OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Volunteer Policy
DRAFT for Council approval

Document	Volunteer Policy, including Code of Conduct and Volunteer Risk Assessment
Prepared by	Christmas and Events Working Group / Office
Builds on	Report to Full Council, 11 February 2026, Agenda Item 19: Recruitment of Volunteer Event Stewards
Approved by	Full Council on [date to be added]
Review date	Annually, or sooner if legislation or Council activities change

1. Purpose

This policy sets out how Oakham Town Council recruits, supports and manages volunteers who help at Council-led events, such as the Christmas Lights Switch-On and summer events. It aims to keep volunteers, the public and the Council safe, and to make volunteering a positive experience.

2. Status of volunteers

- Volunteers give their time freely and are not employees or workers of the Council. Nothing in this policy creates a contract of employment.
- Volunteers are not paid. Out-of-pocket expenses may be reimbursed only if agreed in advance by Council.
- Volunteering is flexible. Volunteers can choose which events and hours they help with, and can stop at any time.

3. Who can volunteer

- Event stewards must be aged 18 or over.
- Young people aged 16–17 may help with low-risk tasks only (not stewarding or road closure points). They need written consent from a parent or guardian on their registration form, must never work out of view of an adult volunteer, and adults should always outnumber them.
- Volunteers should be fit to carry out the role and should tell the Event Manager about any health condition that may affect them on the day, so reasonable adjustments can be made.

4. Recruitment and registration

- Volunteer roles will be advertised through the Council website, Facebook, notice boards, shop windows (where possible) and local community radio.
- Each volunteer completes a short registration form (Appendix B) with contact details, an emergency contact and availability.
- The roles in this policy do not involve being alone with children or vulnerable adults, so DBS checks are not normally required. The Council will review this if any role changes.

5. Role description: Community Event Steward

Reports to: the Event Manager on the day.

Purpose: to act as the friendly face of the Council during public events, helping residents and visitors have a safe, enjoyable and well-organised experience.

Key responsibilities:

- Welcoming visitors and giving directions and event information.
- Helping to keep walkways clear and monitoring designated areas, such as the stage, stalls and road closure points.
- Helping to guide authorised vehicles on and off site at walking pace, under the direction of the traffic management team.
- Acting as "eyes and ears" and reporting any incidents, hazards or concerns to the Event Manager.
- Light logistics support, such as putting out signage and guiding stallholders to their pitches.

What we are looking for: friendly, reliable people who can stay calm in a busy environment. No experience is needed, as a full briefing is given before each event.

Volunteers must not: physically restrain or remove anyone; carry out security work that requires an SIA licence; give first aid unless qualified and asked to by the first aid team; direct moving traffic on an open road; or lift heavy items alone.

6. Induction and briefing

Before each event, every volunteer will receive a briefing (see the checklist in Appendix C) covering:

- their role, location, shift times and who to report to
- emergency and evacuation procedures, and the location of first aid and the lost child point
- how to report incidents and concerns
- safeguarding and the lost child procedure
- welfare: breaks, refreshments, toilets and dressing for the weather

Volunteers will be given a hi-vis vest and a contact number for the Event Manager.

7. Volunteer Code of Conduct

Volunteers represent Oakham Town Council and are asked to:

- be polite, patient and respectful to everyone, regardless of background
- follow instructions from the Event Manager, first aid team, traffic management team and emergency services
- wear the hi-vis vest provided at all times while on duty
- not drink alcohol before or during their shift, or volunteer under the influence of drugs
- not smoke or vape while on duty in public areas
- keep personal information about the public and other volunteers confidential
- not post photos of members of the public, especially children, on social media while volunteering
- not accept money or gifts on behalf of the Council
- let the Event Manager know as soon as possible if they can no longer attend

If a volunteer does not follow this code, the Council may ask them to stop volunteering.

8. Health and safety

- The Council will carry out a risk assessment for volunteer activities at each event (see Appendix A) and share the key points at the briefing.
- Volunteers must take reasonable care of their own safety and that of others, and report hazards straight away.
- Volunteers should not put themselves at risk. If a situation feels unsafe, they should step back and contact the Event Manager.

