

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

VOLUNTEERS POLICY

1. Volunteering in Congleton

- 1.1- We are proud that there is a vibrant culture of volunteering in Congleton. The Council recognises and supports this through voluntary sector grant-funding and by providing support to voluntary sector organisations and supporting volunteering opportunities.
- 1.2- As in the rest of the UK, the context for volunteering in Congleton is changing, with people less likely to volunteer than in previous generations due to time available, an increase in paid work outside the home, additional caring responsibilities within families and other time pressures.
- 1.3- As volunteers add value to the work of the Council, we believe that they should gain from their volunteering experience and therefore we are committed to managing volunteers in a way that ensures this happens.

2. Introduction

- 2.1- This policy is designed for volunteers working directly with Congleton Town Council either through Congleton In Bloom or an event or activity run by Congleton Town Council. The policy has been developed based on good practice and advice about volunteering in the sector.
- 2.2- A volunteer is someone who chooses to commit their time and energy to a project for the benefit of others. This is given freely without expectation of financial reward or mutual obligation. A volunteer is not an employee, a worker or a contractor providing services and there is no contractual relationship between the two parties.
- 2.3- A key principle is that volunteering with the Council is not about replacing paid staff but about complementing and adding value to the work we already do. Volunteers bring specialist knowledge and skills to their roles and the Council recognises that some of the work it does would not be possible were it not for volunteers,
- 2.4- Providing a strong consistent approach to volunteering fits well with Congleton Town Council's Vision and values. Our vision is for Congleton to be the Best Town in Cheshire East by growing the economy, and building a sustainable future.
- 2.5- There are three main ways to volunteer with the Council. This is important because the policy and procedures are different for the different types of volunteering:
 - 1. Individual volunteers working under the supervision of a Congleton Town Council Officer (e.g. Appropriate member of staff employed by Congleton Town Council, Events etc)
 - 2. Groups of private business employees carrying out voluntary work for Congleton Town Council (e.g. Seddon Homes carrying out their own community litter pick by themselves using the Town Council equipment).
 - 3. Voluntary and Community groups carrying out voluntary work for Congleton Town Council (e.g. Individual in Bloom Groups IYN, volunteer, individual and group carrying out maintenance and services within our open spaces and sites).

3. Aims

3.1 This policy forms part of the Council's aim to develop a strategic approach to Health and Safety of volunteering.

This policy aims to:

- Provide a single corporate framework for volunteering with the Council that is clear, consistent and fair.
- Involve and encourage volunteers who reflect the diversity of our Town.
- Ensure that volunteering with the Council is an enjoyable and rewarding experience.
- Ensure the safety of all those volunteers involved.
- Recognise the contribution of volunteers to the Council by supporting development and other opportunities.
- Ensure that the benefits of volunteering and working with volunteers are actively promoted throughout the Council, ensuring that the Council staff are aware of, and appreciate the role of volunteers.

3.2 Objectives

Congleton Town Council will achieve its aims by ensuring that:

- There is a clear, consistent and fair approach to recruiting and managing volunteers within the Council.
- Potential barriers that people may face when trying to volunteer with the Council are identified and work is done to try and remove/ reduce them.
- Guidance and best practice is provided to Council staff working with volunteers and for the volunteers themselves.
- Clear role descriptions are provided for volunteers and necessary training/ induction plans are in place, including health and safety.
- Council volunteers are provided with relevant opportunities, experience, supervision, training and support in order to carry out their duties and provide personal development.
- Feedback is encouraged from volunteers to help improve service delivery and further develop volunteering guidance.
- The contribution and investment provided by volunteers is recognised in supporting the Council to fulfil its responsibilities to the local community, through events and other methods of recognition.

4. Individual Volunteers

4.1 All volunteers, engaging as an individual, will be asked to complete a personal information form. Other forms may be required, dependent on the role.

4.2 Potential volunteers will be invited to a meeting with the Council Volunteer Supervisor responsible for the volunteer role. This is an opportunity for both parties to determine if the particular volunteer role, or activity, is suitable. The meeting should be structured and organised without being unnecessarily formal.

5. Business or Voluntary Groups

- 5.1** Business groups can get involved by contacting the Council who will advise of opportunities available, or work with the organisation to create a specific team building day. Business groups can also express their interest via the Town Council website.
- 5.2** If the volunteers are engaging as a voluntary group or business organisation the expression of interest form will need to be completed by the appropriate lead member.
- 5.3** On meeting with the Council Volunteer Supervisor they will complete the relevant Health and Safety Application Form.
- 5.4** Organisations volunteering for the Council may be required to carry out their own risk assessment and provide their own insurance to cover their team whilst engaging in activities. This will be discussed with the Council's Volunteer Supervisor and, if required, copies of the relevant documents must be provided to, and agreed by, the Council prior to the commencement date.

