

Forres Area Community Trust

Volunteers Handbook



FACT owns and runs Forres Town Hall to support the local Community as part of our overall aim to make the Forres Area a better place to live, work and visit

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Welcome to FACT

FACT is pleased that you have decided to volunteer as part of our FACT Team which provides services to people across the Forres Area. The Board of Directors and FACT Staff are all keen to welcome you as part of the Team. We recognise that Volunteers make a massive difference to the lives of some of our most vulnerable community members and we support this valuable contribution.

FACT organises a variety of Volunteering Opportunities which offer the Forres Area Community a range of services and support for both residents and people living, working and visiting the area – friendship, social and recreational activities, information for visitors plus wider involvement in the communities that we serve.

An Overview of Forres Area Community Trust (FACT)

Forres Area Community Trust (FACT) is a Development Trust with long term plans to make the Forres Area a better place to live, work and visit.

FACT was incorporated as a company in November 2011 to benefit all the Forres Area Communities - from Brodie to Alves to and Findhorn to the Dava Crossroads.

The area that FACT supports is the Forres Academy Catchment Area which can be seen on the map on Page 4.

FACT is led and managed by local people who make up the FACT Board of Directors and is supported by our Members. FACT was registered as a Charity in Scotland in June 2014.

FACT aims to:

- Address local social and economic issues
- Generate income to sustain the Trust and invest in the community
- Secure funding for projects that meet local needs
- Support other local groups

Our Objectives are to:

- Advance citizenship and community development
- Advance and protect the local environment, culture and heritage
- Advance education and lifelong learning for the benefit of the people living, working and visiting the Forres Area

FACT encourages community involvement and we endeavour to expand the roles that Volunteers play in supporting the many local Communities in Forres and the surrounding area. The involvement of Volunteers allows individuals to make significant and fulfilling contributions to the work of the organisation by making the community we serve a brighter, happier and better supported environment to live, work and visit.

The Communities that are supported by FACT can be seen on this map and are those within the **Forres Academy Catchment Area**:



FACT stepped in to lease Forres Town Hall for 2 years from 2018 after it was closed by Moray Council in 2017 due to cutbacks. After completing essential repairs and securing a Grant from the Scottish Land Fund, FACT bought Forres Town Hall via a Community Asset Transfer and this process was completed in February 2021.



FACT now own and runs Forres Town Hall for the Community and we are continuing to develop plans to improve the building and make it more user friendly. We have completed some aspects such as the redecoration of the North Room and we are working on other areas.

Our Volunteers are very important to us and the beneficiaries of the services that we provide and we believe that volunteering has a powerful role to play to support the work of FACT across the Forres Area.

This Volunteers Handbook has been developed to support the experience of Volunteers working with FACT to make a positive, sustainable and tangible difference to our local Communities.

We would like to thank the FACT Volunteer Forum who have helped to develop and review the FACT Volunteer Handbook alongside the Volunteer & Community Engagement Coordinator. The input of the whole FACT Team is appreciated as well as your continued support.

FACT's Commitment to Volunteers

Overview of Volunteering with FACT

The involvement of Volunteers allows us to enhance the lives of people of all ages and backgrounds who are living, working and visiting the Forres Area.

The relationship between FACT and our Volunteers is based upon the following principles:

Recognition of the contribution of Volunteers:

Your contribution is invaluable and we recognise your commitment by sharing your time, expertise and skills to support the organisation and how you help to make a positive difference to our Community. We also recognise the benefits that Volunteers gain from our Volunteer Opportunities such as learning new skills, developing increased confidence, meeting new people and feeling rewarded for helping others.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity:

We encourage Volunteer Applications from people with different backgrounds and from across all sections of our Community as we value everyone equally and, where possible, our Volunteer Opportunities are accessible to all. FACT is committed to promoting diversity and to supporting people from a variety of backgrounds to enable them to take part in Volunteer Activities as we value the way that different experiences can enrich our organisation. We aim to be inclusive and for everyone to feel valued and respected so that their contributions can support the work that we do across our Community.

Volunteer Recruitment:

Volunteers are recruited without regard to gender, disability, age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation or any other factors relating to their backgrounds. A Volunteer's ability to undertake the tasks of the Volunteer Role is the only thing that is taken into consideration when allocating a Volunteer Opportunity. Depending on individual circumstances, a health issue or a criminal record does not necessarily exclude you from volunteering. Any disclosures will be treated as strictly confidential and kept securely in accordance with the Data Protection Legislation.

