

Volunteer Policy

(Applies to all persons not employed by the Council)

1. Guidance Maintenance

1.1 Document Version

Amendment	Date	By whom
Draft, consultation with volunteers/friends of groups/CHAS/SLT	2018-2019	GI

1.2 Maintained by

Guidance maintained by the Health, Safety and Emergency Planning Officer.

1.3 Distribution list

This is a corporate Council Policy and guidance stored on the Council’s intranet, H&S / AssessNET portal, selecting ‘Company documents’ GBC File store, within Volunteer Policy and also located on the Council’s main website.

1.4 Important information warning

The data contained in this document forms part of the Councils Health and Safety Policy and H&S management system.

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2. Policy: Volunteer Policy

- 2.1 Voluntary activities can be regular such as those arranged with our Parks department, with our Friends of groups, or on a more ad hoc basis such as 'community litter picking days' or other one-off or short-term events which could include community emergency response activities.
- 2.2 This policy is for volunteers who may be members of public, residents, businesses, third parties and other groups that wish to volunteer for the Council, on Council premises, for Council run activities and those under the control of and with the permission of Council officers. The policy will apply to all Council controlled, managed and supported voluntary activities.
- 2.3 This policy does not cover voluntary activities undertaken on behalf of party political activities. It excludes activities organised by Councillors without Council officer control, any political parties activities when they are not acting on behalf of the Council or when not acting as an employer. Such as electioneering, elected member organised community events, other political party arranged activities, or any voluntary activities not controlled, managed or supported by the Council or its officers.
- 2.4 This policy does not apply to all types of voluntary activities that occur within the Borough boundaries that are not being managed or controlled by the Council or its officers and not within the Council's responsibilities as an employer. It is important to stress that this policy only applies to the extent where Council officers have control over activities or require for statutory purposes the need to control voluntary activities. For example, this policy does not apply to external voluntary groups organised by members of the public such as 'Keep Britain Tidy' sessions or any other external groups and organisations that are not within the control of the Council or Council officers.
- 2.5 This policy is separate to the Employee Handbook's Volunteer Policy (appendix 39 – Volunteering Policy). The employee Volunteering Policy is the policy that explains how employees can qualify for additional leave through

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two different routes. Please refer to personnel for a copy of the employee handbook.

- 2.6 This policy will not be applicable to Council employees whilst at work. However when an employee chooses to volunteer outside of work and wishes to volunteer for a Council run activity or group session operated on Council premises, this policy and associated documents will apply.
- 2.7 This policy also supports the Gedling Plan priority of Strong and Dynamic Communities and the objective of promoting and encouraging pride, good citizenship and participation, reduce anti-social behaviour; along with the Sustainable Environment priority to provide an attractive and sustainable local environment that people can enjoy; and thirdly the Healthy Lifestyles priority, and all four of the priorities key objectives.

3 Background, why volunteers are important to the Council

- 3.1 Volunteers can raise awareness about the Gedling Plan's objectives, build relationships within the community in which we work and contribute to supporting others in the community. By providing volunteering opportunities we provide opportunities for social inclusion, skills development and potential routes to employment. There is also evidence that volunteering can help to improve health and wellbeing for individuals and inform the development and delivery of Council service plans, projects or other key objectives by bringing in new opinions, ideas or approaches of volunteers. This can help the Council to adapt, stay relevant to what the Council Tax payers and the community needs, as well as identifying opportunities to improve what we do. They can also be crucial support in times of great need, such as emergencies.
- 3.2 This policy also supports the Gedling Plan priority of Strong and Dynamic Communities and the objective of promoting and encouraging pride, good citizenship and participation, reduce anti-social behaviour; along with the Sustainable Environment priority to provide an attractive and sustainable local

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environment that people can enjoy; and thirdly the Healthy Lifestyles priority, and all four of the priorities key objectives.

- 3.3 A good point to start is understanding what a volunteering policy is and why have one?

A volunteering policy is a framework for a volunteer programme and how the Council would like to control and manage its volunteers and voluntary groups. It helps define the role of volunteers, what is expected of them and the Council, how they can expect to be treated and sets out clear boundaries of the relationship.

- 3.4 The main advantages of having a policy, is that it can help to:

- Demonstrate the Council's commitment to our voluntary activities, individual volunteers or voluntary groups. The Volunteering Policy documents will show that the Council cares and has thought through how we will manage volunteers.
- Ensure consistency and that all volunteers are treated equally and fairly. Being able to refer to a written policy document ensures that decisions do not have to be made on an ad hoc basis.
- Allow volunteers to know where they stand; it offers some security, in that they know how they can expect to be treated, and where they can turn to if they feel that things are going wrong.
- It helps ensure that Council officers and senior management fully understand why volunteers are engaged and involved in certain agreed activities, and what activities they will be able to do.

