

# St Albans Museums Volunteer Policy

CURRENTLY BEING REVISED.

## Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in St Albans Museums Service. It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff and those in positions of responsibility. The following is intended as a guide and is not a definitive or legally binding statement so it is binding in honour only and is not a contract of employment.

## Aims and Principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by St Albans Museums Service. It is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment. The role of volunteers complements and enhances but does not replace the role of paid staff.

St Albans Museums Service views volunteering as a mutually beneficial agreement between the service and its volunteers. It sees volunteering as an opportunity for members of the community to

- gain an insight into how museums work,
- increase their skills and knowledge,
- gain new experiences,
- share their expertise,
- input into the service,
- support their local museums, and
- contribute to the wider community.

St Albans Museums Service recognizes the important contribution that volunteers make to the service. The service is stronger due to the diversity and support of its volunteers. Where possible, volunteers will receive recognition of their contribution through awards, references, and informal recognition.

Volunteers will be given clear role descriptions. Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role that volunteers fulfill, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise the organisation cannot be compelled to provide either regular work or payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

## Commitment

St Albans Museums Service is committed to the following:

- To provide suitable protection and insurance relating to health and safety regulation and public liability for volunteers in compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act, other relevant legislation and Council policies.
- To provide a clear statement of the duties and responsibilities of the volunteer worker.
- To consider all offers of volunteer help on the basis of skills and motivation irrespective of age, social class, colour, disability, ethnic or national origin, culture, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief.
- To give support and supervision on a regular and structured basis to all volunteer workers. A named supervisor will provide a point of contact.
- To treat all complaints and grievances concerning volunteer workers in a fair and reasonable manner.

- To ensure that all information regarding volunteers is stored and processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act and other relevant legislation.
- To give opportunities for training and skills development commensurate with the assigned tasks.
- Not to use volunteer workers as replacement or substitute for paid workers.
- Not to place unfair demands on the time of volunteer workers.

### **Recruitment and Selection**

St Albans Museums Service is committed to limit barriers to participation in volunteering opportunities. For this reason, the recruitment and selection of volunteers will be done through an informal process.

Volunteering opportunities within the service will be advertised via online Museum communications and local partners as and when they arise. Interested parties are invited to contact the named contact to express their interest. Either via communications or at an informal meeting where possible, the supervisor will establish the applicant's suitability for the role as per the personal qualities listed in the role description. Appointment will be strictly on the basis of skills and motivation.

DBS checks and references will only be required for relevant roles that involve contact with children or vulnerable adults. The applicant will be advised of this in the role description and at the initial meeting. In these cases, appointments will only be made after satisfactory DBS checks and references have been received.

Upon appointment, the volunteer's personal data will be collected and stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act. By becoming a volunteer you agree to be added to the Volunteer database and the Museum will send you Volunteering and Museum-related opportunities, news and events.

Any research, photos or materials produced by a volunteer in the course of their role will become part of St Albans Museums' research collection / archive under their copyright unless otherwise agreed.

### **Induction and training**

St Albans Museums Service is committed to providing volunteers with a thorough induction and any training that is required to enable them to fulfill their role.

### **Support and supervision**

Volunteers will have a named supervisor. Supervisors will initially meet with volunteers, and arrange to be present when the volunteer comes on site, or name an alternative contact if they cannot be present.

### **Expenses**

St Albans Museums Service does not pay volunteer expenses. Volunteers will never be asked to make purchases on behalf of St Albans Museums Service.

### **Health and Safety**

All volunteers are covered by the Health and Safety policy and procedures implemented by St Albans Museums Service and St Albans City and District Council. Health and Safety checks are regularly carried out under this policy.

Volunteers will receive a Health and Safety induction when they first start their role as appropriate.

### **Insurance**

The organisation's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them. The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage.

### **Confidentiality**

St Albans Museums Service will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality policy and procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by the organisation relating to the volunteer.

### **Equal opportunities and diversity**

Volunteers are covered by the values of St Albans City and District Council's [Equal Opportunity Employment Policy](#).

Volunteers are expected to support this policy and the principles of the [Inclusion Strategy](#) while performing their duties for St Albans Museums Service.

## **Resolving problems**

St Albans Museums Service aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The organisation seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution based on the organisation's guidelines for settling differences.

The supervisor referred to above is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to him/her. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the organisation to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the organisation's wider disciplinary, grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to.

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

St Albans Museums Service recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- have safe working conditions
- be insured
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive appropriate training
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development

St Albans Museums Service expects volunteers to:

- To be clear and realistic about how much commitment they can give and to stick to it if possible.
- To respect the authority of paid Museum staff and to follow all reasonable instructions and requests.
- To recognise the right of St Albans Museums Service to expect quality service from all its workers, paid and unpaid, and to do what is requested of them to the best of their ability.
- To discuss with their supervisor or manager any problems which they experience in their volunteering role.
- To respect the right to confidentiality of clients and other Museum workers, paid or unpaid.
- To respect the right to confidentiality of the Museum and the District Council as regards internal matters.
- To recognise that they represent St Albans Museum Service and that they need to act in an appropriate manner at all times in compliance with the law and Council policies.
- To honour any commitment made and give as much notice as possible if a commitment cannot be met, for example on the grounds of ill health.
- To be willing to undertake appropriate training as and when required.
- To give over to the Council full copyright over any work produced whilst volunteering for the Museum Service and to recognise that all intellectual property rights remain with the Council.
- To share suggestions for improved service with the appropriate supervisor or manager at the Museum.

## **Policy review**

This policy will be reviewed every five years, to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of St Albans Museums Service and its volunteers.