- Volunteers will not work alone and will be able to contact the Event Manager at all times.
- Shifts will include breaks, and no volunteer should be on duty for more than 3 hours without a break.

9. Safeguarding

- Volunteers must never be alone with a child or vulnerable adult out of public view.
- If a volunteer finds a lost child, they stay with the child in a public place, contact the Event Manager and follow the lost child procedure.
- Any safeguarding concern must be reported to the Event Manager immediately, who will contact the police or social services if needed.

10. Insurance

On condition that volunteers are working at the request of, and under the control of, the Council, they will be insured under the Council's Public Liability and Employers' Liability cover. This does not cover unauthorised activities, tasks outside the volunteer's agreed role, or volunteers' personal belongings.

11. Data protection

Volunteer information is collected only to organise and contact volunteers, and is stored securely and kept in line with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. It will not be shared without consent, except with emergency services if needed. Volunteers can ask for their information to be deleted at any time.

12. Problems and concerns

If a volunteer has a concern or complaint about their volunteering, they should raise it with the Event Manager or the Clerk, who will deal with it fairly and promptly.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Council.

DRAFT

Appendix A: Volunteer Risk Assessment

Likelihood (L) and Impact (I) are scored 1–5. Risk = L × I.

Hazard	Who	Risk	Control measures	Rev.	Rating
Slips, trips and falls (wet or icy ground, cables, kerbs)	Volunteers	3x3=9	Briefing on hazards; sensible footwear advised; cables covered; areas checked before the event	2x2	4 Low
Vehicle movements during set-up, breakdown and at road closure points	Volunteers	3x5=15	Volunteers never direct moving traffic; vehicles move at walking pace with traffic management team; hi-vis worn at all times	1x5	5 Low
Crowd surge at the switch-on	Volunteers, public	3x4=12	Volunteers positioned away from pinch points; briefed on evacuation routes; report crowding to Event Manager	1x4	4 Low
Cold, wet weather and darkness after 4pm	Volunteers	4x2=8	Advice to dress warmly; shifts with breaks; hot drinks; torches for late shifts	2x2	4 Low
Aggressive or intoxicated members of the public	Volunteers	2x3=6	Volunteers do not intervene physically; step back and report to Event Manager or police	1x3	3 Low
Safeguarding (lost child, allegations)	Children, volunteers	2x4=8	Never alone with a child out of public view; follow lost child procedure; report concerns immediately	1x4	4 Low
Manual handling (signs, barriers)	Volunteers	2x3=6	Light items only; team lifting; no heavy lifting alone	1x3	3 Low
Fatigue or illness on duty	Volunteers	2x3=6	Maximum 3 hours without a break; volunteers tell Event Manager about relevant health conditions; first aid on site	1x3	3 Low
Unclear roles or communication	Volunteers, public	3x3=9	Pre-event briefing; contact number for Event Manager; volunteers work in pairs	1x3	3 Low
Emergency or evacuation	Everyone	2x5=10	Briefing on evacuation routes and assembly points; follow Event Manager and emergency services	1x5	5 Low

DRAFT

Appendix B: Volunteer Registration Form

Full name	
Address	
Mobile number	
Email	
Are you 18 or over? If not, please give your date of birth	Yes / No
If under 18: parent or guardian name and signature	
Emergency contact name and number	
Any health condition or need we should know about to keep you safe? (optional)	
Which events and hours can you help with?	

☐ I have read and agree to follow the Volunteer Code of Conduct.

☐ I consent to Oakham Town Council holding my details to organise volunteering, in line with UK GDPR.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix C: Pre-event Briefing Checklist

Item	Covered
Welcome, introductions and Event Manager contact number	☐
Roles, locations and shift times	☐
Hi-vis issued	☐
Site layout: road closures, stage, stalls, attractions	☐
First aid point and lost child point	☐
Lost child and safeguarding procedure	☐
How to report incidents and hazards	☐
Emergency and evacuation procedures, routes and assembly points	☐
What volunteers must not do (Section 5)	☐
Welfare: breaks, toilets, refreshments, weather	☐
Questions	☐

DRAFT