- 3.5 An important consideration was the consultation in developing this policy. This has been far reaching from national guidance, H&S legislation, voluntary research, regional and Nottinghamshire wide H&S practitioner benchmarking, internal organisation Corporate Health and Safety (CHAS) group consultation and as well as past and current voluntary groups and individuals.

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- 3.6 Alongside this has been a review of violent and aggressive incidents between some volunteers towards Council officers, meetings with for example the Friends of Gedling Country Park, as well as insurance civil claims caused by or linked to voluntary activities that were unsupervised.
- 3.7 Volunteering has many benefits. Volunteer roles greatly improve the ability for the Council to further enhance to facilities provided for residents and others to enjoy. Volunteering has the opportunity to provide residents with quality, regular, organised voluntary sessions. Volunteering has also been widely reported to enhance the life of those that take part and deliver your service or projects in a more effective and efficient way, which can help to save money and resources. However organisations such as the Council do have to invest in supporting volunteering for this to work effectively.
- 3.8 Recognition of volunteer contribution, by informally telling volunteers they are doing a great job, asking their opinions on internal developments, getting them to feel comfortable with being a part of the community are all important. More formally, volunteer events (part of [Volunteers' Week](#) maybe), where group recognition takes place, the awarding of certificates, helping volunteers gain accreditation, holding meetings with volunteers and inviting them to be members of working groups offer possibilities. These will demonstrate a recognition both to all volunteers, Council officers and elected members of the importance of volunteers.
- 3.9 In January 2019, NCVO published a report on the volunteer experience [Time Well Spent](#) showing that the most popular form of volunteer recognition (42%) was verbal or written thanks from the organisation. There is a section on respondents' perceptions of volunteer recognition in the report. Time well spent was a survey of over 10,000 respondents and was published January 2019. Here are some extracted key findings:
- Volunteers are more likely to volunteer in their own neighbourhood, for local organisations and groups.

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- Volunteers in employment are more likely to volunteer for an organisations not linked to their workplace and outside of work hours.
- Helping to improve things is one of the key reasons people start volunteering.
- A very relevant point is that a third of those surveyed agreed that things could be organised better.
- Volunteering for the most, is all about being with others rather than being on their own. Volunteering can help people feel less isolated and lonely.
- The over 65 age group are more likely to volunteer than any other age group. This is one of the factors in why the Council will have limitations on certain physical and more risk based activities, like removing chain saw usage from the agreed list of low risk activities.
- Disabled volunteers are more likely to disagree that there is a culture of respect and trust than non-disabled volunteers (11% vs 6%), conversely though disabled persons are more likely to volunteer on online platforms, which might provide opportunities for those who otherwise might find it hard to participate.
- 89% of recent volunteers said they met new people through volunteering.
- 7 out of 10 people surveyed have volunteered at some point in their lives.
- A smaller minority of 7% surveyed said they had been heavily involved in volunteering over their lifetime. It is envisaged that for the purpose of our policy, the people we are likely to attract are from the small minority to the infrequent volunteers too.

3.10 Volunteers can learn new skills and develop confidence. Many volunteers encounter a variety of new challenges when they give their time in their communities. Through sharing these experiences with people it can in itself develop new skills, build new friendships and improve their confidence to face challenges in other areas of their lives. Through meeting new people and working together it can provide a self-fulfilling prophecy as new bonds and networks are formed. These networks strengthen communities, increase their capacity to support each other and tackle local issues from all backgrounds

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and demographics. These activities have also been linked to an increase tolerance and respect.

3.11 It can be as simple as having a bit of fun. Not every volunteer experience is the same, but volunteering is often linked to healthier lifestyles even with just moderate exercise. Volunteering may give:

- A heightened sense of wellbeing and a stronger immune system;
- an improvement in insomnia;
- speedier recovery from surgery;
- Social responsibility, amongst other known benefits.

4 Enhancing local Council services and wellbeing provision

4.1 Volunteering activities often provide services, facilities and physical improvements that benefit the wider community and would otherwise not be provided. They can also add value to existing services and investments by helping to achieve additional benefits. Engaging volunteers can also help to ensure that services and projects are meeting local needs, by involving people in their delivery.

5 Improving Neighbourhood Perceptions

5.1 Volunteering can make people feel better about the area that they live in. These benefits are not restricted to volunteers themselves – simply observing or being aware of local volunteering activities can make people feel more positive about their neighbourhood. The Council recognises the vital contribution volunteers make to improving the quality of life in communities across the Borough of Gedling. In many respects volunteers are key drivers in helping bind communities together and therefore the Council needs to play its part in supporting and nurturing the current and the next generation of volunteers.

