

Policy number 12

Thorpe on the Hill Parish Council Volunteer Policy

Please also refer to the separate policy covering volunteer strimming work at the Eric East Memorial Lake.

Purpose

This policy sets out the principles for voluntary involvement in activities authorised by Thorpe on the Hill Parish Council).

The Parish Council is grateful for the considerable service that volunteers have given to Thorpe on the Hill over many years and in many ways, and acknowledges that volunteers bring a wide range of benefits to the council, the local community, and the volunteers themselves.

This policy applies to volunteers working on behalf of the parish council, not to employees of the Parish Council or Parish Councillors.

1. The Parish Council

1.1 If the Parish Council or Lake Management Committee is required to decide regarding work to be undertaken by volunteers then a detailed and fully costed proposal must be submitted to the Parish Clerk no later than 14 days prior to the next Parish Council or LMC meeting, as appropriate.

1.2 The Parish Council or Lake Management Committee 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 Councillor or Lake Management Committee Meeting.

1.3 The Parish Council may make detailed policies for specific volunteer activities.

2. Volunteers

2.1 Volunteers should expect to be treated fairly and equally, and accommodated from all walks of life. However they should note that restrictions, such as age limits, may be necessary to comply with Parish Council public liability insurance terms and conditions, or with risk assessments.

2.2 Volunteers shall be required to note that only volunteer work that has been authorised by the Parish Council or Lake Management Committee will be covered by the Parish Council's insurance, however exclusions apply to person's over 75 years of age and the scale of compensation is limited, more information can be received from the Parish Clerk. Anyone who undertakes work on Parish Council property without such permission is not covered under this policy and the Parish Council cannot be held responsible for any consequences of such action. In extreme circumstances those responsible for unauthorised work could be liable for prosecution for criminal damage.

2.3 Unless volunteers have relevant professional experience, they will carry out only the least hazardous work involving, for example path maintenance and grass cutting with the use of non-powered tools only, other than lawnmowers, strimmers and jet washers.

2.4 Volunteers should not undertake any type of work where they have received medical advice to avoid doing such activities.

2.5 Volunteers should note that the council may decide to set up a volunteer database that records volunteers and some basic contact details.

3. Risk Assessments & Pre-Task

3.1 Activities subject to a specific Parish Council policy should be handled according to that policy, otherwise:

3.2 Each activity carried out by volunteers must be agreed in advance by the Parish Clerk, or by the Parish Council or Lake Management Committee, if asked to make a decision on such works (see item 1.1). This is essential, not only to ensure that proposed works are in accordance with Parish Council policies, but also to avoid work being duplicated or overlapping with other volunteers or contractors, and that where needed, advance warning can be given to the public e.g. lake users.

3.3 For all activities a list of those taking part, including an event supervisor, should be provided to the Parish Clerk in advance of the work, along with a telephone contact number for each person.

3.4 Volunteer activities are divided into three categories; green, amber and red.

<p>Green: Very low risk activities including but not limited to, weeding: planting seeds, bulbs, small plants and saplings: deadheading: pruning shrubs or hedges with non-powered tools: sweeping up: picking up sticks/leaves/litter (in areas away from vehicles); cleaning; painting, surveying wildlife.</p>	<p>The Parish Council will draw up a generic risk assessment to cover these activities; this risk assessment may change from time to time to encompass new activities or risks..</p> <p>These activities can be carried out by volunteers of any age, although under 16s should be accompanied by an adult family member. Organised groups of under 16s e.g. Scouts must be accompanied by appropriate adults</p> <p>No prior risk assessment needs to be submitted to the Parish Council or Lake Management Committee, volunteers will be referred to the generic risk assessment. If an organised group of under 16s is taking part, a copy of their organisation's risk assessment for their participation should be lodged with the Parish Clerk.</p>
<p>Amber: Low risk activities including but not limited to, using power tools like lawnmowers, strimmers, jet washers; using stepladders on level stable surfaces.</p>	<p>Over 18s only. A specific risk assessment should be carried out and provided to the Parish Clerk for approval in advance of the work being carried out, along with a list of those taking part including an event supervisor.</p>
<p>Red: High risk activities including but not limited to, tree maintenance, such as felling, removal of large branches, working at height or stump removal; significant heavy lifting; significant use of scaffolding or ladders; use of power tools or machinery other than strimmers, lawn-mowers or jet washers; use of toxic or environmentally-damaging chemicals such as weedkiller or pesticide or non-domestic cleaners..</p>	<p>These activities should only be carried out by suitable contractors, or adult volunteers with suitable professional experience and expertise. A specific risk assessment should be carried out and provided to the Parish Clerk for approval in advance of the work being carried out, along with a list of those taking part including an event supervisor.</p>

3.5 The Parish Clerk, or Parish Council or Lake Management Committee, will decide on the designation of any proposed activity not listed above into an appropriate category of green, amber or red.

3.6 If necessary, assistance with completing risk assessments or templates will be provided by the Parish Clerk.

3.6a Any risk assessment will have regard to any safeguarding arrangements.

3.6b The risk assessment should include as a minimum:

- Details of the job or activity;
- A record of the visual inspection of the site, noting any hazards that may be present or other issues that volunteers should be aware of;
- The existing competency of volunteers and any training or induction that may be required;
- The circumstances of the work (e.g. the degree of supervision that will be required);

- The tools and/or equipment being used, and any PPE that will be required for such and/or specific requirements regarding clothing or footwear. For example, a high visibility vest, eye protection, work shoes and protective gloves may be needed. Jewellery, watches, trainers, open-toed shoes, high-heeled shoes, or sandals must not be worn if by doing so the safe working environment for the volunteer is compromised.
- Any social distancing or hygiene requirements as per the government guidelines in force at the time.

3.7 Volunteers must be advised in advance of any specific need for PPE, and reminded to wear clothing and footwear appropriate to the activity. A copy of this policy must also be provided to all volunteers.

3.8 Volunteers must inform the event supervisor of work they intend to carry out before commencing such work. This can be in writing via e-mail to the Parish Clerk or by signing in with the event supervisor ahead of a session. The record will be retained.

4. Volunteer Activity On The Day

4.1 Prior to work commencing, a visual inspection of the site must be carried out on the day by the event supervisor to ensure that there are no obvious hazards such as residue from fly-tipping, glass, or stones. These inspections are to be recorded.

4.2 The event supervisor must always carry out a general 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.

4.3 Volunteers must be adequately trained to be able to carry out the role or activity they are undertaking if they do not have experience in such or are using unfamiliar equipment. The exact nature of the training, if any, will depend on the role or activity and the findings from any risk assessment. Responsibility for training rests with the event supervisor, although it may be delegated to another volunteer if they have more specialised knowledge or experience of the type of work or equipment.

4.4. Normally volunteers will be expected to use their own tools and PPE. The Parish Council cannot be held liable for either any injury caused by use of faulty equipment/tools or loss of equipment/tools. The event supervisor is expected to carry with them a mobile telephone for use in case of emergency.

4.5. All volunteers shall have regard to the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 when undertaking work. Volunteers will not be authorised to carry out work that the Council considers hazardous, or would contravene the principles of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, taking into account the competence of the volunteer(s) carrying out the proposed work. The event supervisor must ask volunteers who are not wearing appropriate clothing, footwear or PPE to leave the site.

4.6. All volunteers must have due regard to the fact that they are carrying out authorised work on behalf of Thorpe on the Hill Parish Council and as such are representing the Council, both in quality of work and possible interaction with, and safety of, the public.

Dated : 20 October 2021

Review Date: yearly at the Annual meeting

Revised :