

Local Members Interest
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Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Joint Archive Committee – Monday 08 August 2022

Volunteering Policy and Procedures Review

Recommendation(s)

That the Committee

- a. Approve the updated Volunteer Policy
- b. Approve the use of an enhanced volunteer agreement
- c. Note the introduction of best practice guidelines to encourage knowledge sharing and continuity across the service

Report of the Director for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills (Staffordshire County Council) and Director of Strategy and Resources (Stoke on Trent City Council)

Reasons for Recommendations:

1. The first volunteering policy was created in 2002 to ensure that the Joint Archive Service has sector specific guidance in place to support volunteering and meets standards required for accreditation.
2. There have been several updates to the policy between 2002 and 2016.
 - a. The updated service specific policy is not designed to supersede any authority policies, strategy or guidelines.
3. In May our volunteers were surveyed to support the review of the volunteer policy. There were 46 responses out of 60 volunteers contacted (a 76.6% response rate), 44 of the responses were received digitally via Citizen Space. The results were very positive which supported the need for limited updates to the volunteering policy. Key findings were that:
 - a. 97.97% rated their volunteering experience as enjoyable, there were no negative responses to this question.

- b. Motivations for volunteering were varied and individual which highlights the need to take a person-centred approach when working with our volunteers.
 - c. There was a strong desire for regular communication, which has been actioned through the introduction of a volunteer specific e-newsletter.
4. The volunteer policy has been updated to make it suitable for use within the Staffordshire History Centre, acknowledging that in future the service will have an increased number of volunteers undertaking different roles, some of which are new.
5. Changes have been made to the policy so that it now takes a role specific focus rather than a site-specific focus. This acknowledges the variety of volunteer roles and allows staff to tailor actions to each volunteer's individual experience. This is to ensure volunteering is managed safely, efficiently and aims to improve the experience for volunteers.
6. The policy has been updated to reflect new authority policies and strategies and removed outdated references to policies that are no longer in use.
7. A volunteer agreement has been in place since 2002.
 - a. The volunteer agreement has been updated to include a code of conduct for volunteers that will assist in creating a positive environment for all and aims to reduce the potential for any conflict.
 - b. Stoke on Trent City Archives staff will use their own rebranded version of the agreement once the joint service branding is approved. This is to ensure volunteers feel connected to the part of the service they volunteer with.
8. The policy and volunteer agreement will require further review if the service recruits volunteers aged under 18 as the current policy covers only adults.
9. Brand new best practice guidelines have been created to encourage knowledge sharing and continuity across the service, support all staff in their interactions with volunteers and to assist us in improving our offer to volunteers. We have consulted with Heritage Volunteering group and used guidance provided by Heritage Lottery Fund to support the creation of these guidelines.

Legal Implications

The policy has been updated in conjunction with Staffordshire County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council policies and uses established best practice from the heritage volunteering sector.

Resource and Value for Money Implications

The service allocates funding towards ensuring the volunteer experience is rewarding and acknowledges the commitment given by individuals. The in-kind value of volunteering in 2021-2022 was £72,140 based on the National Lottery Heritage Fund rate of £20 per hour and 3,607 hours donated.

Climate Change Implications

Volunteers travel to our offices using a mix of their own vehicles, shared vehicles and public transport. A town centre location for volunteering supports use of public transport.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 – STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHIVES AND HERITAGE
VOLUNTEER POLICY

Appendix 2 – Staffordshire History Centre Volunteer Agreement

Appendix 3 – Volunteer Best Practice Guidelines

Contact Details

Assistant Director: Catherine Mann, Interim Assistant Director –
Culture, Rural and Safer Communities

Report Author: Sarah English
Job Title: Engagement & Access Manager
Telephone No.: 07971 946900
E-Mail Address: sarah.english@staffordshire.gov.uk