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6 Matching Skills to People’s Abilities and Strengths

6.1 Identifying appropriate volunteering opportunities will help with improved or enhanced self-confidence and better skills, greater self-esteem and social wellbeing.

7 Our volunteering objectives

7.1 The Council has a volunteer policy to set out clear management arrangement measures and controls to manage and operate voluntary activities. This will enable the Council and its officers to engage and train volunteers around the borough in suitable activities to support people to improve their skills, health and happiness and add to community satisfaction within their local area. To bring together communities by offering meaningful activities for all. To offer volunteering opportunities in a safe and sustainable way.

7.2 This policy supports the Corporate Governance policy and its core principles. Through demonstrating a strong commitment to our ethical values and respecting the rule of law, ensuring openness, stakeholder engagement, sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits and managing risk.

7.3 The policy reflects the size and nature of the Council, and is proportionate and pragmatic in terms of the level of formality so as not to put potential volunteers off volunteering but to also guard against reputational damage of the Council and its officers.

The Areas covered in the Council volunteering handbook is:

- The attracting and induction of volunteers, including equality and diversity
- Instructions and training
- Expense expectations
- Supervision, support and safeguarding
- Health and safety
- Clothing and personal protective equipment
- Confidentiality and data protection
- Insurance

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- Problem solving and complaint procedures for volunteers.
- Being an ambassador for the Council, not a spokesperson
- Accident and incident reporting

8 Starting out

8.1 All new volunteers will receive an induction when they begin. What this looks like will depend on the nature of the role undertaken but will include discussing the expectations of both parties, the identification of a named staff contact, instructions on how to complete a task safely and how to use any necessary tools or equipment. As part of this process volunteers will be asked to fill out a volunteer induction form. They will then be entered onto the volunteers' database.

9 Becoming a volunteer

9.1 The Council believes that volunteering should be open to all and we welcome anyone who wishes to volunteer. Volunteering opportunities are advertised in a variety of ways and locations in order to ensure a wide coverage. There may be age and ability restrictions for certain activities.

10 Volunteer tasks and roles

10.1 There are a range of tasks that volunteers may undertake.

11 Induction and on-going training

11.1 All new volunteers will receive an induction form and volunteer handbook when they begin volunteering. It is essential that all new volunteers read the handbook and sign the volunteer induction form at their first day of volunteering. More information is available from the supervisor of the session or from the volunteer's staff contact.

12 Insurance

12.1 The Council has Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance in place that includes cover for volunteers undertaking tasks on our behalf and under our supervision. Any volunteer, including the Friends of Groups and other

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community groups, working in our open spaces or other volunteer projects without the direct supervision of a Council officer must have their own Public Liability Insurance.

- 12.2 The level of cover held by an individual volunteer or group will dictate what roles can and cannot be undertaken. The Council does not allow a volunteer or group to undertake any other activities unsupervised nor to use any kind of equipment or machinery tools that are not listed, or have not been provided training on, even if their own insurance policy covers this activity.

13 Working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

- 13.1 The handbook, risk assessments and training will cover suitable arrangements to control activities with the children, young people and vulnerable adults.

14 Supervision and review

- 14.1 All volunteers will have a designated staff contact that they should use as a point of contact for reviews of progress, queries, guidance or problems.
- 14.2 There may be low risk activities which require minimal supervision and for medium and high risk activities, these are always supervised and managed by a suitable Council officer.

15 The Council's volunteer policy handbook covers volunteers acting as an ambassador for the Council

- 15.1 The handbook includes details on what to do if volunteers have any concerns or wish to report a problem during their voluntary activity.

16 Volunteer health

- 16.1 Health of volunteers is an important consideration.
- The 'Your health' section covers important considerations for volunteers to consider before they finally agree to be a volunteer.

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17 Health and safety, Volunteer responsibilities and Clothing, footwear, personal proactive equipment (PPE), transportation and expenses.

17.1 These are important considerations within the Voluntary policy and associated documents.

18 Accident and incident reporting

18.1 Instructions are clearly covered within the Volunteer handbook.

The policy reflects the size and nature of the Council, and is proportionate and pragmatic in terms of the level of formality so as not to put potential volunteers off volunteering but also to guard against reputational damage of the Council and its officers.

The Areas covered in the proposed volunteering handbook is:

- The attracting and induction of volunteers, including equality and diversity
- Instructions and training
- Expenses expectations
- Supervision, support and safeguarding
- Health and safety
- Clothing and personal protective equipment
- Confidentiality and data protection
- Insurance
- Problem solving and complaint procedures for volunteers.
- Being an ambassador for the Council, not a spokesperson
- Accident and incident reporting

19 Solving volunteer problems and handling complaints

19.1 Problems can arise because different priorities come to the fore, volunteers don't get the resources they think they need and money goes to a part of the organisation other than the one they are serving. Where good support and supervision procedures are in place, problems may get solved without prolonging the difficulty.

