**Volunteering guidance handbook **

**Your guide to volunteering with Gedling Borough Council**

**Gedling Borough Council** (herein referred to as “the Council”).

The Council engages volunteers to help support activities in various service areas and teams including Community Relations that leads on community events and our Parks and Street Care (PASC) service that includes green spaces and our country parks. Our PASC service works closely with a number of “Friends Groups” that help look after some of our parks.

**Our volunteering objectives**

To engage and train volunteers around the borough; supporting people to improve their skills, health and happiness, add to community satisfaction with their local area. To bring together communities by offering meaningful activities for all. To offer volunteering opportunities in a safe and sustainable way.

**Starting out**

All new volunteers will receive an induction when they begin. What this looks like will depend on the nature of the role undertaken but will include discussing the expectations of both parties, the identification of a named staff contact, instructions on how to complete a task safely and how to use any necessary tools or equipment. As part of this process you will be asked to fill out a volunteer induction form. You will then be entered onto the volunteers’ database so you can receive further information about volunteering for the Council.

Data Protection: In order to volunteer for the Council, you will be asked to provide the Council with some personal information such as your name, next of kin and any relevant medical conditions or history. The Council will hold this information securely and in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations and the Data Protection Act 2018. Further information is provided on the volunteer induction form.

Please see our full privacy statement at <https://www.gedling.gov.uk/public-protection-privacy/>

**Becoming a volunteer**

The Council believes that volunteering should be open to all and we welcome anyone who wishes to volunteer. Volunteering opportunities are advertised in a variety of ways and locations in order to ensure a wide coverage. There may be age and ability restrictions for certain activities.

**Volunteer tasks and roles**

There are a range of tasks that volunteers may undertake. There is a list of tasks included as an appendix along with risk assessments for each task, further information is available from the volunteer’s staff contact**.** When you sign your induction form you are confirming to us that you have read and understood the list of tasks you are permitted to undertake and will comply with the risk assessment, instructions and training for those tasks. Furthermore, that you have read and understood this handbook.

**Induction and on-going training**

All new volunteers will receive an induction form and volunteer handbook when they begin volunteering. It is essential that all new volunteers read this handbook and sign the volunteer induction form at their first day of volunteering. More information is available from the supervisor of the session or from the volunteer’s staff contact. If this information is not available at the session please contact your designated staff contact.

**Insurance**

The Council has Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance in place that includes cover for volunteers undertaking tasks on our behalf and under our supervision.

Any volunteer, including the Friends of Groups and other community groups, working in our open spaces or other volunteer projects without the direct supervision of a Council officer must have their own Public Liability Insurance. The level of cover held by an individual volunteer or group will dictate what roles can and cannot be undertaken. A list of activities that the volunteer or group intend to undertake should be given to their insurance provider and confirmation sought that all these activities will be covered by their policy. In addition, only those activities listed in the volunteer handbook appendix are permitted unsupervised activities. The Council do not allow a volunteer or group to undertake any other activities unsupervised nor to use any kind of equipment or machinery tools that is not listed, or have been trained on, even if their insurance policy covers this activity.

**Working with children, young people and vulnerable adults**

The vast majority of a volunteer’s role does not involve close contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults. Due to our safeguarding policies, the Council does not expect any of the volunteers to be in a ‘position of responsibility’. As a volunteer you are not permitted to undertake tasks that would place you in a position of responsibility for the care of any minor. As a volunteer you are not permitted to train, supervise or give guidance to children (anyone under the age of 18). Your volunteering activities should not bring you into unsupervised contact with children. For this reason it is not normally a requirement for our volunteers to undertake an ‘enhanced disclosure check’ through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) although this may be required before undertaking some specific tasks. Prior to participation in, or arrangement of any event at which children may be present you as volunteer (or as a group of volunteers such as a “Friends of Group”) are required to notify a staff contact in order for proper planning and risk assessment to be carried out. Further guidance can be obtained from your staff contact.

**Supervision and review**

All volunteers will have a designated staff contact that volunteers should use as a point of contact for reviews of progress, queries, guidance or problems.

A review form will be sent out to all volunteers annually. This will be used to assess the quality of volunteering offered by the Council and identify areas for improvement along with any policy changes/updates.

