

Thame Town Council

Volunteer Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Thame Town Council acknowledges and values the support that volunteers provide to the local community. This policy sets out the broad principles for the voluntary involvement in activities overseen by Thame Town Council.

2. Objectives / Aims

2.1 This policy applies to volunteers working on behalf of, but not employed by, the Town Council. Volunteers are unpaid and of their own free will contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

2.2 The main aims of this policy are:

- To describe how Thame Town Council engages with volunteers.
- To outline expectations for both staff and volunteers
- To ensure volunteers are and feel valued and supported.

2.3 Town Council volunteer opportunities will be advertised through social media, including noticeboards, boards, and website.

2.4 Other volunteering opportunities that arise from the community and involve council property and land must be authorised by Thame Town Council. Volunteers must inform the Town Council of the work they intend to undertake before commencing such work by contacting the Information Centre by emailing info@thametowncouncil.gov.uk or telephone 01844 212833.

3. About Thame Town Council

3.1 We work with communities in Thame and Moreton to help them care and enjoy the environment by:

- Encouraging people to get involved with their local countryside or park by offering a range of volunteering opportunities, from practical conservation to leading Health Walks.
- Providing advice to landowners and managers to help them look after their land with wildlife in mind. Helping a range of people secure funding for landscape improvement and conservation work within Cuttle Brook Nature Reserve.
- Promoting outdoor recreation through organising events and working with groups to develop and cycle routes to link towns and villages to their surrounding countryside.
- Promoting the Charter Market, themed Markets, businesses and charity/community organisations by holding events to encourage the vibrancy and vitality of the Town Centre.

4. Why Volunteers are important to us

- 4.1 Volunteers are integral part of our activity, with many projects undertaken by volunteers. The time, experience, knowledge and skills that volunteers offer is highly valued by Thame Town Council, as well as Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council.
- 4.2 Our aim is that volunteers have a positive experience from their time working with the Council and that the relationship is one of mutual benefit.

5. What Volunteers can expect from Thame Town Council

- 5.1 Thame Town Council shall ensure the health and safety of any volunteers, as far as reasonably practicable, and that of any people who might be affected by their work.
- 5.2 Volunteers are requested to respect neighbours and residents when carrying out voluntary work. 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.
- 5.3 Volunteers will be treated equally, regardless of their sex, gender reassignment, race, age, religion or belief, disability, being pregnant or on maternity leave, being married or in a civil partnership or sexual orientation.
- 5.4 Volunteers must be adequately trained to be able to carry out the role. The Town Council or its representative will work with the individuals authorised to undertake the work to assess training needs and provide appropriate training as required.
- 5.5 Volunteers must undergo an induction appropriate for the task being undertaken. This should include health and safety, what to do if there is a problem and an introduction to other relevant individuals. The Town Council or its representative will work with the individuals authorised to undertake the work to ensure appropriate induction takes place.
- 5.6 Volunteers must carry out only the less hazardous work involving use of non-powered tools, where possible. However, appropriate protective equipment should be worn including appropriate footwear, safety goggles (if appropriate), and high visibility vests.
- 5.7 Volunteers working on behalf of the Town Council, at their direct request, will be insured under the Town Council's Public Liability and Employer's Liability cover. However, the Council does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage and if volunteers use their own tools or equipment the Town Council cannot be held liable for any injury, loss or damage arising from a fault or defect with these.

- 5.8 A risk assessment must be undertaken for all projects/activities in order to identify the risks that might be faced and how they will be managed. The Clerk must receive a copy of such risk assessment records. The Town Council will work with the individual authorised to undertake the work to ensure appropriate risk assessments are undertaken.
- 5.9 Where appropriate a volunteer tasks and expectations form will be issued for understanding and signature by all volunteers while working for the Town Council.
- 5.10 Where a volunteer is under 18 or considered vulnerable, supervising staff must undergo DBS checks and [safeguarding protocols](#) (where applicable).
- 5.11 The onsite Supervisor/Manager will make themselves known to the volunteer and will wear appropriate identification such as ID tag or high visibility clothing. In some circumstances a sign in / out register will be in place to record who is on/off site during events. It will be made clear to volunteers that it is their responsibility to sign in/out and not just wanderer onto/off site. One control measure which may be used for this is the wearing of high visibility vests. No vest no work (these will be supplied by the council).
- 5.12 Expenses will be paid only with the prior approval of the Town Council Officer and after receipt by the Town Council of the relevant paper receipts. Provision of any safety equipment or clothing needs that are identified during the risk assessment process must be authorised in advance by the Town Council.

6. Medical Conditions

- 6.1 If any volunteer has or have had any medical conditions, illness or injury that may affect them or others while working for Thame Town Council, or if there are any changes to health, it is the volunteer's responsibility to inform the relevant Council Officer. Information provided will be strictly confidential.

7. Problems or Concerns

- 7.1 If volunteers have any concerns or are dissatisfied with any aspect of their work or wish to resolve a problem, contact should be made in the first instance with the Council Officer they are working with or to the Town Clerk. In certain circumstances the official complaints process should be followed.

8. Confidentiality & GDPR

- 8.1 As part of their role volunteers may encounter information that is confidential. This should not be disclosed to, or discussed with, anyone not directly connected to the work of the Town Council.
- 8.2 The Town Council will ensure that any personal information supplied is treated in confidence and is handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations.

9. Insurance

- 9.1 Whilst engaged on agreed activities, volunteers are treated the same as a paid employee for the purpose of both Employers and Public Liability Insurance. As such, the standard Employers and Public Liability policy give the same protection to volunteers as they would to an employee.
- 9.2 The Employers Liability policy covers the Thame Town Council's legal liability in respect of accidental injury, illness, disease or death to employees, and therefore to volunteers. The policy also provides an indemnity to individual volunteers regarding injuries caused by them to other employees/volunteers, where they are legally liable as individuals.
- 9.3 In line with the Health and Safety at work etc Act 1974; Volunteers must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and avoid putting themselves or other at risk by their actions or omission.