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19.2 On the other hand, a volunteer may bring a complaint about a member of staff, or vice-versa, or a client may complain about a volunteer. Volunteers need to feel complaints are handled with sensitivity, that they receive a fair hearing and that the complaints/grievance procedure of the organisation will be rigorously followed. This procedure should be in writing and available to volunteers, and will ensure a consistency of response.

19.3 Meeting expectations of volunteers is not always easy. Having variation for volunteer journeys is an important factor, at the same time the challenge is balancing variation against the risk of fines, prosecutions and litigation for both the individual volunteer, voluntary groups or the Council and its officers. The time well spent report found that a third surveyed agreed that things could be much better organised.

19.4 An issue can be that people want to give their time, but often on their own terms. This again reinforces the need for a clear Volunteer policy. A Council Volunteer will have to follow our policy and guidance, if they do not agree with the policy, that's okay, it just means they cannot volunteer for us and will have to volunteer for someone else.

20 Letting go of volunteers

20.1 An organisation such as the Council has to be prepared to 'let go' of volunteers as well as retain them. For one or a combination of reasons some may be 'let go' as they have volunteered in one role for a very long time and run out of steam; for some, their personal circumstances have changed to the detriment of their volunteering; others may, after all, show themselves to be unsuitable in spite of good recruitment procedures. Knowing when to let go is as important as knowing how to retain.

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20.2 Unless there has been serious misconduct, a departing volunteer should receive thanks and be offered an Exit Interview opportunity. At this the totality of their volunteer experience, short or long, can be evaluated and views sought from the departing volunteer about possible improvements that could be introduced for future volunteers. Be as positive as possible so the departing volunteer will retain positive views about the organisation and not seek to lower its reputation. Try to agree the benefits the volunteer has gained whilst with the organisation and offer them appropriate support in seeking new opportunities.

21 Volunteer induction

21.1 A good induction ensures volunteers are able to contribute quickly and feel part of the organisation.

22 Effective volunteer training

22.1 Good volunteer management includes ensuring volunteers are trained to fulfil their roles effectively.

22.2 How much volunteer training to give? This will depend upon the voluntary activities to be undertaken, balancing the risks and having suitable controls in place. It is important to strike the appropriate balance.

23 Supporting volunteers

23.1 The importance of supporting and gaining feedback from volunteers, to assess their satisfaction with their roles.

24 Get to know Council volunteers

24.1 It is important to really get to know your volunteers. This means taking time to understand what they find satisfying about volunteering and

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any concerns they may have about the role or the organisation. Volunteers do get bored; they have other things going on in their lives. A manager of volunteers may be coordinating many volunteers so finding the time to talk to each individual or group may be difficult. However, ensuring volunteers are given opportunities for giving and receiving feedback on their work is essential. Exit interviews are particularly helpful in this respect.

24.2 Understanding your volunteers will help you to:

- revise roles to ensure they are still relevant and valuable
- provide new opportunities for keeping volunteers involved and motivated
- enable you to continually improve how volunteers are organised.
- obtain feedback from volunteers

25 Health and safety considerations

25.1 'When is a volunteer a volunteer?' - It's broadly recommended that local authorities have a normal 'duty of care' towards genuine volunteers and should use the provisions of Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (duty to others) as guidance in most instances

25.2 Importance of Good communication - It should be clear that a two way communication channel exists between the Council officer and the volunteer. The extent of liability for the Council depends on what activities have been agreed and how much direction the Council has given. This is why the volunteer handbook and induction form are important. These documents safeguard the Council, Council officers, volunteers and ultimately other park and facility users.

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26 Consultation

26.1 The Health and safety and Emergency planning Officer undertook a consultation exercise with other H&S Practitioners in Nottinghamshire (Ashfield, Bassetlaw, Mansfield as well as Newark and Sherwoodcolleagues). This advice and proposal outlines a consensus opinion of H&S professionals and is one that is fairly pragmatic.

- There is a sincere appreciation of the value and contribution volunteers make to the community. However, regardless of their best intentions volunteers have to be managed.
- With suitable management arrangements in place it is possible these groups can work safely, sometimes with minimal supervision.
- The cooperation of volunteers to follow Council H&S policies and instructions is very important (not an exception nor a decision a volunteer can make to follow it or not). If they go beyond the boundaries we set them they can leave the Council vulnerable to risk, liability and negligence claims and costs.
- If the volunteer fails to follow Council instruction, its policies and acts outside the remit agreed, then a volunteer can also run the risk of personal liability.
- It is reasonable that volunteers sign-up to our volunteering agreement, if they don't sign it, then they simply don't volunteer. They don't have a public right to be on Council premises.
- Provide volunteers with a programme of work (list of lots of low risk jobs they can do); 'vetted' by a Council officer.
- Keep the volunteers busy with low risk jobs which need minimal supervision (like litter picking, sweeping, weeding etc.)
- Have stricter supervision for higher risk activities, like work with vibratory tools, or work beside a watercourses etc.
- We want volunteers who are engaged and will work closely with

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us.

