



# Volunteering Policy

## About the Friends of Friendless Churches

[The Friends of Friendless Churches](#) (the FoFC) is a small charity with a big task. We were set up in 1957 to campaign for beautiful churches that have closed for regular worship and save them from demolition, decay and unsympathetic conversion. Today we look after more than 60 buildings of architectural and historical importance across England and Wales, which are open year-round.

We rescue and maintain these historic places, and share them with people who will also care about (and for) them and help to keep them 'alive' - open to visit and enjoy, and used for events, activities and occasional services.

## Our volunteers

By giving their time, unpaid, to do activities that support us, volunteers are the heart and soul of the FoFC. As a small but busy charity with a dispersed and varied collection of buildings, without volunteers we could not achieve all that we do. Volunteers are essential to the FoFC. They help us to:

- Care for and share our churches and chapels.
- Keep them open for visitors.
- Benefit from volunteers' knowledge, skills and passion. We support our volunteers to develop their knowledge and have a positive experience in return.

## Volunteering with us

We welcome and value volunteers because:

- We wish to grow our community and offer enjoyable opportunities for our members, supporters and others to be actively involved with the FoFC, its buildings and its work, alongside other like-minded people.
- The FoFC is a 'practical, poetic, principled' organisation — friendly, inclusive, expert, passionate and dedicated. We are committed to quality and authenticity in everything that we do.

**We have short and long-term volunteer opportunities, and hope that there'll be a role that appeals to you. However, we are not able to offer work experience placements. You must be aged 18 or over to volunteer with us.**

We appreciate our volunteers' time and dedication, but we recognise that things change and sometimes volunteers might not be able or want to continue. Volunteers can stop at any time, or take a pause if they need to, but we do ask that they let us know. If something goes wrong, we have steps in place to deal with that.

**This Volunteering Policy sets out how the FoFC recruits, works with and supports volunteers. It also explains what we ask of volunteers and what they can expect of us.**

If you have questions or would like this policy in a different format, please let us know.

E: [volunteers@fofc.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@fofc.org.uk)

T: 020 4520 4458 (FoFC office)

## Recruitment – How we find volunteers

The Friends of Friendless Churches aims to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all.

We are committed to treating everyone equally and with respect, irrespective of their age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, and expect our people — staff and volunteers alike — to abide by this commitment. Discriminatory language or behaviour are not tolerated at the FoFC and any instances will be dealt with promptly under our problem solving procedure.

- **Application process**

- **Role description** — sets out clearly what the volunteer will do and what skills, experience or attributes are needed.
- **Volunteer information form** — gathers essential information about a potential volunteer.
- **Phone or online conversation** — to explore a potential volunteer's interests, skills and experience. We will check that they understand the role and assess whether it is a good match for them. We can answer their questions and, where appropriate, discuss the scope for any adaptations they might need in order to take up a volunteer role.
- **Reference** — we ask potential volunteers to provide details of someone (a friend or colleague, not a family member) who knows them well, who we can contact to confirm the information that they have given us. We need our volunteers to be reliable and trustworthy. Asking for a reference protects all the FoFC's people, its buildings, members of the public and the volunteer.
- **Volunteer agreement** — signed by the FoFC and the volunteer when they join us. This explains what we and they each agree to do. Signing confirms that the volunteer understands and is happy with their role, and that they have read and agree to follow the Volunteer Handbook. We also ask them to provide an emergency contact at this stage.
- Volunteering is an informal arrangement. The agreement can be ended by the volunteer or the FoFC, at any time, by letting the other know.

- **Policies**

- The FoFC recruits volunteers in line with its safeguarding provisions and its [Privacy Policy](#).
- Volunteers are also covered by other policies which apply across the organisation. There is more information about this in our Volunteer Handbook. New volunteers will find this in their welcome pack when they start.
- Our volunteer information form asks about unspent criminal convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Having a conviction doesn't mean that someone can't volunteer with us. When we talk to them about their application, we can discuss any convictions then.
- Certain roles will require that the FoFC requests a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check on the applicant before they can start volunteering. This will be clearly stated in the role description. The DBS helps organisations make good recruitment decisions by checking for spent and unspent convictions, cautions etc. Obtaining a check is a free and simple process that the FoFC will arrange. You can find out more about the DBS and the checks it carries out on the GOV.UK website [here](#).

## Getting started

New volunteers will receive:

- **Welcome pack** – the essentials:
  - Volunteer Handbook — a handy reference, full of helpful information.
  - FoFC general guidance documents — about how our buildings are used.
  - Information specific to their volunteer role.
- **Induction with the Volunteer Coordinator** — introduction to the FoFC, safeguarding briefing and another chance to ask questions.
- **Training** — where relevant, new and existing volunteers may be offered training or extra guidance from time to time to help them in their role and to develop their knowledge and skills.

## What else can volunteers expect from the FoFC?

- **Support**
  - Regular communication — FoFC monthly e-news, updates for volunteers including about the impact of what they do for the FoFC.
  - Support from the Volunteer Coordinator, who welcomes your feedback.
  - Opportunities to network with other FoFC volunteers.
  - Occasional volunteer survey — keep us up to date and share your views on volunteering with us.
- **Expenses** — all our volunteer roles are unpaid. But we can reimburse legitimate out-of-pocket expenses directly relating to volunteering with us, in line with the FoFC's expenses policy.
- **Insurance**
  - The organisation's insurance covers volunteers and the activities they do for the FoFC.
  - Our public liability insurance covers members of the public at the FoFC's sites and events.
- **Equipment** - any materials or equipment (such as personal protective equipment) necessary for the volunteer to carry out their activities correctly and safely.

## What we ask of volunteers

We ask that FoFC volunteers follow the Volunteer Handbook; do the activities that they've agreed to (or let us know if they can't); ask for help if needed; be respectful of all the FoFC's people; and uphold our values and reputation.

## What if something goes wrong?

We aim to deal with any issues or problems that arise promptly and fairly, and **informally** in the first instance. Volunteers should contact the Volunteer Coordinator or the FoFC office about any issues or problems, so that appropriate action can be taken.

If the matter can't be resolved that way, or someone wishes to make a **formal** complaint, it will be referred to the Director or to the Chair of Trustees, who will look into the matter and decide any actions to be taken.