Adopted: 14.07.25
Readopted: 14.07.26

MARY TAVY PARISH COUNCIL
VOLUNTEERING POLICY



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Mary Tavy Parish Council recognises the valuable contribution that volunteers can make to the work the council does in the community and how vital volunteers can be for projects and events to be successful.

1.2 The council also recognises that volunteers are motivated, because it is their choice to volunteer and give their time freely. In return, the council wishes to provide volunteers with opportunities that will help them to develop new skills and experiences.

1.3 This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in Mary Tavy Parish Council and is relevant to anyone involved in recruitment and managing volunteers and the promotion of volunteer activities.

1.4 The aim of this policy is to ensure volunteers are safe and appreciated when volunteering with the council. It is designed to provide a framework for how the council will manage volunteers and what volunteers can expect from the council; it sets out the principles and practice by which the council will involve volunteers.

1.5 This policy applies to all volunteers undertaking work or duties on behalf of the council in a voluntary capacity. It does not apply to those who are directly employed or contracted by the council or to councillors.

1.6 Any organiser may identify the opportunity for volunteering with the council, and must submit the names of the volunteers and the dates they are volunteering prior to them beginning a task to the parish clerk. All volunteering opportunities must be approved by the Parish Clerk in consultation with the Council Chair.

2 PRINCIPLES

2.1 A volunteer is someone who, without expectation of financial compensation beyond reimbursement of expenses, performs a task at the request of and on behalf of Mary Tavy Parish Council.

2.2 Volunteers give time, volunteering is voluntary and no financial reimbursement will be provided. No enforceable obligation can be imposed on a volunteer, to attend or set minimum time commitment to carry out tasks. The Council may provide ad-hoc volunteering opportunities and cannot provide regular volunteering.

2.3 While volunteers offer their time without any obligation and on a voluntary basis of good will, there is a mutual expectation of mutual support and reliability, as well as high standards upon which the council's reputation depends.

2.4 Councillors and the Clerk will be expected to work positively with any volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.

2.5 The council aims to provide volunteers with satisfying roles and the opportunity for personal development. The council seeks to help volunteers meet these needs.

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2.6 The council will not introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.

2.7 For all volunteering roles, there will be an appointed volunteer coordinator who has responsibility for the volunteers(s).

2.8 The council is committed to providing equal opportunities for all volunteers, irrespective of their characteristics and opposes all forms of unlawful or unfair discrimination. The council's Equality Policy for employees will always be adhered to in relation to the recruitment and support of volunteers.

3 RECRUITMENT AND INDUCTION

3.1 The council may recruit volunteers using a range of methods, including word of mouth, advertising, talking with other organisations or engaging volunteers through another organisation. It may also directly approach people who have previously volunteered with the council.

3.2 The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criteria being the individual's ability to do the specified task subject to the needs and restrictions of the location.

3.3 The council can look at facilitating help to a volunteer to overcome barriers which may make it difficult for them to volunteer.

3.4 Whilst not applicable for the majority of volunteering opportunities with the council, for certain voluntary roles prospective volunteers may be interviewed by the volunteer coordinator to assess their suitability and it may also be necessary to obtain references or a DBS check.

3.5 All volunteers will be asked to sign a volunteer agreement which details the role they are agreeing to undertake, indicates agreement to the council's relevant policies and sets out the commitment from the council. This requirement may be disapplied where volunteers are working through a partner organisation which has a similar agreement in place for its volunteers.

3.6 All volunteers will receive an appropriate induction which will aim to:

- Familiarise volunteers with the work of Mary Tavy Parish Council in general and in their specific area of work
- Ensure volunteers are aware of the risk assessment and safety measures applicable to their work

4 SUPPORT, INVOLVEMENT AND PROBLEM SOLVING

4.1 All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact.

4.2 Where appropriate (for example for ongoing volunteer work) volunteers will receive regular supervision to feedback on progress and discuss future development.