- Technically volunteers in the parks would likely be classed as unpaid employees, they should be treated like ‘employees’.

26.2 In recent years Voluntary sessions were as popular as ever, but at time volunteers have been afforded the autonomy to run sessions. The autonomy has given rise in places to some volunteer individuals and groups formulating positions of authority they simply do not have.

26.3 It is envisaged that in time the policy will remain open to feedback and input from all stakeholders to ensure that the policy remains suitable and relevant.

References:

Knowhow.ncvo.org.uk advice on volunteer recruitment process/

https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/your-team/volunteers/recruiting/copy_of_process#

Find out more about volunteering:

- The [Time Well Spent](#) report is a result of a national survey on the volunteering experience.
- The [Getting Involved](#) report gives an overview of the different ways that people get involved in society and looks at the nature of participation by drawing upon trends, facts and statistics.
- The [Institute for Volunteering Research](#) is home to reports on volunteering and its impact.
- The [UK Civil Society Almanac](#) provides statistics and information on volunteering.
- The government's [Community Life survey](#) tracks trends in volunteering.
- Read more about [volunteer management](#) and [practical advice for volunteering](#).
- The [Volunteer Rights Inquiry](#) aimed to understand the nature and scope of the problems experienced by volunteers and to identify suitable remedies.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1:

List of tasks for volunteers working on Gedling Borough Council Parks and Open Spaces

Appendix 2:

List of other voluntary activities (subject to change)

Appendix 3:

Volunteer induction form

Appendix 4:

Corporate Volunteer Handbook

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Appendix 1

List of tasks for volunteers working on Gedling Borough Council Parks and Open Spaces

Please note this list covers the main tasks volunteers are currently asked to undertake. You should fully read, understand and agree to follow any activity risk assessments whilst carrying out the tasks during volunteering.

All the tasks to be carried out at a distance of 2m from any highway or watercourse. Under no circumstances can you work on or beside a watercourse. Only hand tools to be used.

- Planting, including bulb and tree planting using hand tools
- Litter picking
- Weeding
- Brushing hard and soft surfaces
- Raking
- Mulching (dressing borders with bark chippings)
- Hedge laying
- Bagging up green waste and general waste
- Installation of bird boxes (not including working at height)
- Species survey recording

Requests from volunteers to undertake any other tasks not specified on this list will require a minimum of four weeks notice to arrange a risk assessment and suitable supervision with a Council officer.

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Appendix 2

List of other tasks volunteers may be required to undertake

Please note this list covers the main tasks volunteers are currently asked to undertake. You should fully read, understand and agree to follow any activity risk assessments whilst carrying out the tasks during volunteering.

- Volunteer 'driver' delivering and collecting donations, parcels, prescriptions, food stuff and other associated duties.
- Volunteer distribution centre support
- Catering
- Administration support
- Stores support
- Telephone hotline support – triage of request for help
- Emotional support for those in need
- Food parcel 'picking'

Requests for volunteers to undertake tasks not included on this list will require additional risk assessments to be prepared.

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Appendix 3



Volunteer Induction Form

This must be supplemented by a parental consent form for all volunteers under the age of 18 years.

Personal Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Mobile Phone: _____

Email: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Do you have any physical or medical conditions or medication that we might need to be aware of e.g. asthma, allergies, etc.? *Please note, you are not required to answer this question, however, if you choose not to, for health and safety reasons, it may limit the range of volunteering activities permitted by the Council.*

Have you had any First Aid or Health & Safety Training within the last 3 years? Yes/No

If yes, please give details:

Which team(s) are you volunteering with?

When are you able to volunteer?

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	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
a.m							
p.m							

How much notice do you need to volunteer?

One week 2-3 Days

24 Hours 1-2 Hours

How often are you interested in volunteering?

Once a Week Once a Month Every Few Months

Occasionally As and When Required

Emergency Contact

Name: _____

Address: _____

Day Time Telephone No: _____ Relationship:

Induction Checklist

Have you been shown around the site you will be working on? Yes No

Have you been introduced to relevant members of staff? Yes No

And to other volunteers? Yes No

Have you received a copy of the Volunteering Guidance Handbook? Yes No

Health & Safety

Do you know the Accident and Emergency Procedures? Yes No

Do you know where to find fire extinguishers & emergency exits (if applicable)?

