



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Employment Committee

Wednesday, 25 March 2026

Report of Councillor Paul Stokes,
Deputy Leader of the Council and
Cabinet Member for Leisure and
Culture

Implementation of the Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy

Report Author

Karen Whitfield, Assistant Director (Leisure, Culture and Place)

✉ karen.whitfield@southkesteven.gov.uk

Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an update in relation to the implementation of the Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy.

Recommendations

The Employment Committee is asked to note the progress made on the implementation of the Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy, requesting any clarifications or further information required.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting Communities Enabling Economic Opportunities
Which wards are impacted?	All Wards

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 No costs have been incurred to date as a result of the implementation of the Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy. Should volunteers need to be reimbursed the Policy provides a robust authorisation process to be followed and the expense would be met from the relevant service budget.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and Deputy s151 Officer.

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 The adoption and implementation of the Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy has created a clear framework for the Council to engage volunteers and meet its legal obligations around protecting the health and safety of volunteers.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Health and Safety

- 1.3 The Council has a legal and moral responsibility to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the health and safety and welfare of volunteers whilst they are engaged in Council activities. The Council must provide the same level of protection to volunteers as it does to employees carrying out similar duties.
- 1.4 The implementation of the Policy has created a clear framework for volunteer activity which includes adherence to risks and mitigating actions identified, the provision of training and personal protective equipment, as well as procedures for reporting and addressing safety concerns.

Completed by: Philip Swinton Head of Health, Safety, Emergency Planning and Compliance

Human Resources

- 1.5 The implementation of the Policy has ensured that both the Council and its volunteers are clear on their respective roles and responsibilities. It has also

promoted consistency across services in how volunteers are engaged and managed, ensuring a high quality and valuable experience for volunteers.

Completed by: Fran Beckitt (Head of HR)

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy (the Policy) was introduced in September 2023 following consideration by the Employment Committee (See Background Papers).
- 2.2. Since that time the Policy has consistently been adopted across the Council services where volunteers are engaged. In addition to providing a framework for existing volunteers it has also enabled the recruitment of new volunteers, as well as expanding the number and types of roles available.
- 2.3. The introduction of the Policy has also allowed Council officers to improve relationships with existing volunteer groups and organisations engaged in activity on Council owned land and assets.

Grantham Parks

- 2.4. There are currently a total number of 15 individual volunteers engaged in activities at Wyndham Park and the Wyndham Park Visitor Centre. The roles covered include:
 - Light gardening work including planting and weeding
 - Surveying wildlife
 - Leading walks through the park
 - Hosting regular events including book club and coffee mornings for the deaf
 - Hosting arts and crafts activities for park users
 - Instructing 'Our Parks' fitness classes
- 2.5. The volunteers at Wyndham Park have received a comprehensive range of training to allow them to fulfil their roles to a high standard. This has included training on equality, diversion and inclusion, customer service, health and safety, dementia awareness and mental health first aid.
- 2.6. Regular check ins are undertaken with each volunteer on a four to six week basis. As a result, volunteer retention and satisfaction levels have remained high.

Wyndham Park Forum and Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park

- 2.7. The two volunteer organisations were previously separate but have since merged due to the membership and governance arrangements being the same. The membership of the merged organisation varies between 15 and 20 people.
- 2.8. A Terms of Reference document has been developed and was jointly signed by the Council and the Wyndham Park Forum/Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park in July 2024. The aim of this document has been to facilitate a positive working relationship and to align the work of the volunteer organisation with the Policy.
- 2.9. The Terms of Reference document clearly sets out the respective roles and expectations of the Council and the volunteer group. This includes the need for all activities to be risk assessed and works to take place in agreed areas.
- 2.10. During 2025, volunteers from the merged organisation undertook a total of 360 hours of work in Wyndham Park and 363 hours of work in Queen Elizabeth Park. The following list includes the agreed areas which the volunteer group is responsible for maintaining:

Wyndham Park:

- The Sensory Garden
- The Commemorative Orchard
- The Shield Bed adjacent to the white bridge
- The Machine Gun bed

Queen Elizabeth Park:

- The Diamond Grove
- Wildflower areas.

