATEMENT

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council recognises, welcomes and values the support that volunteers provide to the local community. This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in activities overseen by Leigh-on-Sea Town Council.

Leigh-on-Sea Town Council involves volunteers to:

- Increase our contact with the local community we serve
- 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.

2. PRINCIPLES

This Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- We will ensure that volunteers have a clear understanding of their role within the Council, the tasks they are being asked to perform and the responsibility that goes with those tasks.
- We do not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff
- We expect that paid staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and where appropriate will actively seek to involve them in their work.
- We recognise that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.
- We are committed to ensuring that volunteers find their volunteering rewarding and enjoyable.

3. PRACTICE GUIDELINES

The following guidelines deal with practical aspects of volunteering with the Town Council.

a) 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

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.

b) 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.

c) Safeguarding

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. The Council has a Safeguarding Policy which is available to volunteers.

d) Induction and training

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

Training will be provided when necessary.

e) 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 £5 will be reimbursed. Payment of reasonable expenses will be authorised by the volunteer coordinator in advance and receipts or tickets will be required.

f) 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 mitigate risks.

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.

g) 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.

h) Confidentiality

Volunteers will be bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff.

i) The Volunteer's Voice

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

j) 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.