



VOLUNTEERS POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

This policy sets out the principles for volunteering with Thornbury Town Council and outlines what volunteers can expect from the Council, as well as how volunteers are expected to behave.

This policy reflects current legislative provisions relating to volunteers. It is non-contractual and applies to all unpaid volunteers.

Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is a person who donates their time, skills, and experience without receiving any form of compensation from Thornbury Town Council.

A volunteer is not an employee of Thornbury Town Council, and there is no legally binding contractual relationship between the Council and the volunteer.

Why Does Thornbury Town Council Involve Volunteers?

Thornbury Town Council believes volunteering offers mutual benefits and provides opportunities for individuals to make a valuable contribution to their community.

Volunteers are highly valued by the Council as they:

- Increase contact with the local community
- Help ensure facilities and services reflect community needs
- Bring additional skills, experience, perspectives, and diversity

Volunteering also offers individuals the opportunity to gain experience, try something new, and meet like-minded people within their local community.

2. THE VOLUNTEERING RELATIONSHIP

Thornbury Town Council's commitment to volunteers

We will:

- Allocate a contact person to liaise with the volunteer, arrange an induction, deliver role-specific training, and provide ongoing support and opportunities for feedback
- Explain the expected standards and encourage and support volunteers to achieve and maintain them.
- provide any necessary equipment for volunteers to complete their roles.
- explain the accident and incident reporting procedure.
- Make sure that there are no barriers which would make it difficult for a volunteer to undertake the agreed activity.
- be flexible in relation to volunteering hours, recognising the need for holiday time and other commitments.
- pay travel expenses should a volunteer be requested by the council to attend training or a function outside the parish of Thornbury. Fuel travel expenses will be paid in line with the Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAPs) rate in operation at the time or reimbursement for bus or train travel, whichever is the cheapest. Authorisation must be sought in advance from the Town Clerk.
- reimburse car parking fees incurred when visiting non-Council premises whilst on Council business. The Council will not be liable for any parking fines or road traffic penalties incurred by volunteers regardless of circumstances. Authorisation must be sought in

advance from the Town Clerk.

Thornbury Town Council's expectation of volunteers

- To attend induction and any relevant training necessary to carry out their role safely and effectively
- To read, understand, and adhere to Council policies and procedures
- To maintain confidentiality at all times
- To attend meetings with their contact person where reasonably possible
- To inform the contact person of any health issues so that reasonable adjustments can be considered
- To report any accidents or incidents promptly
- To ensure appropriate personal insurance is in place where required
- To understand responsibilities when driving on behalf of the Council
- To notify the contact person in advance of any expenses likely to be incurred
- To uphold and promote the Council's reputation at all times
- To treat all individuals with respect and dignity
- To inform the contact person if they wish to end their volunteering
- To inform relevant agencies if claiming state benefits while volunteering
- To use Council equipment responsibly and report faults immediately
- To attend volunteering activities without being under the influence of alcohol or drugs

References and other checks

Depending on the role, volunteers may be required to provide two referees.

The Council may also need to understand health considerations to determine reasonable adjustments.

Enhanced DBS checks will be required where volunteering involves regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults.

All checks must be completed before volunteering begins.

Insurance

Volunteers are covered by the Council's insurance whilst undertaking approved activities. Details are available upon request. Some exclusions may apply.

Health and safety

The Council is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for all volunteers, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, and has a Health and Safety Policy in place.

Volunteers will be made aware of this policy during their induction and must be familiar with it before undertaking any volunteering activity.

A Risk Assessment will be carried out for each volunteering activity. This will provide the basis for decisions about what information a volunteer needs and the appropriate induction process for the role.

Volunteers must report any accidents, incidents or other dangerous circumstances immediately using the appropriate process as laid out in the Health and Safety Policy.

Volunteers will not be asked to and must not lone work.

Volunteers must only use Town Council tools, equipment and machinery (where permission and training has been given) and must not use personal tools, equipment and machinery unless explicit permission has been given in writing.

Appropriate PPE will be provided where required, as identified in the risk assessment.

Complaints

Service users and external agencies may raise concerns or complaints about staff, volunteers, or services.

Any concerns raised by the Clerk regarding volunteer conduct will be addressed promptly, with external agencies consulted where necessary.

Volunteers wishing to make a complaint should do so in writing to their named contact, who will follow the Council's Complaints Procedure.

Ending Voluntary Activity

A volunteer may choose to end their involvement at any time and is not required to give notice. Likewise, the Council is not required to provide notice if a volunteer's services are no longer needed. It is recommended that an exit interview is carried out to gather feedback that may support future volunteers and continuous improvement.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Thornbury Town Council is committed to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion, as underpinned by the Equality Act 2010. The Council aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively, and consistently in accordance with its Equality and Diversity Policy and Complaints Policy.

Volunteers will be treated equally regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

The Council is committed to ensuring that its volunteers reflect the diversity of Thornbury's community.

Other policies

Volunteers should familiarise themselves with relevant policies, including:

- Volunteering Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy

Further information will be provided by your contact.