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Yes No

Do you know which staff /volunteers are nominated first aiders? Yes No

Data Protection & Confidentiality

We ask you to respect other people’s privacy and keep sensitive information confidential.

We will use the information provided by you for to enable you to volunteer for the Council. The basis under which the Council uses personal data for this purpose is that you have given your consent to the processing and that it is necessary for the compliance with a legal obligation to which the Council is subject to.

The information provided by you may include information about your health which is a special category of personal. This information is used by the Council on the basis that you have given explicit consent in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018.

The Data Controller is Gedling Borough Council, Civic Centre, Arnot Hill Park, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 6LU. You can contact the Council’s Data Protection Officer at the above address or by email at dataprotectionofficer@gedling.gov.uk

The information provided by you may also be used for the purpose of any other function carried out by the Council. Information about these functions and further information including how long we retain your data, who we share with and your rights can be found at <https://www.gedling.gov.uk/public-protection-privacy/>

Declaration

I, (*full name in capitals*), wish to volunteer for Gedling Borough Council and commit to the following:

1. To help Gedling Borough Council fulfil its aims of protecting and enhancing the environment, wildlife and heritage features in the Borough;
2. To perform my volunteering role to the best of my ability;
3. To adhere to Gedling Borough Council’s rules, procedures and standards, including health and safety procedures and its equal opportunities policy in relation to its staff, volunteers and clients; and
4. To maintain the confidential information of Gedling Borough Council.

I confirm that I have read and understood the list of permitted unsupervised task, and the associated risk assessment, attached at Appendix A to this

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form and agree that I will not undertake any other activity unless supervised and approved by Gedling Borough Council.

This agreement is not intended to be legally binding contract between the volunteer and Gedling Borough Council and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither party intends any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

Volunteer's signature:

Name: Date:

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Appendix 4

Volunteering guidance handbook



Your guide to volunteering with Gedling Borough Council

Gedling Borough Council (herein referred to as “the Council”).

The Council engages volunteers to help support activities in various service areas and teams including Community Relations that leads on community events and our Parks and Street Care (PASC) service that includes green spaces and our country parks. Our PASC service works closely with a number of “Friends Groups” that help look after some of our parks.

Our volunteering objectives

To engage and train volunteers around the borough; supporting people to improve their skills, health and happiness, add to community satisfaction with their local area. To bring together communities by offering meaningful activities for all. To offer volunteering opportunities in a safe and sustainable way.

Starting out

All new volunteers will receive an induction when they begin. What this looks like will depend on the nature of the role undertaken but will include discussing the expectations of both parties, the identification of a named staff contact, instructions on how to complete a task safely and how to use any necessary tools or equipment. As part of this process you will be asked to fill out a volunteer induction form. You will then be entered onto the volunteers’ database so you can receive further information about volunteering for the Council.

Data Protection: In order to volunteer for the Council, you will be asked to provide the Council with some personal information such as your name, next of kin and any relevant medical conditions or history. The Council will hold this information securely and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018. Further information is provided on the volunteer induction form.

Please see our full privacy statement at <https://www.gedling.gov.uk/public-protection-privacy/>

Becoming a volunteer

The Council believes that volunteering should be open to all and we welcome anyone who wishes to volunteer. Volunteering opportunities are advertised in a

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variety of ways and locations in order to ensure a wide coverage. There may be age and ability restrictions for certain activities.

Volunteer tasks and roles

There are a range of tasks that volunteers may undertake. There is a list of tasks included as an appendix along with risk assessments for each task, further information is available from the volunteer's staff contact. When you sign your induction form you are confirming to us that you have read and understood the list of tasks you are permitted to undertake and will comply with the risk assessment, instructions and training for those tasks. Furthermore, that you have read and understood this handbook.

Induction and on-going training

All new volunteers will receive an induction form and volunteer handbook when they begin volunteering. It is essential that all new volunteers read this handbook and sign the volunteer induction form at their first day of volunteering. More information is available from the supervisor of the session or from the volunteer's staff contact. If this information is not available at the session please contact your designated staff contact.

Insurance

The Council has Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance in place that includes cover for volunteers undertaking tasks on our behalf and under our supervision.

Any volunteer, including the Friends of Groups and other community groups, working in our open spaces or other volunteer projects without the direct supervision of a Council officer must have their own Public Liability Insurance. The level of cover held by an individual volunteer or group will dictate what roles can and cannot be undertaken. A list of activities that the volunteer or group intend to undertake should be given to their insurance provider and confirmation sought that all these activities will be covered by their policy. In addition, only those activities listed in the volunteer handbook appendix are permitted unsupervised activities. The Council do not allow a volunteer or group to undertake any other activities unsupervised nor to use any kind of equipment or machinery tools that is not listed, or have been trained on, even if their insurance policy covers this activity.

