



Volunteer Policy

Name of museum: Hastings Museum & Art Gallery

Name of governing body: Hastings Borough Council

Date on which this policy was approved by governing body:

Policy review procedure: This policy will be published and reviewed from time to time, at least once every five years.

Date at which this policy is due for review: March 2027

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1. Introduction

Hastings Museum & Art Gallery is a community museum that aims to inspire people and connect communities. The museum aims to inform and inspire people's interest in the cultural and natural heritage of Hastings, and address relevant contemporary issues by:

- Collecting, preserving and interpreting material evidence of the past
- Enriching people's lives and creating a sense of place and identity
- Stimulating creativity, inspiration and enjoyment
- Engaging with the widest possible audience.

The museum has a long-term purpose and holds collections in trust for the benefit of the public in relation to its vision and aims. We recognise that volunteers perform an important role, supporting and complementing the work of the paid staff. Volunteers make a real difference, investing their time and bringing a range of skills and expertise to the organisation.

In turn, we aim to develop and support volunteer involvement in our work. We hope that volunteers will both enjoy and benefit from their experiences, developing new skills and connecting with their local heritage. By providing individuals with a closer understanding of our work and the collections, the museum supports the principle that *'All those who work in and with museums should ensure that everyone has the opportunity for meaningful participation in the work of the museum'* ('Code of Ethics for Museums', Museums Association, 6th Edition 2015, section 1.7).

The relationship between the museum and its volunteers is one of shared responsibility and commitment. All volunteers must agree to comply with all Hastings Borough Council policies, as well as The Museum Association's Code of Ethics for Museums, which is explicit in its application to all *'those who work for museums, paid or unpaid'* ('Code of Ethics for Museums', Museums Association, 6th Edition 2015).

2. Definition of a Volunteer

The museum defines a volunteer as an individual who gives their time, energy and skills of their own free will, without financial reward of any kind, for the mutual benefit of the museum and themselves.

Whilst the museum is not under any obligation to provide guaranteed volumes or types of roles for volunteers, every effort will be made to ensure that a regular programme of opportunities is available.

Likewise, volunteers will be expected to commit to a minimum amount of time on a regular basis, although due account will be taken of personal circumstances.

Volunteers are expected to accept and understand that their role does not give them the status of a worker or employee in legal terms. Volunteers do not replace paid staff, but complement their services.

3. Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Confirm the commitment of the museum in involving volunteers
- Recognise the contribution volunteers make to the museum
- Provide a basis for the expansion of volunteer involvement
- Provide overall support, guidance and direction to staff and volunteers
- Establish the values and standards of the museum in its involvement with volunteers
- Ensure decisions are made fairly
- Clarify the status of volunteers and the boundaries between them and staff
- Help to ensure the ongoing quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the activities carried out by volunteers.

This policy and the volunteer agreement is not, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personal agreement. It applies to all volunteer placements regardless of activity. Certain items may be altered if a volunteer is being placed by a sponsoring agency.

4. Recruitment and Selection

Hastings Museum & Art Gallery will list new projects on the website. Prospective volunteers who express an interest in the opportunities will be invited into meet with the volunteer role supervisor to chat through the project and their interest in it. If projects are oversubscribed selections will be made on merit and attitude and not on past experiences.

5. Induction and Training

All volunteers will receive a general induction covering housekeeping issues, health and safety, the nature and purpose of the organisation, as well as the practicalities of the volunteer's role. They will be given an induction pack and asked to complete a personal details form and a paper-based safeguarding course.

Volunteers are recruited to fill specific, advertised roles and will be given a clearly defined role description as part of their induction pack.

Volunteers will also receive this policy and agreement document. The agreement outlines what volunteers can expect from the museum and what the museum can expect in return (Appendix 1). Volunteers will be asked to sign the agreement to acknowledge that they have read it and to confirm that intellectual property, including copyright, of anything brought into existence while they perform volunteer services shall belong to Hastings Museum & Art Gallery and Hastings Borough Council.

