



Ilminster Town Council

Volunteer Policy

Adopted: March 2026

Review: March 2029

1. Introduction

Iminster Town Council (ITC) recognises the positive contribution volunteers make to the local community. Volunteers bring valuable skills, experience, ideas and enthusiasm, enhancing the services and activities that the Council provides.

This policy sets out a clear and consistent approach to volunteer involvement, ensuring that volunteering is a rewarding, safe and mutually beneficial experience. It applies to all individuals who contribute their time to ITC on a voluntary basis.

ITC is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define ITC's approach to involving volunteers.
- Establish expectations for both volunteers and the Council.
- Provide clarity on roles, responsibilities, training and support.
- Ensure volunteers are welcomed, valued and treated fairly.
- Ensure ITC meets its legal obligations in relation to health and safety, data protection and safeguarding.

3. Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is someone who freely offers their time, skills and experience to assist ITC without expectation of financial reward.

Volunteers are not employees, do not hold employee status, and do not replace paid staff.

The relationship between volunteers and ITC is based on mutual trust and respect.

4. Principles of Volunteering at ITC

ITC will:

- Create a positive, supportive volunteering environment.
- Treat volunteers with fairness, dignity and respect.
- Ensure volunteering is safe, meaningful and enjoyable.
- Provide appropriate induction, training, supervision and support.
- Recognise and value the contribution of volunteers.
- Offer flexibility where possible to accommodate volunteers' availability.
- Ensure volunteers are never used to displace paid staff.

Volunteers are expected to:

- Act in a professional, courteous and respectful manner.
- Follow ITC policies, procedures and guidance.
- Represent the Council positively.
- Maintain confidentiality where required.
- Be reliable and communicate if commitments change.
- Work safely and comply with health and safety instructions.

5. Recruitment of Volunteers

ITC welcomes expressions of interest from all members of the community and is committed to equal opportunities.

Recruitment may include:

- Completion of a volunteer agreement and application forms.
- An informal discussion to understand suitability and expectations.
- Verification of qualifications where relevant.
- A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check for roles requiring safeguarding, funded by ITC.

Volunteer opportunities will be publicised on the ITC website and noticeboard.

Applicants who are not selected will be informed, and records will be securely retained for six months before destruction.

6. Role Descriptions

Each volunteer position will have a **Volunteer Role Guide** outlining:

- Purpose of the role
- Expected tasks
- Skills or experience beneficial (not mandatory “requirements”)
- Training and supervision arrangements
- Time commitment

Volunteers will receive a copy of their Role Guide and this policy.

7. Induction and Training

All volunteers will receive an induction covering:

- The role and responsibilities of ITC
- Health and safety requirements
- Data protection and confidentiality
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Relevant safeguarding guidance
- Practical information needed for their role

Training (including regulatory or safety training) will be provided as needed.

Volunteers will be asked to complete a Volunteer Agreement (non-contractual) and provide emergency contact information.

8. Support and Supervision

Volunteers will have a named supervisor who:

- Provides guidance, support and feedback
- Ensures volunteers have the resources they need
- Conducts an annual review of the volunteer's experience
- Acts as the first point of contact for queries or concerns

Regular communication is encouraged to ensure volunteers feel supported.

9. Time Commitment

ITC recognises that volunteers contribute varying levels of time. Arrangements should be agreed in advance between the volunteer and supervisor, ideally with 48 hours' notice for planned activities.

Volunteers may end their involvement at any time, although giving reasonable notice is appreciated.

10. Expenses

Where relevant and agreed in advance, volunteers may claim reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, authorised by the Town Clerk.

Mileage will be reimbursed at the HMRC-approved rate.

11. Health, Safety and Wellbeing

ITC has a legal duty of care towards volunteers and will:

- Provide a safe working environment
- Conduct risk assessments for volunteer activities
- Provide training, supervision, PPE or equipment where required. (ITC would expect appropriate clothing and footwear to be provided by the volunteer)

Volunteers must:

- Follow health and safety guidance
- Take reasonable care of themselves and others
- Report accidents, incidents or hazards promptly

11.1 Equipment

ITC will provide necessary tools, uniforms or protective clothing at no cost. Training and competency records will be maintained where appropriate.

11.2 Lone Working

Volunteers may not work alone until they have:

- Completed relevant training
- Understood ITC's lone working procedures
- Had a risk assessment completed for the activity

11.3 Insurance

Volunteers are covered by ITC's Public Liability, Employer's Liability and Personal Accident insurance while carrying out authorised volunteering activities. Personal belongings and private vehicles are not covered by ITC insurance.

12. Data Protection and Confidentiality

Volunteers must follow ITC's Data Protection Policy and confidentiality requirements. Personal data will be handled securely and lawfully. Volunteer records will be retained only as long as necessary in line with the ITC Privacy Notice.

13. Acceptable Behaviour

Volunteers must:

- Act professionally and with respect towards staff, councillors, other volunteers and the public
- Avoid behaviour that could bring the Council into disrepute

- Wear or produce ITC-issued identification when undertaking duties

Failure to adhere to expected standards may result in ending the volunteer placement.

14. Problem-Solving and Complaints

14.1 If a volunteer has a concern

They should speak to their supervisor first. If unresolved, they may contact the Town Clerk. ITC will aim to resolve concerns promptly and fairly.

14.2 If a concern is raised about a volunteer

ITC will investigate the matter. Outcomes may include:

- An informal discussion
- Further training or support
- Ending the placement in serious cases

Volunteers are not subject to formal disciplinary procedures.

15. Ending a Volunteering Arrangement

Volunteers or ITC may end the volunteering arrangement at any time.

Where possible, reasonable notice should be given.

Volunteers must return any Council property before finishing.

ITC may provide references for volunteers upon request.

16. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if legislation or best practice changes.

17. Related Documents

- ITC Health & Safety Policy
- ITC Data Protection Policy
- Volunteer Role Guides
- Volunteer Agreement & Application Forms