



# **Volunteering at Ararat Policy and Procedures**

**Approved March 2024**

**Reviewed: 04.12.2025**

**Reviewed xx/xx/xxxx**

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## Policy Statement

### Volunteers at Ararat Baptist Church

#### Purpose of document

Ararat Baptist Church is referred to as “the church” in the Policy Statement.

Our vision as a church is to see the heart of the church extended into the community and the heart of the community extended into the church. In fulfilling this vision, the church acknowledges the importance of those who serve as volunteers and who help to support our ministers and staff team in delivering the ministries of Jesus.

The purpose of this policy document, therefore, is to provide a framework and offer some guidelines into the identification, selection, and appointment of voluntary staff and to suggest a more standardised approach to each stage, whilst recognising how the church will support them.

This policy covers the volunteers within our church fellowship and for church related activities alone. The policy does not cover volunteers of independent hiring groups who from time to time are active within the church’s premises.

Such independent groups that regularly deploy their own volunteers on the church facilities, are expected to have their own volunteer policies and may be required to disclose these policies to the Deacons/Trustees to obtain hire agreement or maintain hire agreement.

This policy will be kept up to date and will be reviewed regularly and any appropriate changes made. This policy will be reviewed at one year from signing of document and thereafter annually.

### **Introduction**

This Volunteer policy and procedures sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and is relevant to all staff, volunteers, and Deacons/Trustees within the organisation. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the management of volunteers.

### **Our commitments**

We recognise volunteers as an integral part of the church. Their contribution supports our mission, operational aims and complements the role of paid staff. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the church, the local community, and the volunteers themselves.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers. Volunteers will not be used to replace paid staff.

We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from under-represented groups such as youth, people with a disability, older people, people from the global majority and those from the LGBTQIA2S+ community.

We recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and we will seek to ensure adequate financial and staffing resources are available for the development and support of volunteering.

We recognise that people have a right to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering and can contribute in many ways. We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

### **Who is a volunteer?**

Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of our church, are unpaid and of their own free choice.

The Welsh Government Volunteering Policy (2015) defines volunteering as an activity which,

- is undertaken freely, by choice.
- is undertaken to be of public/ community benefit.
- is not undertaken for financial gain.

Work experience placements and internships are not the same as volunteering. Deacons and Trustees are volunteers with responsibility for governance of the church.

Volunteers may be involved on a one-off, short term or on a longer term, regular basis. They may be involved:

- in the direct delivery of our services.

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- on our board of management as Trustees. (The Diaconate)
- in community engagement to raise awareness of our work.
- in one off events and promotional activities.
- in our offices or in community venues.

Volunteers are valued for:

- bringing additional skills and new perspectives to our church.
- enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in our approach.
- championing our cause within the wider community.
- enhancing the quality of our work and of service users experience.
- promoting the wellbeing of users of services, staff, local communities, and themselves.

### **Standards of Good Practice**

Our management practice is informed by the 'Code of Practice for Organisations Involving Volunteers' and the 'Investing in Volunteers' quality standard for volunteer management.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

The following person/s carries the responsibility for the development and co-ordination of voluntary activity within the organisation and the welfare of volunteers.

Trustee/Deacon for Voluntary Workers – Vaughan Williams

All volunteers will have a designated staff member or mentor who will be able to offer guidance, support, mentoring and supervision. Staffing responsibilities for volunteers will be explicitly referred to in job/ role descriptions.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the church to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits.

However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged - both of what the church expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the church.

The church expects volunteers:

- to be reliable and honest.
- to uphold the church's values and comply with the church policies.
- to make the most of opportunities given, e.g., for training.
- to contribute positively to the aims of the church and avoid bringing the church into disrepute.
- to carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Volunteers can expect:

- to have clear information about what is and is not expected of them.
- to receive adequate support and training.

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- to be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment.
- to be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner.
- to receive out of pocket expenses.
- to have opportunities for personal development.
- to be recognised and appreciated.
- to be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable.
- to know what to do if something goes wrong.

### Recruitment and selection

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted, in English and in Welsh if requested, to attract interest from different sectors of the community. Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate. Online application is encouraged; however, paper copies of the volunteer application form are also available via the Church Administrator or by collecting an application form from the Church Centre reception.

Information will be made available to those interested in volunteering once an application form has been submitted. This will include a written role description which sets out the nature and purpose of the volunteering role, key tasks, skills required and reporting arrangements. A risk assessment will be undertaken on all volunteer roles.

Volunteer recruitment will involve:

- For a role that requires a person to work directly with children and young people, we will make it clear that any appointment is subject to an Enhanced DBS check, for any other appointments that require a Standard DBS check then this will also be made clear both verbally and on application forms,

References may be requested – All applicants will be required to complete an application form including the names of two referees. References will be sought for those who are not already well known to the Church

- Informal interviews will be carried out face to face by the line manager.
- A Criminal Record Self-Disclosure form, and a DBS check must be completed satisfactorily **before** the appointed person starts in their role.
- All volunteers will be required to work within the agreed safeguarding policy and procedures of the church and informed where the safeguarding Policy is kept and displayed
- All volunteers will have a written agreement to include a clear role description, lines of accountability to the church leadership and an assigned supervisor with whom work can be discussed, issues aired, and areas of concerns dealt with.
- All volunteers will be provided with an induction programme, and any required training
- For roles which are deemed as working with or encountering children, young people and/or adults at risk, the volunteer will be required to undertake safeguarding training through the South Wales Baptist Association within 6 months of starting the role. This must be repeated every three years

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For roles which involve care giving and/or sustained and direct contact with children, young people or adults at risk, volunteers will be required to have an Enhanced DBS check. DBS checks are dealt with in the strictest confidence.

