



VOLUNTEER POLICY

Mission Statement

Wokingham Repair Café (WRC) is committed to providing a high quality, dependable and honest advice and repair service to all its customers. Everyone is welcome and the organisers endeavour to ensure that all volunteers, visitors and customers enjoy the best possible Repair Café experience. WRC aims to continue to increase the quantity and quality of Repair Cafés in the region by providing support and assistance as required.

This Volunteer Policy demonstrates our commitment to our volunteers, our consistency in our decision-making process and clarity on how volunteers can expect to be treated in their roles within Wokingham Repair Café (WRC).

1. Introduction

WRC is a volunteer-led community project that offers a range of social, environmental, and economic benefits to its local community. Its main aim is to highlight the merits of repairing a personal or household possession instead of throwing it away. It offers a social meeting place where people of all ages and backgrounds can bring their damaged, broken or torn possessions to be repaired. It recognises and values those who have a wide range of hands-on practical and inter-personal skills and relies on its committed team of volunteers to deliver and maintain a high-quality and reliable repair and advice service. There is no charge but customers are encouraged to leave a donation.

2. Recruitment

Volunteers are usually recruited by word of mouth or as the result of visiting WRC as a customer. New volunteers are invited to meet one of the founders for a very informal interview and asked to complete a Volunteer Application form giving their contact details, information on the skills they can offer and the reason why they wish to volunteer. They are also asked to disclose any serious health issues and to complete an Emergency Contact form. In accordance with GDPR legislation, volunteers now need to give permission for their personal details to be stored securely by WRC.

WRC does not carry out DBS checks or take up references. All volunteers are recruited on the basis of trust, honesty and friendship.

3. Induction and Training

A full explanation of how a Repair Café session operates is given at the pre-Repair Café meeting. Non-repairers are given the opportunity to select a role to which they feel most suited, e.g. front-of house or café duties. Volunteers are encouraged to ask to move to another role if they so wish and should discuss this with David Chapman in the first instance. Every effort is made to ensure that volunteers are happy and comfortable with what is being asked of them.

Repairers are not required to show proof of their professional qualifications and/or training and they should only attempt repairs for which they have the necessary skills, competence and expertise. Repairers are encouraged to work together and learn from each other.

4. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

WRC is committed to equal opportunities. Those from different backgrounds, age groups, cultures, genders and outlooks are encouraged to volunteer to increase diversity and offer a fresh approach. Volunteers with a disability are also welcome.

5. Health and Safety

WRC accepts that it has a duty of care to avoid exposing its volunteers, visitors and customers to any risks which may affect their health, safety and well-being. The Emergency Contact form completed by all volunteers names a relative or friend who can be contacted in the event of an emergency. A Risk Assessment covering the normal activities undertaken at WRC sessions was drawn up in 2024 and is available to all volunteers on request. This is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

All volunteers are expected to take responsibility for their own health and safety whilst on the premises and follow the correct safety procedures when fulfilling their WRC roles.

6. Insurance

Public Liability insurance is provided at the current venue, All Saints Church SpaceForAll. This covers all the activities listed in the Risk Assessment.

7. Confidentiality

All volunteers are required to complete and sign the GDPR form which gives permission for their personal email addresses to be shared amongst the volunteer team. Details provided on the Volunteer Application Form and Emergency Contact Form are regarded as confidential and never shared with other volunteers or third parties.

Customers are asked to provide an email address when completing the WRC registration form so they can be informed about future Repair Café events. These are confidential and added to the WRC mailing list. When reminder messages about Repair Café events are sent to customers, they are always blind-copied (bcc) to protect their privacy.

8. Expenses

No volunteer should ever be out-of-pocket and full reimbursement of any purchases or other expenses is always made promptly. Volunteers are asked to produce a receipt if possible. If a purchase is made via the internet, a copy of the e-invoice should be passed to the Treasurer. Motor mileage and subsistence expenses are always paid when a volunteer attends a Repair Café outreach. Repairers should inform the Repair Manager, when consumables, etc. need replenishing or new equipment is needed.

9. Problem-Solving

In the event of a problem or concern, volunteers are asked to speak to David Chapman in the first instance.