Volunteer Journey:

Once we have received your Volunteer Application Form or we have met you and completed the Form with you, we will invite you for an informal chat and introduction to the Volunteering Roles that we have within FACT before you commit further to volunteering with us. If you wish to continue with your Volunteer Application we will request References from 2 people who know you well. For some volunteer roles, where you may be working with children and young people or vulnerable adults, we will also require you to complete a PVG Application which we will pay for. If the role you choose does not require a PVG, then we will ask you to complete a Self-Declaration Form instead.

Zero Tolerance:

FACT is committed to providing a safe and secure working environment and acts or threats of physical violence, intimidation, harassment, verbal abuse or coercion which a FACT Employee or Volunteer is subjected to during the course of their duties will not be tolerated. Further information is available in our Zero Tolerance Policy.

Health, Safety and Welfare:

We are committed to ensuring the Health, Safety and Welfare of our Volunteers and anyone else who may be involved in or affected by our Activities. All tools, materials and safety equipment to carry out your chosen Volunteer Role will be provided and FACT has appropriate insurance cover for Volunteers while you are undertaking volunteering that has been approved and authorised by us. We will provide Training and Guidance so that you can carry out your Volunteer Role safely.

Data Protection:

All personal data of Volunteers shall be:

- kept accurate and up to date
- relevant and not excessive
- retained for no longer than necessary or anonymised to provide statistics
- kept securely and not passed to any third parties without permission

Personal Development:

We aim to make volunteering a mutually rewarding experience for all. We encourage opportunities for personal development and a guiding principle is that if a Volunteer is enjoying their role and feels challenged then they are best placed to get the most out of their volunteering experience.

References for Volunteers:

During or following your Volunteer Placement, we would be delighted to provide a Reference to any future Employers/ Volunteer Placements. However, please note that we supply References on the following conditions:

- Your FACT Volunteer Placement is ongoing and/or you have undertaken this for suitable period of time that will enable us to write an informed Reference
- If you no longer volunteer with FACT, your FACT Volunteer Placement was concluded in a positive manner
- Your attendance was reliable and any absences were supported by a suitable explanation which was communicated in a timely manner

Please use the info@forresarea.org email address as the contact when giving details to another organisation so that they can ask for a Reference from FACT and we will forward your request to the appropriate member of the FACT Team.

Volunteer's Commitment to FACT

The relationship between FACT and our Volunteers is based on trust, respect and confidence which works on the basis of the following:

What we expect from Volunteers & Dress Code:

All Volunteers help us to deliver the highest standard of service to those they engage with and we ask that our Volunteers provide an appropriate level of service, delivered in a prompt and courteous manner. Our Volunteers strive to understand the needs of those that we support and facilitate an enjoyable, friendly and caring environment.

We expect Volunteers to be dressed in a clean, neat and tidy manner if they are in a customer facing role. We understand that some roles will require the use of old clothes, such as painting or decorating, however we reserve the right to ask Volunteers to dress in a more appropriate manner if their appearance causes issues for others. Clothing with inappropriate slogans or images is not acceptable under any circumstances.

Confidentiality:

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining confidentiality and should not reveal any information about the organisation or those involved with FACT as partners. You will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement as part of the Volunteer Application Form. While you are volunteering, you may see personal information and you should always treat these details as confidential and should not pass this information on to others. The personal details must be stored securely and only used for the specific reason that they were collected for e.g. to update a Project Database. **Any** and **all** concerns that you have about data need to be raised as soon possible with a member of the FACT Staff Team.

Drugs, Alcohol and Smoking:

Volunteers must not consume any drugs/alcohol when volunteering for FACT, before a Volunteer Shift or during breaks. There may be times where a FACT Activity involves the serving of alcohol, however it is our expectation that Volunteers, while on duty at such an event, will not drink alcohol. If a Volunteer attends an Event or Activity and it is suspected that they are under the influence of alcohol (slurred speech, eyes glazed, smelling of intoxicating liquor) then they will be asked to leave. Any such behaviours will be addressed with the Volunteer as soon as possible after the incident occurs.

Smoking is not permitted within Forres Town Hall, including the use of vapes. Volunteers may smoke outside during their breaks and need to make sure that they dispose of their cigarettes in a safe manner.