6. Safeguarding

- 6.1** The Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk. Whilst the Council seeks to uphold the principle of equality of opportunity, it is mindful of its responsibility to protect children, young people and adults at risk.
- 6.2** Each project will be assessed to ascertain whether it is deemed suitable for volunteers under 18. If a volunteer aged 14-17 should wish to be involved in a project, then a risk assessment for that project should take this into account. This is unless they are volunteering as part of a bigger group such as Scouts/Guides or a business group on specific project-based events, in which case suitable documentation (group insurance etc.) will be required.

7. Health and Safety

- 7.1** The Council has a duty to ensure that the health, safety and welfare of all our volunteers is maintained. Any officer approached by a volunteer, voluntary group or organisation must follow the process outlined in the information pack provided for the event

7.2 Individual Volunteers

- 7.2.1** Risk assessments will be carried out by the appropriate Council Officer for all project roles that individual volunteers undertake and volunteers will be notified of any key points at the beginning of each volunteering session. The Risk Assessment will be readily available for any volunteer to read upon request.
- 7.2.2** Where deemed necessary, volunteers must ensure that they have suitable clothing and protective footwear at all times; they will be responsible for this. These will be identified through the project risk assessment, and volunteers will be advised prior to the session of any specific needs (PPE). Measures taken to reduce sun exposure (e.g. sunscreen) are also recommended.

- 7.2.3** The Council will provide protective equipment such as gloves, goggles and hard hats should they be required. Some tools will be provided and these will be in working order and fit for purpose, however if volunteers have their own preferred tools they may be able to bring them along to use. If personal equipment is used, the responsibility of the maintenance of such tools remains the responsibility of the volunteer. All equipment provided by the Council must be returned to the Council should the activity come to an end.
- 7.2.4** In the event of an accident the volunteer will seek assistance from a member of Council staff or group representative.

7.3 Business or Voluntary Groups

- 7.3.1** Organisations volunteering for the Council may be required to carry out their own risk assessment and provide their own insurance to cover their team whilst engaging in activities. This will be discussed with the Council's Volunteer Supervisor (see health & safety application form) and, if required, copies of the relevant documents must be provided to, and agreed by, the Council prior to the commencement date.
- 7.3.2** Supervision of volunteers should be discussed and agreed with the Council's Volunteer Supervisor prior to activities taking place.
- 7.3.3** If groups are made up of more than 15 individuals, they will be required to provide their own first aider to be on site at all times.
- 7.3.4** In all cases groups are expected to supply and maintain a first aid kit whilst carrying out their volunteering duties with the Council.

8.1 Business, Community or Voluntary Groups

- 8.1** Established groups are more likely to work independent to Congleton Town Council staff; in such a situation it is requested they inform Congleton Town Council of dates and times they will be working on Council land and also provide evidence of their own Public Liability Insurance.
- 8.2** In all cases Congleton Town Council does not insure the personal possessions of volunteers against loss or damage. We are unable to guarantee a secure locked location for personal possessions; they are wholly the responsibility of the volunteer.

9. Confidentiality and Data Protection

- 9.1** Volunteers should regard all information they have access to, or are given as a result of their volunteering, as being confidential unless otherwise advised.
- 9.2** Volunteer contact details and personal information is confidential and is only available to relevant staff for the purposes of volunteer management. These details are not divulged to any third parties in line with the Town Council's Privacy Policy.

10. Expenses and Benefits

10.1 Individual Volunteers

- 10.1.2** Volunteers should be advised of the expenses that they can claim before commencement of any voluntary duties.
- 10.1.3** Volunteer expenses are paid at the Service's discretion based on the business need for that service.
- 10.1.5** Any reimbursement of vehicle mileage should be in accordance with the Revenues and Customs tax free mileage rates. Currently, the tax-free approved mileage rates are:

10,000 miles or less	45p
12,000 miles	41p
14,000 miles	39p
16,000 miles	37p
18,000 miles	36p
20,000 miles	32p

Please note that mileage expenses can only be claimed when appropriate insurance is in place and documents have been seen.

10.1.6 Any payment above the Revenues and Customs mileage rate could invalidate the volunteers' insurance as they could be seen to be making a profit from driving.

10.1.7 Any volunteer driving a Council motor vehicle must show proof of driving licence to the Council's Office Staff.

10.2 Business or Voluntary Groups

10.2.1 Expenses are not payable by the Council for business or voluntary group activities, unless organised through the Council.

11. Support and Supervision

11.1 All volunteers must have a nominated Council Volunteer Supervisor, usually one of the managers, who they can have regular access to if problems arise or when help and support is needed.

11.2 Problems with a volunteer's work should be raised informally. It may be the case that problems can be resolved through training or changes to the role. By providing adequate supervision and regular supervision meetings, any issues that arise can be addressed.

12. Business or Voluntary Groups

12.1 Discussions will take place between the Council Volunteer Supervisor and the lead member of the group to discuss inducting the wider group prior to activities taking place. This will include:

- Site task and description
- Introduction to staff and other volunteers
- Equipment safety talks
- Information on welfare facilities (e.g. toilets and handwashing facilities) and emergency procedures.