However, it should be noted that a criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering.

### **Appointing Volunteers**

Anyone who is interested in registering their interest in volunteering should obtain an application form from the church office via the Church Administrator, or by collecting an application form from the Church Centre reception desk.

Forms should be completed in full and returned to the Church Administrator in an envelope marked private and confidential.

The Church Administrator will collate the application forms and liaise with the relevant line managers to pass on the application forms.

Once the forms have been scrutinised by the line managers, those applicants deemed suitable should have an 'interview' with the line manager plus one other if considered necessary (the interviewers must not be related to the interviewee). The interviews do not have to be a formal arrangement (could be a chat) but should be in sufficient depth to determine the suitability of the candidate.

The same questions should be asked of each candidate, and they should also be given scope to ask questions.

Once the interviewer(s) has determined who is the most suitable candidate(s), the Deacons of the Church should be informed of the names of the new volunteers if they are not Church Members, or have been members for less than one year.

It is the responsibility of the relevant line manager to ensure that they email the deacon responsible for volunteering, the name of the volunteer and the role for which they are applying.

The deacon responsible for volunteering will liaise with the Church administrator, who will then write (if considered necessary) to those specified by the applicant for their references.

The DBS verifier will then issue the candidate with a DBS form to complete, unless the applicant is signed up to the Online Update Service.

All DBS responses will be returned to the DBS verifier who will inform the deacon responsible for volunteering of the suitability, or unsuitability (but not the reasons), of each applicant. Any appointment to the post(s) can now be made.

The line manager will be responsible for the induction of successful candidates. During the induction process, the new volunteer will be made aware of the policies relevant to the post and where they may be accessed (behind the reception desk in the Church Centre)

Volunteers will have a probation period, usually 3 months in length. The line manager will also be responsible for undertaking the review of the new staff member at the end of the probation period, and for ensuring that this/these new volunteers) is/are trained appropriately for their role.

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The opportunity to attend safeguarding training must be provided by the church and attended by the volunteer/s as outlined below:

- Volunteer helpers with, or who may come into contact with, children/adults at risk are required to attend Level 2 Safeguarding training within 6 months of their appointment and then every 3 years if still in post.

### **Induction Training**

Following successful appointment, volunteers will be given suitable induction training, the induction training may take place over an agreed period and may vary according to the differing requirements of the various volunteering roles.

It is envisaged that this period will be used as an opportunity for both the volunteer and the Church to assess the complete suitability to the volunteer role and will offer the opportunity for the volunteer to withdraw should there be an identified incompatibility.

From time to time, there may be an expectation that the volunteer will attend required training to help them fulfill the role they are volunteering for. If this is the case, then appropriate expenses may be offered to cover any personal costs to the volunteer if, for example, they need to travel to participate in the training.

### **Training**

Basic training for each volunteer role will be necessary and will be conducted for each volunteer as early as possible following appointment.

For certain volunteering roles some formal training may need to be undertaken e.g., Food Hygiene, safeguarding training. Where this is identified as a necessity, the Church will seek to fund any formal training costs and will require the completion of such training by the individual in order to continue in the volunteer role.

From time-to-time internal training conducted within the Church may be required, this may be purely role dependent or be generally applicable across the Church.

From time to time, there may be an expectation that the volunteer will attend required training to help them fulfill the role they are volunteering for. If this is the case, then appropriate expenses may be offered to cover any personal costs to the volunteer if, for example, they need to travel to participate in the training.

Training records will be maintained for each volunteer.

### **Support and Supervision**

Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate, and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken and may include one to one reviews/ supervisions.

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Volunteers will be offered opportunities where possible for professional development to upskill and expand their volunteering role.

### **Recognition**

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the wider church staff team, at staff meetings, during formal supervision meetings and through feedback questionnaires.

Formal recognition of the contribution of volunteers is expressed through annual reports, minutes from Deacons and church meetings, website articles, social media etc.

### **Confidentiality Agreement**

Any volunteer role will necessitate contact with people of all ages, their personal situations, and circumstances. All associated information will be treated in confidence and with caution.

Each volunteer is responsible for maintaining all information securely and confidentially unless specifically required to disclose to third parties such as Designated Persons for Safeguarding or external to the Church e.g., the Police, Social Services etc.

Under these circumstances the volunteer will be supported in any discussions by line manager or the deacon responsible for volunteering

### **Dealing with Concerns and Complaints**

The church aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively, and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted, and acted upon promptly.

We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn to in the case of any difficulty. Where informal resolution is not possible, the church's 'Complaints' policy' will be adhered to.

Volunteers will be made aware of the church's complaints policy and how to use it. They will also be made aware of how inappropriate behaviour by volunteers will be addressed by the church.

### **Expenses**

Volunteers will be advised about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.

### **Retirement or Leaving the Role**

When volunteers retire or make the decision to leave their role with the church, they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience.

Volunteers who have remained with the organisation for at least two months will have the right to request a reference from their line manager. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options if they so require this and if it is within the church's capacity to do so.

## **Volunteer Discipline and Grievance**

Volunteer workers will be acting on behalf of the Church in their capacity as a volunteer and as such will be expected to adhere to the same Church principles that apply to paid staff.

In the event of a breach of these principles the Church will seek to address the breach with the volunteer, initially on an informal basis. When the volunteer is deemed responsible for repeated breaches the Church may need to respond differently and where necessary will seek to pursue further discussion or relevant training to attempt to achieve a resolution.

The Church operates a formal Disciplinary and Grievance procedure and if necessary and appropriate will invoke those processes.

The Disciplinary and Grievance Policy is available to all Volunteers in the folder kept behind the Church Centre Reception desk

Created and Approved March 2024

Amended December 2025