If you are supporting a vulnerable person in their own home then Volunteers need to adhere to the wishes of the resident in relation to smoking and vaping.

If you are unavailable to volunteer:

FACT aims to provide flexible opportunities to volunteer which can fit in around your life and other commitments. We are completely aware that personal circumstances can change very quickly, however, when you become aware that you may be absent, you must inform your Team Leader as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made. You can also contact the FACT Office on 01309 674388 or by emailing: info@forresarea.org

Email, Internet Usage and Social Media:

Volunteers must not use the FACT email or electronic messaging systems to infringe the copyright or other intellectual property rights of third parties or to distribute defamatory / fraudulent / harassing messages or to engage in any illegal or wrongful conduct.

When making comments on Social Media, please remember that you are part of an organisation that is non-political and non-religious and be aware that any information that you make public online could affect how people perceive FACT. We appreciate your support by liking and sharing posts on Facebook and Instagram which helps to highlight the work that we undertake to support the local Community. Please refer to our Social Media Policy for further guidance.

Whistle Blowing:

This is the disclosure of information about suspected wrongdoings or dangers in a workplace. Some of the things it may include are criminal activity, financial fraud, negligence or breach of internal policies or procedures, etc.

If you have a genuine concern about a situation whilst you volunteer you should raise this with your Team Leader or a Manager in order to bring it to their attention. This will also allow any potential issues to be raised and addressed quickly.

While you are volunteering

We aim for our learning and development opportunities to meet the diverse needs of our Volunteers. You will receive an appropriate Induction to FACT and Guidance / Training for the tasks or responsibilities you will be undertaking. We are always looking for new and creative ways to undertake this task and we encourage you to feedback after our Training Sessions. This gives us the chance to make any necessary changes or improvements to our Training.

Induction and Training:

Volunteers will be given an Induction to their Volunteer Role and a copy of this Volunteers Handbook will be available to read. There is a Presentation on the FACT YouTube Channel which gives an overview of the history of our organisation and our FACT Projects: www.youtube.com/@ForresAreaCommunityTrust

This information will ensure that you have a good understanding of the work and purpose of FACT and the Project or Activity that you are helping to deliver with a clear understanding of how to undertake your Volunteering Role in a safe and supportive environment. However, on completion of your Induction and if you feel unprepared in any way, then please raise this with the Team Leader so that we can address this directly and provide any additional support that is needed.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Volunteers have defined roles and responsibilities. As part of the Volunteer Application process you will be asked to sign the Volunteer Agreement and you will be given a Role Description relating to your chosen Volunteering Activity or Project as part of the Induction. The Roles are also monitored and reviewed whenever a need arises.

In addition, it is vital that you let FACT know of any medical conditions as they may have an affect on your ability to volunteer. A health issue is not a barrier to volunteering, but **knowledge of all conditions**, even if they are controlled by medication, will help us support you at all times and make sure that we are prepared. There is a section on the Volunteer Application Form that gives you the space to tell us about any support needs that you may have and this can also be discussed as part of the 'Get To Know You' Meeting with your Team Leader.

Signing In and Out:

All Volunteers are required to Sign In and Out of Forres Town Hall when they arrive and leave the building. You will be shown where the List is kept when you start volunteering. For health and safety reasons it is important that we know, at all times, which Team Members are present in the building at any time. This also allows us to make sure that you are safe at all times.

Volunteer Expenses:

We do not want the cost of travel to act as a barrier to volunteering so expenses incurred while undertaking Volunteering Activities with FACT will be reimbursed. We will support individual Volunteers as needed to ensure that they can get to and from their Volunteer Role without having to worry about the bus fare.

Reasonable, pre-agreed out of pocket expenses will also be paid to Volunteers when incurred as part of their Volunteer Role eg. mileage to collect a Befriendee and take them to an Activity. For mileage claims relating to Befriendees, the Befriending Log must be completed so that journeys can be verified.

All claims must have valid receipts attached and the Volunteer must sign the Volunteer Expenses Form. Expenses Forms need to be submitted to the Project Coordinator to process with the Finance Team so that the Volunteer can be paid.

Volunteer Reviews:

Volunteer Reviews allow all Volunteers to reflect on their current role and contribution, plus consider how best they can support the work of the organisation. Reviews can be an informal chat or a more formal meeting, depending on what suits the needs of the individual Volunteer and their Volunteer Role. This will be an opportunity to identify any challenges, agree to any changes and have a chance for mutual feedback. Reviews can often result in the development of new tasks and roles that can develop skills further.

