

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

1. A word of appreciation

Volunteers like yourself play a crucial role in the work of our church. We want you to know that your own contribution really does make a difference, and is greatly appreciated. We also want to make sure that all of our volunteers are looked after, and know what is expected of them.

2. Why a Volunteer Agreement?

Our church has a **Parish Ethos Statement**, which sets out our common values and is a benchmark for assessing how we treat others. It says:

As a church, we are committed to the Biblical mandate to love our neighbours as ourselves, following the teaching that every person is created in the image of God and has inherent worth in God's eyes. We therefore seek to treat everyone, whatever their circumstances in life, with kindness, respect and dignity.

We also recognise our responsibility to act as stewards of the Gospel and of the resources entrusted to us, and expect everyone acting on behalf of our church to behave with integrity, honesty and accountability.

Every person who has a position of responsibility within our church, whether paid or unpaid, is considered a "Church Officer" for the purposes of the Church of England Safeguarding Policy. Some areas of work, e.g. pastoral visiting or helping with administration in the office, involve working with children or vulnerable adults, or using personal data such as names and contact details, and sometimes being aware of more sensitive personal information which should be kept confidential. A Volunteer Agreement helps you know what is expected of you and how you should expect to be treated. Also, for the credibility of our church in the wider community, we need to be seen to be keeping everyone safe and handling all information about people properly. This will also give the people you serve confidence that they can trust you and the church.

3. Guidelines for Volunteers

- a) Our Parish Ethos Statement and our Parish Safeguarding Policy are there to ensure that we treat everyone, including you and those you work with, according to the following standards:
 - showing respect, dignity and integrity in all interactions with others;
 - appropriately challenging inappropriate behaviour when it occurs;
 - respecting the authority and decisions of others;
 - participating openly in the investigation of any complaints;
 - providing support to any individuals who are experiencing bullying or harassment and respecting their confidence;
 - reporting any unfair treatment witnessed even if this causes personal discomfort;
 - undertaking relevant training when asked.
- b) In general, we ask you to follow the parish's **Data Protection** and **Safeguarding policies**.
- c) If a person shares stories, opinions, or personal information, use your discretion to establish what is the degree of **confidentiality** they are expecting. Some information should quite properly be shared with others who can offer appropriate support to the individual, e.g. a member of the clergy or pastoral team or leaders of children and young people; but some is shared in the expectation that it will not be told to anyone else without explicit permission. If in doubt, check with the person whether they are happy for you to pass on what they have told you to an appropriate person, and tell them who you'd like to pass it on to.

- d) On rare occasions it **could be necessary to break a confidence**, e.g. if something you learned indicated a risk of serious harm being done to someone, not necessarily the person telling you. In that case you should speak to the Rector, a Churchwarden or the Parish Safeguarding Officer, as appropriate. They will then escalate things if appropriate, or if required by law. Remember that this is ultimately in everyone's best interests.
- e) **Confidentiality** includes how you treat information you learn about someone through a third party.
- f) If you are unsure about the status of information you have been given, ask the Rector or a Churchwarden for advice. In case of any doubt, the **Parish Safeguarding Policy** will always take precedence over other advice.
- g) We hope you find the work you are volunteering to do rewarding and enjoyable. Please talk to your group leader in the first instance if you are unhappy about what is being expected of you, or you have a difficult relationship with someone you are serving or with another volunteer, or need other support. Other people who are available to help are the Rector or a Churchwarden, the Parish Safeguarding Officer or the Family Worker, as appropriate.

4. Oversight

The Rector and Churchwardens are responsible for ensuring that everyone who works on behalf of the church, on a voluntary or paid basis, is suitable for the role they undertake and will exercise the appropriate levels of confidentiality and sensitivity. For some roles it will be necessary for the individual to undertake a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check (or whatever statutory system is in place at the time), and it may also be necessary to attend Safeguarding training. The cost of these will be borne by the PCC.

Declaration

Name of Volunteer _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

Email Address _____

Role(s) undertaken in church: _____ Is a DBS check required for this work?

_____ Yes/No

_____ Yes/No

_____ Yes/No

I have read the guidelines above and undertake to follow them to the best of my ability.

Signed _____ Date _____

Counter-signed _____ Date _____

Rector/Churchwarden (please indicate)