4.3 The council may offer training and development opportunities where it helps fulfil the

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volunteer's role or where it is required for health and safety purposes or in compliance with law.

4.4 The council will encourage networking meetings between volunteers to encourage peer support and share experiences.

4.5 The council will invite volunteers to provide feedback on activity they are engaged in, including, but not limited to, the post-event evaluation of events and projects.

4.6 Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning the Parish Council, its facilities, services and events to the volunteer coordinator. The council welcomes volunteers proactively providing feedback and making suggestions.

4.7 The council wishes to identify and resolve any problems at the earliest possible stage and volunteers are encouraged to raise any grievance or complaint with their volunteer coordinator or the Parish Clerk.

5 HEALTH AND SAFETY

5.1 The council has responsibility for the health and safety of its volunteers and will undertake a risk assessment of all volunteering activities.

5.2 Volunteers must always follow the council's health and safety policies and procedures; they have a duty of care to themselves and others who might be affected by their actions. Volunteers may also need to disclose any medical conditions which affect their ability to undertake certain activities.

5.3 The council will inform volunteers of any specific health and safety measures which must be taken during a voluntary activity and volunteers may wear any PPE if appropriate.

5.4 Volunteers must report any accidents to the volunteer coordinator.

5.5 The council's insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability for, and towards them, whilst undertaking official duties on behalf of the council; cover is not provided for unauthorised actions or actions taken outside the volunteering agreement. The Council does not insure personal possessions of volunteers against loss or damage.

6 EXPENSES

6.1 Volunteers will be reimbursed for any out-of-pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the council where this has been approved in advance. Receipts must be provided.

6.2 With prior agreement of the Parish Clerk, reasonable personal expenses may be reimbursed on a case-by-case basis to enable volunteers to overcome financial barriers to volunteering.

7 VOLUNTEER CONDUCT

7.1 Volunteers represent the council and whilst they are not employees there are certain

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expectations the council has for its volunteers. Volunteers are expected to:

a) undertake their volunteering duties to the best of their ability

b) treat all volunteers, staff, contractors, councillors and members of the public fairly and courteously

c) respect decisions taken by staff and follow all reasonable instructions

d) follow safety procedures and wear any PPE required

e) wear appropriate clothing (including suitable footwear), provided identification (if required), and take necessary steps to protect themselves in the environment they are working in (e.g. protection from UV rays through the use of sunscreen and a hat)

f) not behave in a way which could bring the council into disrepute

g) return any equipment/clothing supplied at the end of their duties

h) maintain safeguarding standards towards others at all times while volunteering

7.2 Volunteers may have access to personal data or sensitive information about the work of the council, its volunteers and staff, clients or other organisations.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 volunteers will only have access to personal or sensitive information they need to fulfil their specific role and this shall be approved by the Parish Clerk.

There is an absolute requirement both during and after volunteering with the council to maintain confidentiality and not pass on information to any individual or third party organisation unless required to do so by law.

7.3 Volunteers using the council's computers/IT network will observe any council policies relating to use of council IT, and policies on Data Protection and Social Media use.

7.4 Personal information recorded about volunteers is stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality. The Council informs volunteers of their right of access to personal records under data protection legislation.

8 RIGHT TO LEAVE

8.1 The council recognises that volunteers give their time freely and are under no obligation to give notice. However, it is greatly appreciated if volunteers can provide advance notice if they are either unable to attend their volunteer role or wish to end their volunteering arrangement with the council.

8.2 If a volunteer is leaving, it would be greatly appreciated if feedback can be provided to share any learning points, and understand if they may wish to volunteer again in the future.

9 POLICY REVIEW

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9.1 This Policy/Protocol will be reviewed every two years, or when there are changes to relevant legislation, or as necessary.

10 ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

10.1 Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Copies of this document in large print (A3 format) or larger font size, or any tables contained within this document in a screen reader accessible format can be made available on request from the council by emailing the Parish Clerk's office clerk@marytavyparishcouncil.gov.uk