10. Roles and Responsibilities of the Repairers / Sewing Team

- a. All repairers are reminded that WRC acts as a 'clinic' and not a 'hospital'. With this in mind, repairers are asked to make as quick a diagnosis of a problem as possible and a decision on whether to proceed with the repair. If a repair is likely to take a long time or requires a spare part, items can now be referred to the mobile 'deliver, repair, collect' (DRC) system and this is offered to customers as an alternative so the repair can be completed at the repairer's home. Customers are required to give their permission by signing the registration form.
- b. Repairers have the right to refuse any item for repair that:
- is likely to take too long to fix at a normal session
 - requires replacement of a part that the customer has not provided
 - requires specialist skills and/or equipment and tools that are not available at the session
 - is considered to be a potential danger to the repairer
 - is in so bad a state of disrepair/damage that a repair is unlikely to be successful and could be a potential hazard to the repairer and the customer
 - is too dirty/unpleasant to handle or too badly torn to make a repair viable
- c. If a repairer is unable or does not wish to attempt a repair for any reason, s/he is not required to justify this decision but should offer as much advice as possible to the customer.
- d. Repairers are expected to involve the customer in the repair of the item as much as is safely and practically possible. They are also expected to share their skills with the customer.
- e. Repairers were not encouraged to take items home in order to complete a repair. However, if necessary and especially in the case of clocks and furniture repairs that need more specialist attention this can be permitted. When a repairer makes a private arrangement with a customer, it is at the sole discretion and responsibility of both parties and contact details should be exchanged. As a precaution, it is preferable to also inform the management.
- f. Customers are not supposed to leave an item with a repairer and collect it later in the morning. Should a customer wish to do this, repairers should refer to David Chapman for a decision, as this situation may be acceptable in extenuating circumstances.

11. Roles and Responsibilities of Reception / Front-of-House

As the first points of contact, FoH volunteers should greet all visitors and customers with a welcoming smile. All WRC volunteers and FoH work together closely as a team, constantly liaising with each other to ensure every customer enjoys a smooth transition from reception to the repair zone. Under the current one-way system, customers with more than one item must prioritise which is dealt with first. Following the first repair, they must exit by the door in the repair zone (main hall) and return to reception to register their next item.

FoH volunteers have a responsibility to:

- Treat everyone fairly and with respect and be polite at all times;

- Clearly explain the registration and repair zone procedures to all first-time customers;
- Assist customers with completion of the registration form if necessary;
- Check customers' items brought for repair so that the correct details are recorded on the registration form;
- Offer assistance to members of the public who have mobility or other issues;
- Deal calmly, firmly and politely with any complaint or difficult situation that arises with a member of the public. Refer the matter to David Chapman if necessary;
- In the event of a delay due to high demand, keep customers in the cafe and waiting regularly informed
- Ensure that customers' items for repair are stored safely and do not present a trip hazard in the café or reception area.

12. Role and Responsibilities of the Organisers

- To keep all volunteers safe and secure during each session;
- To ensure that volunteers feel comfortable and contented in their roles;
- To ensure that every new volunteer is welcomed and works alongside a regular to help them get used to the system;
- To provide free refreshments to all volunteers throughout the three hour session. Volunteers are asked to notify David Chapman if they have any special dietary requirements that are not being met;
- To encourage volunteers to give regular feedback and promptly fulfil requests for tools and/or consumables;
- To consult all volunteers in the event of any planned changes and to treat all comments and opinions equally and with respect. However, the organisers reserve the right to make the final decision when a consensus cannot be reached. The future viability of WRC is always the top priority in any decision;
- To respect and value everyone's contribution to the project and do their best to meet the individual wishes of each volunteer;
- To ensure that all customers and volunteers are welcomed and treated politely and fairly.

All Saints SpaceForAll is a large premises to manage efficiently and we welcome suggestions and ideas from the volunteer team on how to improve the Repair Café experience for volunteers, customers and visitors. Volunteers are always encouraged to provide feedback and/or make suggestions to David Chapman or Peter Wells or through email to info@wokinghamrepaircafe.uk

Peter Wells
26th January 2024

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