

## *Friends of Eastfield Park*

### **Volunteer Activities Policy and Procedures**

#### **A. Introduction**

1. This document covers all activities carried out by volunteers working on behalf of the Friends of Eastfield Park (FoEP) in Eastfield Park and elsewhere. It replaces the FoEP Lone Worker Policy agreed in January 2016. That policy was originally developed to deal with occasional situations where a volunteer works single-handedly to carry out an approved FoEP activity within the Park. However, it was extended to include situations where a small group of volunteers work together on a FoEP project in the Park without supervision or without somebody in charge of the group.
2. This new policy places further restrictions on the circumstances where volunteers may work alone. It also makes it compulsory for all groups to have a leader who is responsible for the activity and who decides what action to take in the event of an incident or accident. In the case of a lone volunteer, the lone volunteer has the responsibility of the leader.
3. In this document, 'Park' with a capital 'P' refers to Eastfield Park; 'park' without the capital refers to parks in general

#### **B. Voluntary Activities**

1. The FoEP carries out a variety of voluntary work in Eastfield Park and elsewhere. It generally works with supervised groups of volunteers who may or may not be members of the FoEP. Some members may wish to work alone, but this is only permissible if the activity carries a minimal risk (such as collecting items from the FoEP garage or making routine observations in the Park) or are activities which members of the public may undertake independently of the FoEP, such as litter picking. Otherwise at least two volunteers must be present for any activity, and one must always be designated leader of the group. The FoEP will never **require** volunteers to carry out activities alone or unsupervised in Eastfield Park or elsewhere.
2. FoEP members may carry out their own personal activities within the Park as members of the public enjoying the Park as a public open space. Under these circumstances, the members are not acting for the FoEP and are responsible for their own actions. They would, however, be expected to behave in a sensible way and follow good practice in using the Park. They are not covered by the FoEP insurance.
3. Some volunteers, or groups of volunteers, belong to other organisations and have agreed to carry out activities agreed between the FoEP and their own organisation. These volunteers must follow their own organisations' policies but must also comply with this policy any instructions given by the FoEP concerning the activities.
4. The FoEP recognises the need to assess and advise the level of risks for members and volunteers working in the Park on approved FoEP activities whether alone or with others. However, members and volunteers also have the responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves and other people who may be affected by their work. The FoEP has no obligation to assess the risks for members carrying out their own personal and private activities within the Park but may offer general advice to all Park users regarding the hazards that may be encountered within the Park.
5. All volunteers (members and non-members) must always adhere to this policy and other FoEP policies, particularly the Health & Safety Policy and the Equal Opportunities Policy.

### **C. Scope of the policy**

1. Ownership and responsibility for Eastfield Park rests with West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) and all activities approved by the FoEP must be within the compass of activities and procedures agreed with WNC and, if relevant, the Eastfield Park Management Committee (EPMC).
2. This policy applies to all situations where FoEP members or volunteers carry out activities on behalf of the FoEP in any location, inside or outside Eastfield Park. It includes all situations where people are volunteering at a location in the Park even if the leader is elsewhere in the Park.
3. The policy does not apply to FoEP members or members of the public carrying out personal and private activities within the Park. It is important therefore that members distinguish between activities carried out on behalf of, and approved by, the FoEP and those carried out in a purely personal capacity. The leader of a group should always wear a hi-vis vest, or other clothing, displaying the FoEP name, and carry personal identification and a mobile phone.

### **D. Aims of the Policy**

The aims of the policy are:

- To increase awareness of safety issues relating to voluntary work in Eastfield Park.
- To ensure that the risks of volunteer work are assessed in a systematic and ongoing way.
- To ensure that all risks are reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.
- To ensure that incidents and accidents are dealt with in an appropriate manner.

### **E. Responsibilities**

1. The FoEP is responsible for:
  - Ensuring that arrangements are in place for identifying, assessing and managing risks associated with approved activities, whether carried out by individuals or groups of individuals.
  - Identifying situations where people are permitted or not permitted to work alone.
  - Ensuring that risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly.
  - Ensuring that appropriate support is given to members or volunteers involved in any incident and that such incidents are properly recorded.
2. Members and volunteers are responsible for: -
  - Taking reasonable care of themselves and others affected by their actions.
  - Following the good practices for volunteer working outlined below.
  - Reporting all incidents that may affect the health and safety of themselves or others to the responsible authorities (copied to the FoEP Secretary) and asking for guidance as appropriate.
  - Reporting any dangers or potential dangers they identify, or any concerns they might have, in respect of the work being carried out to the responsible authorities (copied to the FoEP Secretary).

### **F. Good Practice for Volunteer Working**

1. Members and volunteers should only carry out FoEP approved activities. If necessary, they should consult with members of the FoEP committee who will determine if an intended actions is consistent with FoEP aims and policies and WNC requirements and authorisation.
2. Under no circumstances should untrained volunteers be left working alone in the Park.
3. Members and volunteers should avoid activities at night or where there is an increased risk of violence or abuse and should never work alone under these circumstances.
4. Members and volunteers should not carry out lone activities where the site or task presents a special risk to the worker or to the public, or if the risk assessment forbids it.

5. Members and volunteers working in the Park or elsewhere should always carry a mobile phone for emergency use.
6. Members and volunteers working in the Park or elsewhere should have access to first aid and appropriate personal safety equipment.
7. Members and volunteers intending to work alone in the Park should inform a responsible person about the nature and location of the work and their expected time of completion.
8. Members and volunteers should not work alone with children or vulnerable adults.
9. Members and volunteers should ensure they have read or been informed about any safety notes and/or instructions relating to the activity they plan to undertake.

#### **G. Responsibility of organisers and leaders.**

1. The FoEP member organising an activity should ensure that the activity has been properly risk assessed and that they have read and fully understood the assessment. For many activities, such as gardening and litter picking, generic assessments may be used, but for more specialised activities, such as strimming or removing overhead branches, assessments specific to those activities should be used.
2. The activity organiser should communicate the assessment's main findings to volunteers taking part in the activity. The findings may be communicated in the form of a list of safety notes or instructions. Volunteers may be asked to sign to say that they have read these notes before an activity takes place.
3. If more than one kind of activity is taking place, the organiser should ensure that volunteers have read the notes applicable to the activity that they are performing. They need not read other safety notes, but they should be aware of other activities taking place and not take part in them.
4. It is the organisers responsibility to ensure that activities are completed safely and to a sufficient standard. They are also responsible for reporting any incidents or accidents and deciding what action should be taken in any situation.
5. Organisers should particularly ensure that safety measures are followed when using power tools such as strimmers and lawnmowers. Brushcutters should only be used by trained personnel who will be responsible for their safe use. Chainsaws should not be used in the Park.

#### **H. Monitoring safety issues**

1. Voluntary workers must report all incidents (including all accidents, 'near misses', threatening behaviour and verbal abuse) to the activity leader. The leader will record the incident in the informal activity record and, unless an accident is regarded as trivial, it will be recorded in the formal Accident Book. The leader will decide if immediate action should be taken. The FoEP Committee will also be informed, and the matter will be discussed at the next committee meeting.
2. The FoEP committee should also regularly ask workers about their safety concerns.

Approved by the FoEP Committee on: 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Signed (Chair): *V. G. F. Smith*

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