



WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL

Volunteer Information Pack

The Blakehay Theatre

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Introduction

Welcome to volunteering at Weston Town Council and thank you for giving your time and expertise.

This information pack has been written to give you all the information about becoming a volunteer at The Blakehay Theatre.

If you do decide to become a volunteer, please complete the application pack at the end of this pack and return to the theatre. We will then call you to arrange a formal interview and be given an induction to the theatre.

As the theatre receives a lot of shows with children in, it is important that all members of staff including volunteers are CRB checked. Once the CRB has been completed you will receive a certificate in the post. At this point we ask that you give a copy to the theatre for our records.

Before this time please make sure that you are supervised by a member of staff. This is not just to safeguard any minors but also to safeguard you.

We will then ask for your availability and be able to rota you in to our shows, staff rotas or as part of our publicity.

We thank you for helping out with our theatre and hope that you will find it a fulfilling experience.

Kind Regards,

Sally Heath

Theatre Manager

Policy on Volunteering

Weston-super-Mare Town Council

1. Introduction

The Weston Town Council policy on volunteering aims to ensure fairness, consistency and compliance with law on employment, safety and working with volunteers. As such it represents a foundation of guidance for good volunteering management practice throughout Town Council, and represents a commitment to managing volunteers in a way that enhances the quality of the volunteering experience.

Policy on Volunteering

2. Relevance and accessibility

This policy is of relevance to all current and potential volunteers, as well as to every member of staff that selects or manages volunteers. The policy has been reviewed by volunteers and prospective volunteers, and volunteers are able to view printed copies at each Town Council location.

Town Councillors have read and approved this policy and are aware of the value of volunteering to the organisation, as represented by the typical roles described. In turn they agree that there is a shared benefit from volunteering, and that staff will need to work closely and positively with volunteers, actively seeking and supporting their involvement in appropriate activities.

3. Values and commitment

Voluntary involvement is welcome and encouraged at all levels of Council activity and as a result Council aims to provide meaningful and fulfilling opportunities based on individuals' interests and aspirations.

The shared objective is to widen understanding of Weston-super-Mare's heritage and legacy, to encourage activities of benefit to the society and to develop the skills of volunteering individuals and groups.

4. Defining volunteers and the Council's relationship with them

A volunteer gives their time without expecting compensation beyond reimbursement of expenses to support the work of and at the request of the Town Council. Council distinguishes volunteering from employment

in line with employment law, by emphasizing the flexible and informal nature of voluntary support, and by recognition of the final responsibility of officers and elected councillors as opposed to volunteers. This recognition is based on the expectation that Council staff provide the structure, organisation, direction and day-to-day management of volunteers together with maintaining accountability, while volunteers add value to the Council's work through their gifts of time, knowledge, skills and experience. As a result this mutual agreement allows volunteers and staff to approach tasks together with no question of volunteering acting as a substitute for employment. Consequently the volunteer role can be considered a non-binding gift of time and expertise, with a mutual expectation of trust and honourable collaboration. There is no expectation of or obligation to attend any session, to give a minimum quantity of time or to carry out tasks. Equally, there can be no expectation to provide regular voluntary placement or tasks for individuals or groups.

5. Responsibilities

The Council acknowledges the need for a clear, planned system for voluntary involvement which supports these ways of working. To this end:

- Each volunteer or volunteer group has a designated member of staff or volunteer to guide and advise them in their tasks.
- Training in 'Working with Volunteers' should be available to staff and any volunteers managing other volunteers.

6. Commitment to diversity and equality

The Town Council recognises the importance of encouraging diversity and equality among volunteers as with employees. As a result equal opportunity to volunteer is provided within the range of required tasks and the limits of the time and staff resources to manage effectively. Further, deployment of volunteers will be based on merit, specifically on an individual's ability to carry out the specified task or role.

There is no minimum age requirement for volunteers provided they are undertaking suitable tasks for which there is no legal minimum, they are supervised and not left alone and a parent or guardian has given permission if they are under 18. All newly recruited managers of young volunteers are CRB checked and trained on working with under 18s.

Equally, any volunteer whose role or task may entail regular contact with children or vulnerable adults will be subject to a Criminal Records Bureau disclosure. However, to protect the rights of individuals to privacy, no CRB disclosure will be sought where there is no expectation of regular contact with children or vulnerable adults. In this way, Town Council will comply with requirements of both Health & Safety legislation and of current legislation concerning Human Rights.

7. Volunteer recruitment and selection

The Council in an equal, fair way based on assessment of the voluntary roles required. The principle of the recruitment policy is to afford volunteering opportunities which relate to the motivation and interests of the individual potential volunteer. In this way Council seeks to address the recognised importance of mutual benefit in the volunteering relationship.

All potential volunteers will consequently require a clear understanding of typical and short term roles, to help with selecting the most suitable opportunity. For individual volunteers this will be provided as both a role description and further illustrated through discussion with the recruiting volunteer manager.

Usually anyone being considered for a volunteer role will be invited for an informal interview with the manager to explore their skills, experience, interests and suitability, as well as their motivation.

