**National Park Authority Volunteering Policy**

**1 Scope of this policy**

* 1. This policy covers all those considered to be volunteering directly for the Authority.
  2. The Authority recognises the benefits to be gained from involvement in volunteering to the National Park, the Authority, and the volunteers themselves.
  3. The Authority works with volunteers in different ways, for example on archaeological or conservation work, at events, to work in the office on specific topics, or to work remotely in research. Certain types of volunteering or projects may need additional policies to cover aspects specific to those projects.

1.4 The Authority may choose to treat certain activities which could be considered volunteering, such as a one-off litter pick open to the general public, as events, which means they would not be covered by this policy.

1.5 All volunteers and staff working with volunteers should be made aware of this policy.

**2 Definition and role of the volunteer**

2.1 This policy defines the term volunteer as an individual who is willing to donate his or her time, resources and skills to the New Forest National Park Authority, without any remuneration or direct financial benefit from the Authority, apart from legitimate expenses.

2.2 Students / work placements are not deemed to be volunteers and are covered under the Authority’s Work Placement Policy.

2.3 Volunteers do not receive any financial or material gain from volunteering.

2.4 The Authority will use volunteers to deliver its objectives.

2.5 Volunteers are in no way obliged to carry out any task or volunteering activity and can cease volunteering for the Authority if they so choose.

2.6 The Authority is committed to ensuring that all volunteers feel valued and welcome.

**3 Recruitment**

3.1 Wherever volunteers are to be recruited, the normal course of action will be to publicise the opportunity and request applications of interest.

3.2 A registration form will be filled out prior to volunteering for the Authority, covering the applicants’ main interests, experience and reasons for volunteering. Where an organised group of people is volunteering on a practical task then that group’s leader can fill in a group form. If the group is made up of separate, non-affiliated individuals then individual forms must be filled out.

3.3 In special circumstances, individuals with specific and/or technical skills can be recruited as a volunteer without the need for the opportunity to be publicised.

3.4 Volunteers should always be informed and aware of what is expected of them. This can be in the form of a role profile, for example in the case of office volunteers, or it could be in the form of a task description. It is important that the volunteer knows how the work fits into the wider purposes of the National Park.

3.5 Before working in a position of trust with children or vulnerable adults and where the Authority’s Child Protection Statement and the appropriate risk assessment indicate, volunteers must complete an application for Disclosure (Criminal Records Bureau) which will be submitted by Human Resources and paid for by the Authority.

**4 Volunteer supervision**

4.1 Volunteers, on site and in the office, will be the responsibility of the named member of staff who supervises/manages those volunteers or that piece of work, unless otherwise stipulated. Volunteers will be interviewed, selected and allocated work and training by this supervisor, with assistance from other staff as required.

4.2 Human Resources staff will monitor the volunteer process to ensure that this policy and other relevant policies are adhered to and that the volunteer’s rights and interests are not compromised.

**5 Induction and training**

5.1 The Authority will run appropriate induction and training for the role the volunteer is taking on. This could be in the form of a talk at the beginning of a day on site, or a more comprehensive induction and training programme for long term and office volunteers.

5.2 All training that volunteers receive should be relevant to their role.

5.3 The Authority will seek every reasonable opportunity offer additional non-mandatory training and skill development sessions to benefit the volunteer.

No volunteer will be expected to undertake any task that they have not been adequately trained to do.

**6 Volunteer expenses**

6.1 Reimbursing volunteers’ expenses means that volunteering is accessible to all, regardless of income.

Reasonable volunteer expenses that are incurred as a direct result of the volunteer activity will normally be covered if agreed in advance with the Authority and project lead. For example, this includes travel to and from a site, but not the cost of lunch. A valid receipt is required for any reimbursement.

6.2 Volunteers will be encouraged to walk, cycle or use public transport to travel to and from their voluntary work, and also to car share if travelling by vehicles is required.

6.3 Costs are met from project budgets as agreed by the Authority. Limits as to what is reasonable to claim will be decided on a project-by-project basis.

6.4 Any other activity that may incur costs should be discussed with the supervisor/manager prior to undertaking the activity to establish whether those costs can be met. If agreed, costs will only be reimbursed on receipt of proof of expenditure.

**7 Insurance**

7.1 The Authority’s public liability and employer’s liability insurance covers all people who are working for the Authority equally, regardless of whether they are paid or unpaid.

Volunteers registered with other New Forest organisations will be able to volunteer on NFNPA led projects and be covered by NFNPA insurance if that organisation is signatory on a 3rd party agreement covering volunteer sharing.

Likewise, volunteers registered with the NFNPA will have the opportunity to and will be encouraged to volunteer with other partner organisations.

7.2 Volunteers must arrange their own insurance when driving vehicles in association with volunteer work, including travelling to and from a volunteering start point, unless driving an Authority vehicle such as the pool car or mobile unit.

7.3 If volunteers use their vehicle during their volunteering, including getting to and from a start point, they must sign the Driver’s Declaration at Appendix 1.

**8 Confidentiality and personal data**

8.1 We take your privacy very seriously. Your information will never be supplied to anyone outside the NFNPA without first obtaining your consent or letting you know as appropriate, unless we are obliged by law to disclose it, or it would otherwise be fair to do so, and we are permitted by law to use it in this way. More information about how we hold your personal information and your rights regarding it is set out in this clause 8, clause 13.2, and in the NFNPA’s privacy notice available on the website.

8.2 Personal information submitted by volunteers will be held on a secure database accessible by HR and the Project Lead. You may ask for your information to be deleted at any time but once deleted we will no longer be able to contact you about this or future volunteering opportunities. Your information will be stored for the duration of the project you registered for before being destroyed in accordance with the NFNPA’s Retention Schedule unless you give permission for your data to be retained.

8.3 Some volunteers may require an NFNPA email address and access to the Authority’s ICT network and internet access. In such circumstances, volunteers will be requested to sign and adhere to the Authority’s ICT Policy

8.4 Volunteers must not, either during or after their work with the Authority, use for their own or any other purposes, or divulge to any persons any information concerning the business of the Authority, which has not been released to the public through Authority documents or by virtue of being a public report or background document in the public domain.

8.5 Volunteers must not, either during or after their work with the Authority, divulge to anyone any personal information held by the Authority relating to any other individual. You must comply with the NPA’s Data Protection Policy and relevant laws on data protection.

**9 Equal opportunities and diversity**

9.1 The Authority is committed to encouraging diversity in all areas of its work, including volunteering. The Authority believes it has much to learn and gain from diverse cultures and perspectives. It is committed to developing an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds, and needs are fostered and valued, and those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute.

9.2 There will be equal opportunities for all volunteers as required by the Equality Act 2010.

9.3 Volunteers under the age of 18 will be required to provide written consent from their Parent or Guardian before undertaking any volunteer work with the Authority.

**10 Health and safety**

10.1 Volunteers will operate under the Authority’s Health and Safety Policy. Risk assessments will be carried out for each site and operation undertaken. The risk assessments will be made available to all volunteers prior to starting work at a site. Volunteers with any special requirements will be consulted to ensure that they are catered for in the risk assessments.

Every informal volunteer activity or event will start with a health and safety briefing along with a general task briefing. Volunteers will be requested to sign a register for the activity and agree to abide by the risk assessment.

10.2 Volunteers will not be expected to carry out any activities which Authority staff would not undertake for health and safety reasons. Volunteers can refuse to carry out work requested should they deem it unsafe or unreasonable. The Authority will provide and manage a safe working environment including provision of PPE (personal protective equipment) if required; volunteers will be responsible for wearing adequate clothing for prevailing weather conditions.

**11 Resolving problems**

11.1 The Authority strives to ensure that volunteers feel valued and are treated fairly. Any problems encountered during volunteering will be taken seriously by the Authority. As part of their induction volunteers will be given information about what to do, and who to contact, should any problems arise.

11.2 Volunteers will not be accountable under the Authority’s disciplinary or grievance procedures. If problems do arise, then volunteers should first approach the supervisor for their volunteering project. If this does not lead to resolution, volunteers can contact Human Resources directly. Every endeavour will be made to resolve any issues that arise.

**12 Behaviour and conduct**

12.1 Authority volunteers, and members of the public in contact with Authority volunteers, have the right to expect a pleasant and safe environment. All volunteers of the Authority are required to maintain levels of personal behaviour and conduct of the highest standard; it is particularly important not to undermine levels of public confidence in the integrity or the standing and reputation of the Authority as a public department.

* 1. Volunteers must familiarise themselves with and adhere to whatever security arrangements are in place at any time.

**13** **Data matching**

13.1 The New Forest National Park Authority is under an obligation to protect the public funds that it administers. To this end it may use information provided to it for the purposes of the prevention and detection of fraud.

13.2 The information supplied by volunteers, in respect of their recruitment and retention, may be shared internally and with external bodies administering public funds for these purposes only.

**14 Finishing volunteering with the Authority**

14.1 The Authority endeavours to give volunteers as much notice as is practicable to when an opportunity is to finish. However, due to the nature of voluntary work, volunteers should be aware that the work could cease at any time without notice.

14.2 There is no guarantee of future work, paid or voluntary, with the Authority.



**Volunteer Driver’s Declaration**

This declaration should be completed by any Volunteer driving their own vehicle in the course of volunteering duties.

I (full name of driver) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

of (address) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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do hereby declare the following:

1. I confirm that I hold a full UK driving licence to drive motor vehicles.
2. I confirm that my car insurance policy is valid and covers:
3. me for driving to and from sites where I will be carrying out volunteering duties on behalf of the New Forest National Park Authority.
4. me and others when I am driving while carrying out volunteering duties on behalf of the New Forest National Park Authority.

Contact with your insurer is advised – a suggested sample letter is enclosed (Appendix 2).

1. I confirm that my car is taxed and has a valid MOT certificate (if applicable).
2. If at any time my driving licence, insurance policy or MOT certificate becomes invalid, I undertake to notify my supervisor/manager that I can no longer drive on behalf of the New Forest National Park Authority.
3. I declare that I have no disabilities or illnesses which affect my ability to drive and undertake to notify my supervisor/manager if my health deteriorates to an extent that I then become unfit to drive.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name:

***Appendix 2***

Address:

Date:

**TO (Insurance company) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**RE (Policy number) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Dear Sir/Madam

I intend to undertake voluntary work and, from time to time, I will use my vehicle to carry passengers or to carry out other duties, as requested. I will receive a mileage allowance for these journeys to cover the running costs of my vehicle in accordance with Section 1(4) of the Public Passengers Vehicles Act 1981, which exempts me from both Passenger Service Vehicle and Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Car licensing laws.

I have been asked to provide a declaration, of which clause 2 (detailed below) relates to insurance.

***Clause 2***

***I confirm that my car insurance policy is valid and covers:***

1. ***me for driving to and from sites where I will be carrying out volunteering duties on behalf of the New Forest National Park Authority.***
2. ***me and others when I am driving in the course of carrying out volunteering duties on behalf of the New Forest National Park Authority.***

I should be grateful if you would confirm that my existing policy covers me for driving in the circumstance set out in clause 2. Please use the ‘tear off’ slip below.

Please also confirm that my insurance policy contains a clause indemnifying the agencies with which I am a volunteer against third party claims arising out of the use of my vehicle for such voluntary work.

Yours faithfully

MM900354510[1](Policy holder)

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**FROM (Insurance company) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Re (Policy number) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**POLICY HOLDER / DRIVER \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

This is to confirm that your insurance policy covers you to drive in the circumstances set out at Clause 2 of the Declaration as added above (for which a mileage allowance may be received). This also confirms that the above policy contains a clause indemnifying the agencies with which you are a volunteer against third party claims arising from the use of the vehicle on such voluntary work.

*OFFICIAL STAMP*

**ISSUED BY \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**