Working with children, young people and vulnerable adults

The vast majority of a volunteer's role does not involve close contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Due to our safeguarding policies, the Council does not expect any of the volunteers to be in a 'position of responsibility'. As a volunteer you are not permitted to undertake tasks that would place you in a position of responsibility for the care of any minor. As a volunteer you are not permitted to train, supervise or give guidance to children (anyone under the age of 18). Your

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volunteering activities should not bring you into unsupervised contact with children. For this reason it is not normally a requirement for our volunteers to undertake an 'enhanced disclosure check' through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) although this may be required before undertaking some specific tasks. Prior to participation in, or arrangement of any event at which children may be present you as volunteer (or as a group of volunteers such as a "Friends of Group") are required to notify a staff contact in order for proper planning and risk assessment to be carried out. Further guidance can be obtained from your staff contact.

Supervision and review

All volunteers will have a designated staff contact that volunteers should use as a point of contact for reviews of progress, queries, guidance or problems.

A review form will be sent out to all volunteers annually. This will be used to assess the quality of volunteering offered by the Council and identify areas for improvement along with any policy changes/updates.

There may be low risk activities which require minimal supervision and for medium and high risk activities, these are always supervised and managed by a suitable Council officer. As a volunteer you are not permitted to carry out medium or high risk tasks without this supervision.

An ambassador for the Council is not an employee of the Council, as a volunteer you may be seen by some members of the public as informally representing the Council. With this in mind you are asked a volunteer whilst undertaking volunteering duties that you act in a way that promotes the work of the Council and enhances its reputation. We see you as an ambassador for the Council. If you would like more information or guidance about the Council or our work so that you feel more confident about representing us please contact your staff contact. Remember that you should always refer to your staff contact if you are being asked about something you not sure about. You are asked not to share personal views that you have about Council services whilst you are volunteering; we don't ask you to be "the voice of the Council" and would not want you to be put in that position.

Problem solving

The Council aims to make all volunteering experiences as positive and enjoyable as possible, and to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. We encourage frequent two-way communications as a means of preventing problems before they arise or to "iron-out" hitches. However, we realise that difficult situations sometimes do happen and the guidance for dealing with things more formally is:

For a complaint regarding your volunteering experience; record this through the council's complaints system (on our website)

For a complaint about another volunteer; inform your staff contact.

For a complaint about your staff contact; notify the service manager for that team (service manager information is shown on our website).

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Your health

As a volunteer it is your responsibility to inform the Council of any relevant health conditions or illnesses that could affect your voluntary activity or that of others. Please complete the appropriate section of the Induction Form prior to commencing the activity, or notify your staff contact; they can liaise with Council officers and management as necessary. If you are working as part of an unsupervised group you should also share relevant medical information with volunteers around you if there might be a potential risk to yourself or others because of your medical condition. You may also need to notify your insurance company if you are working in an unsupervised group that is covered by their own insurance.

Volunteers taking part in practical conservation activities in particular are strongly advised to comply with the following guidance:

- have an up-to-date tetanus injection.
- Be aware of the risks from the sun (UV radiation) by wearing suitable clothing, hats, sunscreen etc. Likewise for colder conditions wrap up warm with suitable clothing for the prevailing conditions.
- Weather conditions can change throughout the day
- Bring with you suitable refreshments (food and water)
- Proximity to the nearest toilet/ welfare facilities
- Nb. This list is not exhaustive.

Clothing, footwear, personal proactive equipment (PPE), transportation and expenses.

Where appropriate we will supply you with PPE such as high visibility vests. Hand and eye protection will be also provided. Please note. The Council does not provide uniform or protective footwear. You will be expected to arrive to the volunteer activity with suitable footwear and clothing to be worn underneath high visibility items.

Please wear suitable clothing for the prevailing conditions including seasonal weather variations for outdoor activities. Please contact your staff contact for further advice if you need it.

The Council does not make expense payments to volunteers.

You will be expected to make your own arrangements to travel to a site. If you require directions to a site then please ask your staff contact.

Health and safety

Volunteers are regarded as “lawful visitors on Council premises” when they comply with certain criteria, namely; when following the Council’s Health and Safety Policy

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and its officers' health and safety instructions, when adopting any "control measures" and general advice identified as necessary by your staff contact and when undertaking tasks and activities that have been approved by an officer of the Council. A summary of general health and safety guidance to apply to volunteers is provided below. The full copy can be obtained from your staff contact or the Council's Safety Officer.