Volunteers will receive specific training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their role. The training should be appropriate to the complexity of the role and the capabilities of the volunteer.

6. Support, Supervision and Recording Time

Each volunteer role will have an identified supervisor. The supervisor is responsible for supporting the volunteer. If the supervisor is unavailable, another staff member will be designated.

Any risks to health and safety will be identified by workplace assessments and any preventative or protective methods will be undertaken. Volunteers will be told the identity of a competent person taking charge during an emergency and the names of the staff members responsible for first aid and health and safety.

The museum is committed to creating an environment of positive development. We welcome feedback and encourage both volunteers and staff to exchange constructive comments at regular intervals, appropriate to the role being carried out. In-service training on effective volunteer engagement will be provided to members of staff who are involved in volunteer management. At the end of each period of volunteering, the amount of time spent (excluding breaks e.g. lunch) should be logged by museum staff on the appropriate record sheet.

7. Working Conditions

All volunteer projects have their own risk assessment. This is a requirement under 'The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999'. Volunteers will be supervised while they are in museum buildings and informed of all matters relating to their health and safety. All volunteers are covered by Hastings Borough Council's insurance policies (including public liability) whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any activity on behalf of the museum. Volunteers will be issued with a name badge following their induction. These must be worn at all times whilst volunteers are in museum for the purpose of security.

8. Expenses

The museum wants to minimise the barriers to volunteering and support people to get involved. Out of pocket expenses for travel are subject to available funds for the relevant project and refunded monthly. They may only be claimed on presentation of a completed expense form and receipts. It is the responsibility of volunteers claiming benefits to notify their benefits advisor of their intention to start volunteering.

9. Problem Solving

Although the museum will make every effort to ensure that volunteer experience is positive and rewarding, we recognise that there are occasions when volunteers may wish to raise concerns. Volunteers have the right to raise any volunteering-related matter, for example regarding another volunteer, a member of the paid staff or their role. They should first discuss the issue at an informal meeting with their supervisor. The volunteer may be accompanied at this meeting. If the supervisor is the person who the concern involves, then the matter should be referred to their line-manager.

The museum aims to resolve any problems quickly and amicably. If a member of staff raises a concern relating to a volunteer, the matter will once again be raised first at an informal discussion. We will look at what additional support might be required or if an alternative role might be more suitable.

Where a problem cannot be resolved, or it is deemed a serious breach of conduct, this may advise the individual that they are no longer a volunteer. All matters relating to complaints by or about volunteers will be treated in confidence.

10. Evaluation

At the end of a volunteer's engagement with the museum they will be thanked for their contribution and invited to provide feedback about their experience to help improve the programme for future volunteers.

The museum is committed to monitoring its volunteer programme, including the number of volunteers, the amount of time the service has been supported, the range of opportunities offered, and the impact volunteering has had on those involved. Data will be collected from volunteer/staff feedback and used in compliance with GDPR and Data Protection laws.

Appendix A

Hastings Museum & Art Gallery Volunteer Agreement



Volunteers are an important and valued part of Hastings Museum & Art Gallery. We hope that you enjoy volunteering with us and feel part of our team.

This agreement tells you what you can expect from us and what we hope for from you.

We, Hastings Museum & Art Gallery, will do our best to:

- Introduce you to how the organisation works and your role in it
- Provide any training you need
- Provide you with a main point of contact, so that both sides can exchange feedback
- Respect your skills, dignity and individual wishes and to do our best to accommodate them
- Consult with you and keep you informed of possible changes
- Insure you against injury you may suffer or cause due to negligence
- Provide a safe workplace
- Apply our equal opportunities policy
- Resolve any issues that may arise.

I,, **agree to do my best:**

- To be reliable and do the tasks / role to the best of my ability
- To give as much warning as possible whenever I cannot volunteer when expected
- To abide by the museum's rules and procedures, including health and safety, equal opportunities and confidentiality
- And understand that anything I produce as a volunteer remains the property of Hastings Museum & Art Gallery.

This agreement is in honour only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment.