

STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHIVES AND HERITAGE

VOLUNTEER POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Staffordshire Archives and Heritage includes the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service and the County Museum Service. The service operates at the two sites: Stoke-on-Trent City Archives in Hanley and the Staffordshire History Centre in Stafford. The Staffordshire History Centre brings together three collections, from the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service, the County Museum and the William Salt Library.
- 1.2 Volunteers work at the following sites: Stoke-on-Trent City Archives in Hanley, the Staffordshire History Centre in Stafford, the History Access Point at St. Mary's in Lichfield, the museum collection stores in Stafford and remotely from their own homes.
- 1.3 The aim of the Service is to locate, collect, preserve, celebrate and share irreplaceable archive and museum collections relating to the past and present life and work of people of the County of Staffordshire and the City of Stoke-on-Trent and to preserve the archives of the Diocese of Lichfield, thereby contributing to the national network of archive and museum care.
- 1.4 Volunteers, through the time, energy and skills which they provide, make a valuable contribution to the overall aims of the Service. Equally volunteering can also bring benefits to volunteers themselves by improving their skills and confidence, developing interests and providing enjoyment and social interaction.
- 1.5 Across the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service, volunteers are involved mainly in the production of catalogues, indexes or other types of finding aids, which will enhance public access to archive collections, or in preservation work on the collections, which can help to halt further deterioration.
- 1.6 Within the Staffordshire County Museum Service volunteers help with the delivery of our services. Volunteers are involved in many aspects of our work including, for example, research, care of the collections, preventative conservation, documentation and exhibition preparation.
- 1.7 The Staffordshire History Centre Project will broaden the range of volunteering roles within the service, including the creation of public facing volunteer roles.
- 1.8 The Service recognises that collaboration with existing voluntary groups or the formation of groups for specific local projects can help us to engage more effectively with local communities and that specific locally-based volunteer projects can help communities to build and define a sense of place and belonging.

- 1.9 This policy covers those volunteers aged over 18, including university placement students.
- 1.10 This policy is not designed to supersede parent authority guidelines, which should still be followed, rather to ensure best practice is followed across all aspects of volunteering within the service.

2. PURPOSE OF POLICY

The purpose of the Archive and Heritage Service in adopting this policy is:

- To acknowledge the value of the contribution made by volunteers to the work of the Service and to widening participation in the community history of Staffordshire
- To establish clear principles for the involvement of volunteers with the Service
- To clarify the role of volunteers and the relationship between volunteers and the Service
- To confirm the commitment of the service to involving volunteers in its work
- To recognise the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers and the Service
- To establish an appropriate framework for the recruitment and support of volunteers within corporate policies and guidelines

The Volunteer Policy supports Staffordshire County Council's Strategic Plan by supporting the following outcomes:

Where everyone in Staffordshire can -

- Have access to more good jobs and share the benefits of economic growth
- Live in thriving and sustainable communities
- Be healthier and independent for longer

The Volunteer Policy also supports Stoke-on-Trent City Council's engagement plan.

Volunteering enables people to access cultural collections in a different way, meet people and improve their wellbeing, gain new skills to help them seek new opportunities for paid employment.

3. DEFINITIONS

- 3.1 A volunteer is defined as a person who carries out voluntary work in partnership with the Archive and Heritage Service. The work is undertaken by choice and is unpaid.

4. STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 The Service will make information about opportunities for volunteer working widely accessible, including through the various volunteer agencies operating in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and by corporate processes and publicity.
- 4.2 The tasks, which are identified to be carried out by volunteers, will be clearly defined so that both employees and volunteers are sure about their respective roles and responsibilities.
- 4.3 The Service will keep a register/record of volunteers, details of which will not be disclosed to third parties, and will maintain records of the work carried out by volunteers.
- 4.4 Volunteer work will complement, not replace the work carried out by employees.
- 4.5 Volunteers will have the opportunity to represent their views and concerns to the Service.
- 4.6 The Service will acknowledge publicly the contribution made by volunteers to the Service.
- 4.7 The product of any volunteer work carried out to assist the Service will be the copyright of the Archive and Heritage Service and the Service will have the right to publish the product of any volunteer working in order to further its aim of improving access to collections.
- 4.8 This policy and the accompanying procedures relating to volunteer working will be reviewed every three years.

INDIVIDUAL VOLUNTEERS

5. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- 5.1 Staffordshire Archive and Heritage Service will adhere to the Equal Opportunities and Volunteer policies of both Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, when recruiting and selecting volunteers.
- 5.2 We will make information about opportunities for volunteer working widely accessible using corporate processes, including information about actual tasks, required skills, commitment, and time. This will be regularly reviewed. Where appropriate we will use role profiles to support the recruitment of new volunteers.

