

# Houghton on the Hill Parish Council

## Volunteer Policy

**Applies to volunteers working on behalf of, but not employed by, the Parish Council**

1. Volunteers must be adequately trained to be able to carry out the role. The exact nature of the training will depend on the role. It is not possible to detail what constitutes 'adequacy' as requirements will vary according to:
  - a) the job or activity
  - b) the existing competency of volunteers
  - c) the circumstances of the work (e.g. the degree of supervision)
  - d) the tools and/or equipment being used

The training standard, however, must be sufficient to ensure the Health and Safety of volunteers and any people who might be affected by the work, as far as reasonable practicable. Responsibility for providing training rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided by the Parish Council to undertake the work.

2. Volunteers, if working for only a few hours to help at an event or similar, must still be informed about the task and its purpose, health and safety and supervision arrangements. Responsibility for this rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided by the Parish Council to undertake the work.
3. Volunteers expect to be treated equally, regardless of their gender, race, age, faith/religion, disability or sexual orientation. Volunteers must be accommodated from all walks of life.

4. Volunteers must undergo an induction appropriate for the task(s) being undertaken. This must include health and safety, what to do if there is a problem and an introduction to other relevant individuals. Responsibility for the induction rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided by the Parish Council to undertake the work.
5. A risk assessment must be undertaken in order to identify risks that might be faced and how they will be managed. If an area of activity presents a significant risk, consideration must be given to reducing or stopping the activity which gives rise to the risk. The Parish Council, through the offices of its Clerk or other person(s) as advised, must receive a copy of such risk assessment records. Responsibility for undertaking the risk assessment rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided by the Parish Council to undertake the work. Risk assessments and their associated paperwork must comply with current Health and Safety at Work legislation.
6. So far as insurance is concerned, on condition that volunteers are working at the sole request of and under the sole control of the Parish Council then they will be insured under the Parish Council's Public Liability and Employers' Liability cover. Reporting to the Parish Council in respect of work which is of an ongoing nature is not necessary on each occasion and does not require formal approval of the Parish Council on each occasion.
7. Volunteers must carry out only less hazardous work involving, for example, path maintenance and grass cutting with the use of non-powered tools only,

other than lawnmowers/grass cutting equipment and strimmers, when stout footwear must be worn and safety goggles in the case of strimmers. If there are serious issues with regards to trees, this work must be carried out by a qualified tree surgeon with their own public liability cover of no less than £5,000,000. Prior to work commencing, a visual inspection must be carried out to ensure that there are no obvious hazards such as litter, glass or stones. Responsibility for undertaking the inspection rests with the individual to whom authority has been provided by the Parish Council to undertake the work. Remedial action must be taken immediately and these inspections are to be recorded. If volunteers use their own tools, then the Parish Council cannot be held liable for any injury caused by them through the use of faulty equipment/tools. Cleaning materials must not be stronger than those available on shop shelves. High visibility vests or other appropriate clothing must be worn where appropriate.

8. Jewellery, necklaces, watches and the like must not be worn if they might compromise the safe working environment for the volunteer.
9. Generally trainers, open-toed shoes, heeled shoes or sandals must not be worn if by so doing the safe working environment for the volunteer is compromised.
10. Long hair must be tied up if it is long enough to compromise health and safety requirements.
11. All work undertaken by volunteers shall have regard to the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and all other Health and Safety Legislation.

12. Volunteers wishing to provide the Parish Council with an update on their activities can do so during the informal public participation session of any Parish Council meeting.
13. If the Parish Council is required to make a decision, a detailed and fully costed proposal must be submitted to the Clerk by no later than the Monday of the week preceding the Parish Council meeting.
14. Travel expenses will be paid at the current Parish Council mileage rate and will be paid only with the prior approval of the Parish Council.
15. Expenses will be paid only with the prior approval of the Parish Council and after receipt by the Parish Council of paper receipts in respect of same. They will not include safety equipment or clothing.
16. Volunteers must inform the Parish Council of the work they intend to undertake before commencing such work, preferably at the informal public participation session of the preceding Parish Council meeting or in writing to that meeting (via the Clerk).