There may be low risk activities which require minimal supervision and for medium and high risk activities, these are always supervised and managed by a suitable Council officer. As a volunteer you are not permitted to carry out medium or high risk tasks without this supervision.

**An ambassador for the Council** is not an employee of the Council, as a volunteer you may be seen by some members of the public as informally representing the Council. With this in mind you are asked a volunteer whilst undertaking volunteering duties that you act in a way that promotes the work of the Council and enhances its reputation. We see you as an ambassador for the Council. If you would like more information or guidance about the Council or our work so that you feel more confident about representing us please contact your staff contact. Remember that you should always refer to your staff contact if you are being asked about something you not sure about. You are asked not to share personal views that you have about Council services whilst you are volunteering; we don’t ask you to be “the voice of the Council” and would not want you to be put in that position.

**Problem solving**

The Council aims to make all volunteering experiences as positive and enjoyable as possible, and to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. We encourage frequent two-way communications as a means of preventing problems before they arise or to “iron-out” hitches. However, we realise that difficult situations sometimes do happen and the guidance for dealing with things more formally is:

For a complaint regarding your volunteering experience; record this through the council’s complaints system (on our website)

For a complaint about another volunteer; inform your staff contact.

For a complaint about your staff contact; notify the service manager for that team (service manager information is shown on our website).

**Your health**

As a volunteer it is your responsibility to inform the Council of any relevant health conditions or illnesses that could affect your voluntary activity or that of others. Please complete the appropriate section of the Induction Form prior to commencing the activity, or notify your staff contact; they can liaise with Council officers and management as necessary. If you are working as part of an unsupervised group you should also share relevant medical information with volunteers around you if there might be a potential risk to yourself or others because of your medical condition. You may also need to notify your insurance company if you are working in an unsupervised group that is covered by their own insurance.

Volunteers taking part in practical conservation activities in particular are strongly advised to comply with the following guidance:

* have an up-to-date tetanus injection.
* Be aware of the risks from the sun (UV radiation) by wearing suitable clothing, hats, sunscreen etc. Likewise for colder conditions wrap up warm with suitable clothing for the prevailing conditions.
* Weather conditions can change throughout the day
* Bring with you suitable refreshments (food and water)
* Proximity to the nearest toilet/ welfare facilities
* Nb. This list is not exhaustive.

**Clothing, footwear, personal proactive equipment (PPE), transportation and expenses.**

Where appropriate we will supply you with PPE such as high visibility vests. Hand and eye protection will be also provided. Please note. The Council does not provide uniform or protective footwear. You will be expected to arrive to the volunteer activity with suitable footwear and clothing to be worn underneath high visibility items.

Please wear suitable clothing for the prevailing conditions including seasonal weather variations for outdoor activities. Please contact your staff contact for further advice if you need it.

The Council does not make expense payments to volunteers.

You will be expected to make your own arrangements to travel to a site. If you require directions to a site then please ask your staff contact.

**Health and safety**

Volunteers are regarded as “lawful visitors on Council premises” when they comply with certain criteria, namely; when following the Council’s Health and Safety Policy and its officers’ health and safety instructions, when adopting any “control measures” and general advice identified as necessary by your staff contact and when undertaking tasks and activities that have been approved by an officer of the Council. A summary of general health and safety guidance to apply to volunteers is provided below. The full copy can be obtained from your staff contact or the Council’s Safety Officer.

1. All volunteers will be informed of the Council’s Health and Safety policy as part of their induction process.
2. The Council is aware of and will comply with its duty as an employer under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable the health, safety and welfare at work of all its employees and others affected by its activities. This duty includes the duty of care towards Council volunteers.
3. The Council is aware of and will comply with its responsibility of other H&S legislation, regulations, Approved Codes of Practice, Guidance etc. to ensure the health and safety of its employees and others.
4. The Council is committed to maintaining and improving its standards of performance in the areas of health and safety.
5. A risk assessment will be completed prior to every Council event or activity to identify the site hazards and the risks associated with the tasks involved, control measures will also be noted to suggest ways to minimise harm or damage being done to you, others and Council premises, plant and or equipment etc.
6. The staff contact/Council officer must make volunteers aware of any risks by giving a Health and Safety talk at the beginning of the event. This may be by way of a ‘tool talk’.
7. A copy of Gedling Borough Council’s health and safety policy is available at: <https://www.gedling.gov.uk/council/aboutus/policies/healthandsafety/>
8. Volunteers have to be managed.  With suitable management arrangements in place more often than not it is possible these groups can work safely, sometimes with minimal supervision.
9. You must gain the permission of the Council and Council officers to be allowed to volunteer on our premises.

