

FINMERE PARISH COUNCIL VOLUNTEER POLICY

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in activities overseen by Finmere Parish Council. It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff, members, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility. This policy applies to volunteers working on behalf of, but not employed by, the Parish Council. This policy will be regularly reviewed to ensure suitability for purpose.

Finmere Parish Council acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique, and that volunteering can benefit users of services, staff, local communities and the volunteers themselves. Finmere Parish Council values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

Volunteers must be over the age of 16. Anyone under the age of 16 accompanying a volunteer must be closely supervised by an appropriate adult volunteer who will be responsible for the young person's safety.

- 1) Finmere Parish Council expects volunteers to have the necessary experience and/or training for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.
- 2) Volunteers, if working for only a few hours to help at an event or similar, must still be informed about the task and purpose, health & safety and supervision arrangements. Responsibility for this rests with the individual to whom the 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 being undertaken.

This must include Health & Safety requirements, 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 the risk or stopping the activity. The Parish Council, through the offices of the Clerk or other person(s), as advised, must receive a copy of such risk assessment record. 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 & 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. Given the sporadic nature of any volunteering activity the Parish Council will not normally pay for the

servicing and/or repair of volunteer's equipment. The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

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 worn 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 £10,000,000. 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. High visibility vests and other appropriate clothing must be worn where necessary.

8) Cleaning materials used by volunteers must not be stronger than those available on shop shelves. The cleaning of public toilets is subject to this policy and also a separate protocol and risk assessment.

9) Generally trainers, open-toed shoes, heeled shoes or sandals must not be worn by volunteers if by so doing the safe working environment for the volunteer is compromised.

10) Long hair should be tied up if it is long enough to compromise health and safety requirements.

11) Jewellery, necklaces, watches and the like must not be worn if they would compromise the safe working environment of the volunteer.

12) All work undertaken by volunteers shall have regard to the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 and all subsequent Health & Safety Legislation.

13) 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.

14) Expenses will only be paid to volunteers if prior approval for the works and associated costs have been given by the Parish Council.

15) Volunteers must inform the Parish Council of any new or extra 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).

16) If the Parish Council is required to make a financial 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.

17) The Parish Council will, when it gives approval for the work, appoint a Parish Councillor to monitor the work of the volunteers and report the outcome to the next Parish Council meeting.

18) Residents who undertake work on Parish Council property without the permission of the Parish Council are not covered under this policy and the Parish Council cannot be held responsible for any consequences of such action. Anyone who undertakes unauthorised work on Parish Council property could be liable for prosecution for criminal damage.