Grantham Rivercare

- 2.11. Grantham Rivercare are a volunteer organisation who also support the upkeep and maintenance of the parks. Their current focus is on the following:
 - Litter picking between Bridge End Road and Harrowby Weir
 - Working to eliminate Himalayan Balsam from the riverbanks between Grantham and Belton House
 - Maintenance of the three wetland ponds in Queen Elizabeth Park which were developed as part of the Witham/Slea Blue Green Corridor project
- 2.12. The maintenance of the wetland ponds in Queen Elizabeth Park is covered by a Service Level Agreement between the Council and Grantham Rivercare. Again, this document aligns with the Policy and sets out the respective roles of the Council

and the volunteer organisation, including health and safety arrangements and the tasks to be undertaken.

Dysart Park Action Group

2.13. The Dysart Park Action Group are a volunteer organisation who organise a range of successful and well-planned events within Dysart Park. The group are extremely supportive and play a key role in promoting the park and its attractions. Events are well attended, and the funding required is raised solely from sponsorship and community donations.

2.14. For 2026 the following events are planned:

May Gingerbread Festival

July Family Fun Day

September Family Jazz Festival

Park Forum

2.15. A quarterly Park Stakeholder Forum meeting has been established which all volunteer organisations and stakeholders involved in the operation of the parks are invited to attend. This has proved to be a valuable opportunity for the Council and respective organisations to share their plans, aspirations and achievements.

Arts Service

2.16. The Guildhall Arts Centre in Grantham already had a strong cohort of volunteers who had been in place for some time. Following the introduction of the Policy, existing volunteers were requested to sign up to the principles within it, alongside new volunteers that have since been recruited. Subsequently, following the introduction of the Policy, volunteer roles have also now been introduced to support the operation of Stamford Arts Centre.

2.17. Currently a total number of 37 volunteers are signed up to support the Guildhall Arts Centre and a total of 15 at Stamford Arts Centre. The roles they perform include:

- Theatre Usher
- Scanning tickets and showing customers to their seats
- Checking for lost property
- Litter picking

2.18. In addition to the above there are a total of 14 volunteer technicians who operate across the two venues. Their roles are to assist the technical production of live shows including operating an element of the lighting requirements. These volunteer

roles are invaluable during peak seasons, for example supporting the pantomime run.

- 2.19. All the volunteers engaged across the arts service receive training to enable them to undertake their roles. This includes health and safety training, fire evacuation, and safeguarding training.
- 2.20. Currently, to ensure alignment with Council Officers, volunteers within the arts service are being requested to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check.

National Volunteer Week

- 2.21. National Volunteer Week is an annual celebration, which, this year, is due to take place between 1 and 7 June 2026. To mark this the Council is combining the celebration with the SK Community Awards ceremony which is due to take place on Saturday 6 June 2026. Nominations are currently open across seven categories to celebrate community champions, including an award for Volunteer of the Year.
- 2.22. The award celebration is being held in Dysart Park in Grantham. As part of the celebrations, all volunteers engaged with the Council will be invited and will receive a certificate of thanks to celebrate their achievements and demonstrate the Council's gratitude.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The implementation of the Policy has allowed the Council to strengthen its commitment to providing a safe and welcoming environment for volunteers. It has also helped to facilitate a growth in volunteering across Council services, both in terms of the numbers of volunteers and the roles undertaken.
- 3.2. The Policy has provided a framework for the Council to set out its expectations so that it is clear what is expected of volunteers and in return what support they can expect from the Council.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. The Policy has been implemented, and the Employment Committee has requested an update be required. Therefore, no other options have been considered.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The report is for noting and to provide an opportunity for the Employment Committee to raise any questions in relation to the implementation of the Policy.

6. Background Papers

6.1. [Meeting of Employment Committee held on 6 September 2023](#)

6.2. [Volunteering with South Kesteven District Council Policy](#)