12.2 The lead member of the group will then be responsible for sharing the information provided with the wider group.

13. Expectations

13.1 Congleton Town Council is expected to:

- Acknowledge the receipt of your expression of interest form
- Seek to provide you with the type of volunteering activity that you would like; if there are no available opportunities at that period of time, the council will inform you when there is a suitable task.
- Seek to help you gain a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment through your work
- Provide you with a clear role description for each project
- Ask of you only what you wish to do, are trained to do and are capable of doing
- Ensure your health, safety and welfare is fully considered for all tasks
- Listen to any problems or concerns you may have in relation to your volunteering with the Council
- Inform you of any issues regarding welfare facilities before you arrive for a volunteer session, so that you are able to prepare for them (e.g. If there is no drinking water available on a volunteer site you would need to bring bottled water)

- Inform you as soon as possible in the event of a project session, or volunteering, role being cancelled or changed.

13.2 Volunteers are expected to:

- Carry out their volunteering role to the best of their ability
- Inform their Council Volunteer Supervisor of any medical conditions relevant to the role they undertake during a project
- Wear appropriate clothing in order to take part in volunteer projects (e.g. suitable footwear) and take necessary steps to protect themselves in the environment they are working in (e.g. protection from UV rays with the use of sunscreen and sun hat etc.)
- Bring enough water and food to sustain them for each volunteer session
- Respect decisions taken by staff and follow all reasonable instructions, particularly with regard to safe working practices
- Respect confidentiality
- Behave in a safe, responsible and professional manner
- Treat all volunteers, staff and members of the public fairly and courteously
- Not behave in any way which might bring the Council into disrepute
- Inform their Council Volunteer Supervisor if their availability for volunteering changes or if they are unable to attend a volunteer session (e.g. due to illness) or if they no longer wish to volunteer for the Council.
- Return any equipment/clothing supplied when their volunteering role comes to an end.

Volunteering

1. Type of volunteering

Individuals

Individual volunteers working under the supervision of a Congleton Town Council Supervisor (e.g. Event organised by the Council, Congleton in Bloom etc).

Business groups

Groups of private business employees carrying out voluntary work on Council land (e.g. Seddon Homes, Siemens carrying out corporate litter picks).

Voluntary and Community groups

Voluntary and Community groups carrying out voluntary work for Congleton Town Council (e.g. IYN Groups, Friends group carrying out maintenance at the park and amenity land.)

2. Contact Details

Name

Email address

Telephone

Emergency

Contact Name

Emergency

Contact Number

3. Business/Voluntary and Community group

Contact Name

Organisation

Email address

Telephone

4. Volunteering activity

Proposed dates of activity

or ongoing

Total number of volunteers

Maximum number of volunteers on site at any time (if different)

Provide a brief summary of voluntary activity to be undertaken.

Please provide details of the voluntary group supervisors who will be responsible for the safety of the activity and supervising volunteers.

Name	Experience, skills and knowledge related to the volunteering activity

The group must ensure they have all the full names, addresses, medical needs and emergency contacts for all volunteers taking part in this activity.

Please note that if groups are made up of more than 15 individuals, they will be required to provide their own first aider to be on site at all times.

6. Insurance

- I am seeking Congleton Town Council insurance coverage for this volunteering activity. (For individual volunteering only.)
- I attach a copy of the organisation's public liability insurance coverage and any other insurance which may be required for the volunteering activity. (For Business and Voluntary and Community group volunteering only.)

7. Risk Assessment

Will the volunteer activity involve any of the following?

- Work at height (e.g. scaffolding, roof work, ladders)
- Work on or near the highway
- Work/digging that could interfere with buried services
- Work with pesticides or biohazards
- Work with hazardous chemicals
- Work with machinery and power tools
- Hot works (e.g. soldering, welding, bitumen)
- Work near deep water
- Driving
- Lone working

If you have ticked any of the above for your volunteer activity you now need to complete the risk assessment below. Otherwise please move on the Declaration section.

Risk Assessment Template

Voluntary Activity:

Date of Risk Assessment:

What are the Hazards?	Who might be harmed and How?	What action will you undertake to mitigate/manage the risk?	What further actions might be necessary?	Action by whom?	Action by When?	Done

Assessors Name:

Assessment Review Date

8. Declaration

All the information requested above is supplied to the best of my knowledge and I will comply with minimum requirements expected by Congleton Town Council.

If applicable, I have liaised with the named Business or Voluntary and Community group and I am satisfied after consultation with all parties that this volunteer project will be adequately managed.

I understand that if the nature of an ongoing volunteering activity changes in the future I will need to submit an updated application prior to the activity taking place.

Name

Date of application

If you would like any support with this application please contact info@congletontowncouncil.co.uk