**Health and safety continued….**

1. For health and safety reasons, Council officers or an appointed volunteer task leader have the authority to manage voluntary activities, to ensure the safety of the site, of all participants and that of the public in the area. In the unlikely event of a volunteer carrying out an activity could endanger others, the activity will be stopped. That volunteer or others can be asked to leave.
2. Volunteers are required to sign-up to our volunteering agreement (handbook); if volunteers don’t sign it then they will not be allowed to volunteer and they won’t have a public right to be on site.
3. The cooperation of volunteer to follow Council H&S policies and instructions is required without exception.
4. If a volunteer fails to follow Council instruction, its policies and acts outside the remit agreed, then that volunteer can also run the risk of personal liability. The Council will not be responsible or liable for a volunteer carrying out voluntary tasks outside this guidance.

**Volunteer responsibilities**

Different volunteer roles carry different personal responsibilities and risk. You should ensure that you discuss these with your staff contact before beginning your voluntary role. In addition volunteers are required to comply with the following terms:

* Follow the Health and safety section of the handbook at all times.
* To apply the content of any Health and Safety briefing given at the beginning of any event or activity, which may include instruction for the use of tools or equipment.
* Volunteers are required to take all reasonable care of their own health and safety and have due regard for that of others.
* To not recklessly interfere with, or misuse plant or equipment.
* To cooperate with the Council to be able to fulfil legal health and safety responsibilities.
* Follow health and safety instructions, procedures, standards & training.
* When appropriate and instructed to do so wear all personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provided to you. If requested by the Council or your staff contact return all PPE supplied.
* By signing the induction form you are also confirming to the Council you understand the tasks you are permitted to undertake, the content of the risk assessments and its control measures that are there to keep you and others safe and free from harm. Before volunteering you will need to complete the section that identifies a person we can contact in the event of an accident, next of kin and relevant medical conditions.
* Inform your staff contact if you do not feel confident that you have received sufficient information, instruction or training necessary to carry out your voluntary role.
* Meet any agreed time commitments and to try to give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made if these commitments cannot be fulfilled.
* Raise any concerns, issues or problems with your staff contact.
* Ensure no illegal or criminal misuse of Council assets takes place.
* Respect confidentiality of information which you may become aware of whilst volunteering for the Council.

**Accident and incident reporting**

In the event of an accident happening whilst you are on Council volunteer activities, to either yourself or to another volunteer, you need to inform the staff contact immediately. The staff contact will then arrange suitable first aid treatment and will make a proper report of the accident. In summary, you should always:

• Inform activity leaders or staff contact immediately of any accidents, incidents or “near-misses”.

• Notify your staff contact if you see any unsafe work practices or anything that concerns you.

**Where can you Volunteer at the Council?**

**Places and contact information:**

**Bonington Theatre:** contact theBox Office: 0115 901 3640

Address: Bonington Theatre, High Street, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 7EE - [see map](https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Arnold%2BLeisure%2BCentre%2B%26%2BBonnington%2BTheatre/%4052.989267%2C-1.1925324%2C12.75z/data%3D%214m2%213m1%211s0x4879c0e12c1c8759%3A0xa46ec3bc85516bbf)

Email: bonington.theatre@gedling.gov.uk Social media links:

[Facebook thebonington](https://www.facebook.com/thebonington/) | [Twitter @thebonington](https://twitter.com/thebonington) | [Instagram thebonington](https://www.instagram.com/thebonington/)

Box office opening times:Sunday-Friday 9am-9pm; Saturday 9am-5pm; Closed bank holidays.

**Volunteer in our Parks and Open Spaces:**

Contact the Council switchboard on 0115 3901 and ask to speak with a manager in Parks and Street Care; or email parks@gedling.gov.uk

**Volunteer in the wider Gedling borough community**

Contact the Council’s switchboard on 0115 9013901 and ask to speak with a colleague in our Community relations team

**Finally……..thanks**

**The Council thanks you for the time that you have taken to volunteer. Whenever and wherever you give it.**