1. All volunteers will be informed of the Council's Health and Safety policy as part of their induction process.
2. The Council is aware of and will comply with its duty as an employer under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees and others affected by its activities. This duty includes the duty of care towards Council volunteers.
3. The Council is aware of and will comply with its responsibility of other H&S legislation, regulations, Approved Codes of Practice, Guidance etc. to ensure the health and safety of its employees and others.
4. The Council is committed to maintaining and improving its standards of performance in the areas of health and safety.
5. A risk assessment will be completed prior to every Council event or activity to identify the site hazards and the risks associated with the tasks involved, control measures will also be noted to suggest ways to minimise harm or damage being done to you, others and Council premises, plant and or equipment etc.
6. The staff contact/Council officer must make volunteers aware of any risks by giving a Health and Safety talk at the beginning of the event. This may be by way of a 'tool talk'.
7. A copy of Gedling Borough Council's health and safety policy is available at: <https://www.gedling.gov.uk/council/aboutus/policies/healthandsafety/>
8. Volunteers have to be managed. With suitable management arrangements in place more often than not it is possible these groups can work safely, sometimes with minimal supervision.
9. You must gain the permission of the Council and Council officers to be allowed to volunteer on our premises.

Health and safety continued....

10. For health and safety reasons, Council officers or an appointed volunteer task leader have the authority to manage voluntary activities, to ensure the safety of the site, of all participants and that of the public in the area. In the unlikely event of a volunteer carrying out an activity could endanger others, the activity will be stopped. That volunteer or others can be asked to leave.
11. Volunteers are required to sign-up to our volunteering agreement (handbook); if volunteers don't sign it then they will not be allowed to volunteer and they won't have a public right to be on site.

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12. The cooperation of volunteer to follow Council H&S policies and instructions is required without exception.
13. If a volunteer fails to follow Council instruction, its policies and acts outside the remit agreed, then that volunteer can also run the risk of personal liability. The Council will not be responsible or liable for a volunteer carrying out voluntary tasks outside this guidance.

Volunteer responsibilities

Different volunteer roles carry different personal responsibilities and risk. You should ensure that you discuss these with your staff contact before beginning your voluntary role. In addition volunteers are required to comply with the following terms:

- Follow the Health and safety section of the handbook at all times.
- To apply the content of any Health and Safety briefing given at the beginning of any event or activity, which may include instruction for the use of tools or equipment.
- Volunteers are required to take all reasonable care of their own health and safety and have due regard for that of others.
- To not recklessly interfere with, or misuse plant or equipment.
- To cooperate with the Council to be able to fulfil legal health and safety responsibilities.
- Follow health and safety instructions, procedures, standards & training.
- When appropriate and instructed to do so wear all personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided to you. If requested by the Council or your staff contact return all PPE supplied.
- By signing the induction form you are also confirming to the Council you understand the tasks you are permitted to undertake, the content of the risk assessments and its control measures that are there to keep you and others safe and free from harm. Before volunteering you will need to complete the section that identifies a person we can contact in the event of an accident, next of kin and relevant medical conditions.
- Inform your staff contact if you do not feel confident that you have received sufficient information, instruction or training necessary to carry out your voluntary role.
- Meet any agreed time commitments and to try to give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made if these commitments cannot be fulfilled.
- Raise any concerns, issues or problems with your staff contact.
- Ensure no illegal or criminal misuse of Council assets takes place.
- Respect confidentiality of information which you may become aware of whilst volunteering for the Council.

Accident and incident reporting

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In the event of an accident happening whilst you are on Council volunteer activities, to either yourself or to another volunteer, you need to inform the staff contact immediately. The staff contact will then arrange suitable first aid treatment and will make a proper report of the accident. In summary, you should always:

- Inform activity leaders or staff contact immediately of any accidents, incidents or “near-misses”.
- Notify your staff contact if you see any unsafe work practices or anything that concerns you.

Where can you Volunteer at the Council?

Places and contact information:

Bonington Theatre: contact the Box Office: 0115 901 3640

Address: Bonington Theatre, High Street, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 7EE - [see map](#)

Email: bonington.theatre@gedling.gov.uk Social media links:

[Facebook thebonington](#) | [Twitter @thebonington](#) | [Instagram thebonington](#)

Box office opening times: Sunday-Friday 9am-9pm; Saturday 9am-5pm; Closed bank holidays.

Volunteer in our Parks and Open Spaces:

Contact the Council switchboard on 0115 3901 and ask to speak with a manager in Parks and Street Care; or email parks@gedling.gov.uk

Volunteer in the wider Gedling borough community

Contact the Council’s switchboard on 0115 9013901 and ask to speak with a colleague in our Community relations team

Finally.....thanks

The Council thanks you for the time that you have taken to volunteer. Whenever and wherever you give it.

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