Young Volunteers/vulnerable adults

Young people (aged 14–18) and vulnerable adults may volunteer, subject to additional safeguards:

- Parental or carer consent is required
- Access to the Safeguarding Policy will be provided
- Full details of the role and supervision will be given
- Time restrictions apply to under-18s
- References and permits (where required) will be obtained
- Insurers will be notified where volunteers are under 16
- DBS checks will be carried out where appropriate
- Contact details for the Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Clerk) will be provided

Data protection

A volunteer’s personal information will be stored securely in accordance with the Council’s Data Protection Policy and retained in line with the Council’s Data Retention Schedule, only for as long as necessary to support volunteering arrangements.

POLICY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

IMPACT ASSESSMENT	
Strategic	No impact
Equalities	No impact
Environmental/Sustainability	No impact
Crime and Disorder	No impact
Financial	No impact
Resource	No impact
Risk management	Mitigates against negative PR from inappropriate communications.

- END OF POLICY –

APPENDIX 1: VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

This Volunteer Agreement describes the arrangement between Thornbury Town Council and you. We wish to assure you of our appreciation of your volunteering with us and will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us enjoyable and rewarding.

NAME	
ADDRESS	
TELEPHONE	
EMAIL	
EMERGENCY CONTACT 1: NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS	
EMERGENCY CONTACT 2: NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS	
YOU WILL VOLUNTEER AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATION/PREMISES	
VOLUNTEER ROLE TITLE/CATEGORY:	
START DATE:	
THIS VOLUNTEERING ROLE IS DESIGNED TO (state nature and components of the volunteering role)	
MAIN POINT OF CONTACT AT THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL	
APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF HOURS PER WEEK:	
DAYS AND TIMES I WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER:	<p>MONDAY / TUESDAY / WEDNESDAY / THURSDAY / FRIDAY</p> <p>Please specify times, if applicable, or any other details</p>
Any other specific requirement to be discussed with you and your point of contact at Thornbury Town Council:	
DO YOU CONSENT TO PHOTOS BEING TAKEN OF YOU AND BEING USED FOR TOWN COUNCIL PUBLICITY PURPOSES?	

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL:

Induction and Training:

- To provide a thorough induction on the work of Thornbury Town Council, its staff, your volunteering role and the induction and/or training you need to meet the responsibilities of this role.

Supervision:

- To explain the standards we expect for our services and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them.
- To provide a named person who will meet with you regularly to discuss your volunteering and any successes and problems
- To provide any necessary equipment for you to complete your role;
- To be flexible in relation to your volunteering hours, recognising your need for holiday time and other commitments.

Expenses

- To pay travel expenses should you be requested by the council to attend training or a function outside the parish of Thornbury then fuel travel expenses will be paid in line with the AMAPs rate in operation at the time or reimbursement for bus or train travel, whichever is the cheapest;
- To reimburse car parking fees incurred when visiting non-Council premises whilst on Council business. The Council will not be liable for any parking fines or road traffic penalties incurred by volunteers regardless of circumstances.
- Authorisation must be sought in advance from the Town Clerk.

Health and Safety

- To provide adequate training and feedback in support of our health and safety policy;
- To carry out any necessary risk assessments and provide any special equipment as required (including Personal Protective Equipment).
- To not use personal equipment, tools or machinery unless explicit permission has been obtained in writing from the Town Council.

Insurance

- To provide adequate insurance cover for volunteers whilst carrying out their volunteering roles which have been approved and authorised by us.

Equal opportunities

- To ensure that all volunteers are dealt with in accordance with our equal opportunities policy.

Problems

- To try to resolve fairly any problems, complaints and difficulties you may have while you volunteer with us;
- In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer an opportunity to discuss the issue.

Training

- To arrange required training.

WHAT WE EXPECT FROM YOU AS A VOLUNTEER:

- To help Thornbury Town Council fulfil its aims and purpose in line with its 5-year Strategic Plan (available on the Town Council website or hard copy on request).
- To perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability;
- To follow the organisation's policies and procedures, including health and safety and equal opportunities, in relation to its staff, volunteers and clients;
- To maintain the confidential information of the organisation and of its clients;
- To meet the time commitments and standards which have been mutually agreed to and when this is not possible, to give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made;

- To be respectful towards staff, other volunteers and members of the public;
- To be aware that you may on occasion be required to work alone unsupervised or within a group;
- To return any equipment issued to you by Thornbury Town Council when requested;
- If opted in, to allow photographs, taken whilst you are performing your volunteering role to be used for publicity purposes;
- To provide referees as agreed who may be contacted, and to agree to a Disclosure and Barring check being carried out where necessary;
- To adhere to Thornbury Town Council’s Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy at all times;
- To consider and arrange car sharing should more than one volunteer be asked to attend either training or an event;
- To complete and submit a volunteer’s expense claim sheet to the Town Council along with a receipt representing fuel or transport used for your journey to claim expenses;
- To ensure that the insurance covering your vehicle is adequate if used on council business. The cover must be sufficient to permit the volunteer to drive the vehicle for business purposes. Volunteers should contact their insurers for any advice;
- To undertake required training as directed by Thornbury Town Council.

This agreement is binding in honour only, is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intends any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

SIGNED BY VOLUNTEER: _____

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

SIGNED BY TOWN CLERK (OR DEPUTY): _____

NAME: _____

DATE: _____