8. Induction, training and development

New volunteers will receive a Volunteer Welcome Pack, containing essential information for all volunteers, together with material relevant to the specific location, role or group. New volunteers will also have time to settle in, to find out about their role and the work of the Town Council. This settling in period will allow volunteer managers to assess the quality of the arrangement of task and individual.

9. Support and recognition

Staff and volunteers who manage volunteers are encouraged to acknowledge individuals' and groups' gifts of time and expertise regularly, with a 'thank you', written recognition of service, or with any

planned social event.

Volunteers are given the opportunity to claim reimbursement of agreed mileage and other reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, subject to production of appropriate VAT receipts and prior agreement with volunteer managers.

10. Health and safety

The Council is committed to providing and maintaining a safe environment for all its volunteers. The Council will provide induction, training, risk assessment and supervision to guarantee the health, safety and welfare of volunteers. The Council's Health and Safety Policy is available at volunteer-involving locations.

11. Insurance

The Council's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them. The Council does not insure the personal possessions of volunteers against loss or damage. If volunteers use their professional skills at the Council's request for purposes on which they are qualified to advise, the Council will issue a letter on request releasing them from professional indemnity.

12. Information protection

Personal information will be stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality. Under the data protection legislation, volunteers are entitled to access these records and may contact the Theatre Manager if they wish to be provided with a copy.

Volunteers will be expected to donate to the Council any original copyright works they may produce while volunteering and will be asked to sign a copyright agreement for important projects.

Current Roles Available

- ❖ **Promotion & Distribution**
- ❖ **Steward**
- ❖ **Fundraising**

These roles are subject to change and development of the theatre. We hope to offer more opportunities in the future. If you have a specific skill or interest that could benefit the theatre, please do not hesitate to contact us with your ideas or suggestions.

Current Role Descriptions

Promotion & Distribution

The role of promotion & distribution is crucial in promoting shows and events at the theatre.

This role would involve distribution of publicity and our What's On Guide around the local area. This is a varied role and can involve many different aspects - from standing on the high street or promenade handing out leaflets to asking your local shops to display or take leaflets to mail dropping areas. This role could also involve helping on trade stands at exhibitions and events. Outreach to local societies and groups promoting what the theatre has to offer for a hirer and as a patron. All ideas for promoting the theatre to the community of Weston-super-Mare and beyond are always welcome.

Key Elements include:

- Greeting patrons and answering enquiries
- Keeping up to date with recent developments
- Confidence in dealing with patrons
- Working alongside theatre staff and volunteers

Consequently, the Distributor Volunteers will need to demonstrate the following Skills, Knowledge & Experience:

- Outstanding communication skills
- Enjoying meeting people

Steward

The role of steward is crucial in delivering shows and events at the theatre. Providing a warm welcome, under the management of the Duty Manager, and taking pleasure in helping people enjoy their experience at the theatre will be the most important and most rewarding elements of this role.

This role would involve standing in the auditorium of the theatre half an hour before curtain up and showing people to their seats and helping them with any needs.

On occasions that the theatre is not fully booked you are more than welcome to sit at the back of the auditorium and watch the performance free of charge.

Please note that there is a dress code for this role of smart black trousers, shoes and a plain Black top. You will be provided with a Weston-super-Mare Town Council badge for identification.

Key Elements include:

- Greeting patrons and answering enquiries
- Keeping up to date with recent developments
- Confidence in dealing with patrons
- Checking that customers are enjoying their visit, and reporting any relevant issues to the Duty Manager.
- Working alongside theatre staff and volunteers

Consequently, the Steward Volunteers will need to demonstrate the following Skills, Knowledge & Experience:

- Outstanding communication skills
- Enjoying meeting people and helping them with enquiries
- Readiness to undertake training in dealing with difficult situations

Fundraising

The theatre is solely funded by the Town Council and so we are always looking for fundraising ideas and opportunities to raise money for the upkeep and equipment purchase for the theatre.

We are looking to create a fundraising team that will help with ideas for developing the theatre.

Key Elements include:

- Generating Ideas
- Event organising
- Keeping up to date with recent developments
- Confidence in dealing with patrons
- Working alongside theatre staff and volunteers

Consequently, the Fundraising Volunteers will need to demonstrate the following Skills, Knowledge & Experience:

- Outstanding communication skills

Volunteer Application

Thank you very much indeed for expressing your interest in volunteering at The Blakehay Theatre as part of the Weston-super-Mare Town Council. Completing this form does not entail any obligation to provide voluntary support to the theatre, but instead helps managers to co-ordinate offers subject to the Council's policy on volunteering.

If you have any questions about this form please contact the Theatre Manager at blakehay1@wsm-tc.gov.uk on 01934 645493.

Title	
First Name	
Surname	
Address and Postcode	
Telephone (Day)	
Telephone (Eve)	
Mobile	
Email	
In Case of Emergency: <i>(Name & Telephone)</i>	
Role Interested In: (Please tick as many as required)	<input type="checkbox"/> Promotion & Distribution <input type="checkbox"/> Steward <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising
Interests, Skills, Knowledge & Experience that you would like to share; <i>(Please continue Overleaf)</i>	

Office Use Only

Date Received _____
 Date Contacted _____ Contacted by _____
 Date of Induction _____