

DRAFT

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL



Policy Document

Corporate Volunteering

Adopted: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. Minute no:

Review Date:

1. Purpose

Witney Town Council recognises the value of volunteering and the positive impact it can have on both the community and individual wellbeing. This policy enables employees to take up to 2 days (pro rata for part-time employees) of paid leave per calendar year to participate in volunteering activities that benefit the community and align with the values of the Council.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Witney Town Council, regardless of length of service or role, subject to operational requirements.

3. Definition of Volunteering

Volunteering refers to freely giving time to help an organisation, group, or cause without financial gain. Eligible volunteering activities may include:

- Supporting a registered charity
- Environmental or conservation work
- Community development projects
- Educational, cultural, or youth-related initiatives
- Local community or civic events
- Activities that align with Witney Town Council's values or strategic priorities

4. Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for paid volunteering leave, the following criteria must be met:

- The volunteering activity must be undertaken with a not-for-profit, community interest, or charitable organisation
- The activity must not present a conflict of interest with the employee's role or the Council
- The activity must take place during the employee's normal working hours
- The activity should ideally take place within the local community or region, unless otherwise approved
- The request must be approved by the employee's line manager and agreed in consultation with the Town Clerk

5. Procedure for Requesting Leave

1. Employees must complete a Volunteering Leave Request Form at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed volunteering date(s).

2. The request should include:

- o Details of the organisation and activity
- o Date(s) and duration of the leave requested
- o How the activity meets the policy criteria

3. The line manager will assess the request considering:

- o Relevance and appropriateness of the volunteering activity
- o Operational requirements and staffing levels
- o Any previous volunteering leave taken in the calendar year

4. The request will then be referred to the Town Clerk for final consultation and approval.

5. The employee will be informed of the outcome within 10 working days of submitting the request.

6. Conditions of Leave

- A maximum of 2 days (14.8 hours for full-time staff) paid leave per year may be granted
- Leave may be taken as one full block or split into half-days
- Unused volunteering days cannot be carried forward
- Employees are expected to return to work promptly after volunteering and may be asked to provide brief feedback or a reflection on the activity undertaken
- Employees may also be asked to share photos and a short summary of their volunteering experience for potential use in internal or external Town Council communications (e.g., newsletters, website, social media).
 - o Participation in promotional use is voluntary and subject to relevant privacy and data protection policies
 - o Any content used will be approved with the employee [who will be required to consult the organisation with which the volunteering took place] beforehand to ensure accuracy and consent

7. Monitoring and Review

- Managers will maintain records of volunteering leave taken, by recording it on Breathe HR categorised as type 'other leave' and reason 'Charity Days'
- The policy will be reviewed annually by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Line Managers, to assess uptake, impact, and effectiveness

8. Non-Compliance

Any attempt to misuse the volunteering leave (e.g. for personal or paid activities) may be considered misconduct and addressed through the Council's disciplinary procedure.

9. Support

Employees are encouraged to discuss ideas for volunteering activities with their line manager. Support may also be available in identifying suitable local opportunities through the Town Council's partnerships and community contacts.