- 5.3 Potential volunteers will be invited to a preliminary discussion with the appropriate member of staff prior to any volunteer work being offered. This provides an opportunity for informal assessment on both sides and for a consideration of possible options.
- 5.4 The Service reserves the right not to accept a volunteer or to terminate an arrangement.
- 5.5 Wherever possible placements will match the volunteers' skills, talents, and interests with the voluntary work to be carried out. However, it may not always be possible to do this and in some cases, it may not be possible to offer a placement because of insufficient accommodation within the Service.
- 5.6 Volunteers will be required to complete a Volunteer's Agreement. This will outline the commitment of Archive and Heritage Service to the volunteer and the volunteer's commitment to the service.
- 5.7 The Service may request references for volunteers where it is appropriate for example for volunteers roles that involve working with members of the public.
- 5.8 Once placed with the Service, we will expect volunteers to comply fully with existing policies and procedures, including health and safety procedures.

6. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS

The Archive and Heritage Service recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- Be given clear information and a full induction to the organisation and its procedures, including its health and safety procedures, and equal opportunity policies.
- Work in a safe environment and conditions
- Be insured through the Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council insurance policies
- All volunteers will be offered appropriate access to support and supervision on a regular basis, with a named manager, and will be informed who to contact in an emergency
- Receive the necessary training to perform allocated tasks
- Be free from any form of discrimination
- To make comments or complaints which will be dealt with through established corporate procedures
- Ask for a reference to support future work applications

- Withdraw from voluntary working

The Archive and Heritage Service expects that its volunteers will:

- Work within the agreed protocols and procedures of the Archive and Heritage Service, Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council
- Work within the guidelines provided and follow staff instructions and guidance
- Work at times agreed with the Service and give advance notice of any variations where possible
- Carry out all tasks in a way which supports the aims, values and standards of the Service
- Respect confidentiality
- Show courtesy to members of the staff and other volunteers

7. RECOGNITION, SUPPORT AND REWARD FOR VOLUNTEERS

- 7.1 The Service will provide an induction to the workplace, ensuring volunteers are aware of health and safety procedures and a role specific risk assessment will be in place
- 7.2 Volunteers will be entitled to discounts at certain Service events.
- 7.3 Each year volunteers will be invited to attend an annual thank you event in appreciation of their work.
- 7.4 The Service will offer opportunities to learn more about its work and how the work of the volunteers supports the outcomes delivered by the Service.

8. COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER GROUPS

- 8.1 Where appropriate, the Archive and Heritage Service will seek to engage with and encourage local community groups or organisations to help to deliver volunteer projects. Before the commencement of any activity, the overall aims, the task remit, methodology and outcomes of the project will be clearly discussed and defined between the appropriate member of staff and the relevant group.
- 8.2 Where volunteer projects are developed within communities to support the Service, volunteer groups will be asked to carry out specified tasks in a way, which supports the aims, values and standards of the Service.
- 8.3 The Service will ensure that local volunteer groups have a named

point of contact with the Service. Equally there will be a named representative(s), who will liaise with the Service on behalf of the group concerned.

9. RELATIONSHIP WITH ARCHIVE AND HERITAGE SERVICE EMPLOYEES

- 9.1 The Archive & Heritage Service will endeavor to ensure that good working relationships are fostered between its employees and volunteers. All staff working with volunteers will follow the Service's best practice guidelines.
- 9.2 The work of the Archive and Heritage Service employees and the contribution made by volunteers will be promoted and celebrated.
- 9.3 Key members of staff in the Service have named responsibilities for coordinating the work of volunteers and should be the first point of contact. At the Staffordshire History Centre this is the Volunteer Co-Ordinator or the Engagement & Access Manager, at Stoke-on-Trent City Archives this is the Archive Services Manager.
- 9.4 The roles of volunteers and paid staff will be clearly defined, complementary and mutually supportive.
- 9.5 In the event of any industrial action, volunteers will not be requested to carry out the work of Archive and Heritage Service employees. They may continue with their regular duties, provided that adequate supervision can be made available, but will not be asked to undertake additional work.

10. VOLUNTEER AGREEMENTS

- 10.1 The purpose of entering into a service agreement is to ensure that the role of volunteers is clear, that satisfactory arrangements are in place for their management and that the impact and benefits of volunteering are acknowledged.

11. RESPONSIBILITY AND REVIEW

- 11.1 The overall responsibility for the implementation, monitoring and review of this policy rests with the Head of Archive & Heritage Service.
- 11.2 The policy will be reviewed within three years.

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