

## Volunteer Policy

**At Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre we recognise, encourage and value the vital role volunteers play in providing our services to the community.**

Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre's objective is: ***"Supporting Huntingdonshire communities through volunteering"***

It also administers four Community Car Schemes and promotes volunteering as a key element in developing stronger, healthier communities in Huntingdonshire.

Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre (HVC) is part of Volunteering Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, an area Volunteer Centre Network with streamlined processes, and is part of the National Council for Volunteering Organisations.

Our objective is to:

**Work in local communities to improve the quality of life of our volunteers by:**

- **helping them access personal development**
- **social activities**
- **training**
- **self-development and**
- **enjoyment through volunteering**

## Our commitment to Volunteering and Volunteers

**Volunteering** is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken by choice, without concern for financial gain.

**Volunteers and paid staff work together as a team.**

**Trustees and Committee Members** - regular volunteers with a particular responsibility to oversee and manage the organisation, some of whom have specialist skills.

**Staff** - employed to oversee and manage Volunteer Centre functions and the operation of our community car schemes.

**Regular Volunteers** - These are people who take on a particular task, on an ongoing basis. Regular volunteers include those who administer the car scheme, process data and allocate drivers. Car scheme drivers are also considered to be regular volunteers.

**Occasional Volunteers** - These are people who volunteer at one-off events e.g. volunteer stewards at annual festivals. They volunteer occasionally, perhaps a few times a year.

**Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre:**

- does not introduce volunteers to directly replace paid staff

- expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work
- recognises that volunteering is a two way process, with volunteers giving their time to help, and in return gaining some benefits for themselves.

**The Volunteer Policy is guided by the following principles:**

- The Organisation and its volunteers will follow this policy.
- All regular volunteers and committee members will sign the volunteer agreement.
- The Organisation recognises that volunteers donate their time. Their contribution should be mutually agreed.
- The volunteer's role will be clearly explained and mutually agreed.
- The Organisation will provide induction, information, any learning and support to its volunteers appropriate to their volunteer role.
- The Organisation will, whenever possible, give volunteers work that is satisfying and appropriate to their interest.
- Volunteers have the right to express their views within the organisational structure.
- Volunteers will work together within the Organisation's rules, policies and procedures.
- Volunteers will treat each other and be treated with respect and courtesy. (*see: HVC Anti-Harassment & Bullying Policy*)
- The Organisation is committed to equal opportunities in relation to the recruitment, selection and involvement of volunteers.

**Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre's involvement with volunteers covers 5 areas:-**

**1. Planning for Volunteer involvement**

Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre recognises the importance of planning. Volunteer involvement requires the investment of time and resources, particularly for new volunteers.

- Volunteer tasks are developed imaginatively with short term and ongoing opportunities.
- Role descriptions are produced and volunteer tasks are thought out thoroughly before advertising for help.
- When planning new projects, volunteer's expenses are included in budgets so that volunteer activities can be appropriately supported.
- Policies which cover volunteer activities are regularly reviewed by the committee/trustees.

**2. Recruitment and Induction**

**Recruitment**

Volunteering is open to everyone and HVC is committed to equal opportunities in its services and in the recruitment of its volunteers.

- Volunteers are recruited using a variety of advertising methods.
- Potential volunteers are contacted promptly by phone, letter or email and recruitment processes are fair, efficient and consistent.
- Volunteers are required to complete a simple application form.
- All prospective volunteers are interviewed to find out what they would like to do, their skills, suitability and how best their potential might be realised.
- HVC will endeavour to ensure that a volunteer is suitable for a role. Where there is a choice

of volunteers for a role, HVC will select the candidate based on merit. This might be their relevant experience or knowledge, or previous commitment to the organisation.

- If the volunteer, or HVC, decides that the volunteer task is inappropriate / unsuitable for whatever reason, feedback and discussions will be made to explore other options.
- Volunteers will be selected and screened for suitability through one or more of the following methods, dependent on the role:-
  - Informal or formal interview
  - References - all volunteers are required to give names of two people who can be approached for personal references. Acceptable referees must not include family members and should have known the potential volunteer for at least one year.
  - Trial period - try out role to see if this is suitable for both Volunteer and Organisation
  - Disclosure and Barring checks may be required, depending upon the nature of the voluntary role.

### **Induction**

The initial welcome and induction that new volunteers receive is key to their retention

- New volunteers will be given an information pack and a Volunteer Agreement form.
- All volunteers will receive an induction (either by HVC or the Organisation) relative to their role so that they are prepared for the tasks allocated to them.
- All volunteers will be given a named person to contact.
- Volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff and agree to abide by this when they sign the Volunteer Agreement.

### **3. Support and safety**

All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact. They will be provided with appropriate support, which will offer opportunities for feedback on progress, discussion of future developments and the chance to air any problems.

- Volunteers are covered by insurance and are included in health and safety policies.
- Out of pocket expenses are met wherever possible and practicalities of expense reimbursement are laid out in the Volunteer Guidelines.
- Volunteers not wishing to claim their expenses can donate them back to the organisation. Expenses, other than for travel/phone etc. may be met, providing approval is sought in advance. All volunteers are required to itemise and submit expense claims on a simple, standard form.
- In some circumstances, expenses will be paid in advance with the approval of the Office Manager or General Manager.
- Rates of reimbursement (e.g. for mileage) will be set and reviewed regularly by the Board of Trustees/Committee.
- HVC will aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage. A procedure covers complaints either by or about volunteers.

### **4. Training and personal development**

HVC recognises that volunteers' motivation for volunteering may change over time and the skills

they develop in their volunteering may change what they want to do.

- Training relevant to a volunteers role will be provided.
- Volunteers' motivations are met with appropriate tasks and those with extra support needs are enabled to volunteer wherever possible.
- HVC recognises 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 tasks effectively where appropriate.

#### 5. Involving, rewarding and recognising volunteers

- Team meetings and events are held which include paid staff and volunteers.
- Newsletters/email updates keep volunteers up to date with the organisation's activities.
- Volunteers receive appropriate recognition for their efforts. We don't forget the importance of a simple thank you!

#### Volunteer Agreement & Commitment

Volunteers who undertake a volunteering role with HVC will be asked to sign the Volunteer Agreement. This agreement is not a contract, simply a summary outline of conditions to be met by the volunteer and by HVC.

HVC recognises that volunteers will often need flexible arrangements regarding the amount of time and level of commitment they are able to give. We will try to work within these constraints.

Whatever the level of commitment a volunteer can give we will recognise and value their contribution. In return the volunteer will be expected to follow the letter and spirit of the Organisation's policies and procedures and to meet mutually agreed time commitments, or to give notice if this is not possible. Volunteers are free to leave their voluntary role at any time.

*This policy was approved by the Trustees of Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre*

Signed: *Mike Baker* Chairman

Date: *23/1/2024*

Date of next Review: *23/1/2025*