FACT is fully committed to ensuring that you are well supported while you volunteer, so you will have:

- A Key Contact within FACT who will be available to provide support as you undertake your Volunteering Role
- A Team Leader for the Project, Event or Activity that you volunteer your skills, knowledge and experience for
- In addition, FACT Staff are responsible for your day-to-day management and guidance on your Volunteering Activity

Feedback and Suggestions for FACT:

We encourage our Volunteers to speak up with new ideas and contribute to the bigger picture when they see an opportunity or gap that could make a positive difference to FACT and the local Communities that we serve. Suggestions can be made by using our 'Comments Box' that is situated in the Foyer of Forres Town Hall or by emailing info@forresarea.org and we also welcome ideas about our plans or activities.

Your feedback is really helpful in improving our Volunteering Opportunities. Please take the opportunity to complete Feedback Forms after Training or Volunteering or let your Team Leader know if you have any suggestions about how we can improve.

We also love to hear your individual stories and encourage you to write about your volunteering experience. We also recognise that things may not always go smoothly. Do let us know if there is something we can learn from so that we can respond appropriately.

Problem Resolution for Volunteers

We will treat Volunteers fairly and respond to complaints or concerns in a consistent and impartial manner.

Absenteeism:

It is anticipated that Volunteers perform their duties on a regular and punctual basis. When you are aware that you are going to be absent, you are encouraged to inform your Team Leader as far in advance as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made. If you are regularly unable to attend to fulfil the requirements of the agreed Volunteer Role, your Key Contact will carry out a review and seek to resolve any problems.

Reviewing the continuation of a FACT Volunteer Placement:

A review of your volunteering involvement with FACT will take place if you are continually unable to carry out your Volunteer Role, or fail to adhere to the Policies, Guidelines and Procedures of the organisation while volunteering. No decision about ending a Volunteer Placement will be taken until you have had an opportunity to discuss any issues with your Key Contact or Team Leader. If a decision is made to end a Volunteer Placement, advice and assistance should be sought from a Manager or a FACT Board Member. The Volunteer will be offered an Exit Interview and a Manager or FACT Board Member will also attend if required.

Reasons for ending a FACT Volunteer Placement

Possible grounds for ending a FACT Volunteer Placement may include, but are not limited to the following:

Breaching Safeguarding arrangements; being under the influence of alcohol or drugs; Gross Misconduct or Insubordination; theft of property; misuse of equipment or materials belonging to the organisation; abuse or mistreatment of colleagues; failure to abide by the Policies, Guidelines and Procedures that the organisation has in place; failure to perform assigned duties satisfactorily;

Raising a concern:

A Volunteer who has any concerns in relation to their Volunteering Placement can raise this in the first instance with their Key Contact or Team Leader. The aim of addressing any concern is to find a solution in an informal way and to provide a satisfactory outcome for everyone concerned.

If the issue cannot be resolved in an informal way with support from the Key Contact or Team Leader, then the Volunteer can request that the Chair of the FACT Board reviews their concern. The Chair will review the issue in a timely manner and will hold an Investigation Meeting if needed. Following a review of the concern, the decision made by the Chair of the FACT Board will be the final outcome and this will be communicated to everyone involved.

Further Information and Contact Information

Many of the areas covered by this booklet are supported by other FACT Policies:

Alcohol and Drugs Policy	Internet, Email and Communications Policy
Complaints Policy	Safe System of Work Policy inc. Smoking
Confidentiality Policy	Safeguarding Policy
Data Protection Policy (GDPR)	Social Media Policy
Equality and Diversity Policy	Volunteer Policy
Harassment and Bullying Policy	Whistleblowing Policy
Health and Safety Policy	Zero Tolerance Policy

If you would like to view any of these policies, please ask to view a copy or contact the FACT Office.

We do hope this information has encouraged you to support FACT and our aims, objectives and projects by giving your time and talents through volunteering. Our volunteering community is incredibly important to us and helps FACT to achieve our aims. We want you to feel that volunteering with us is a fun and inspiring experience. We hope this Volunteer Handbook has explained the steps taken to provide a supported and safe environment for you to achieve this.

During your volunteering you will have a Key Contact to support you and manage your time with us. Along with this Volunteer Handbook, there is information on the FACT website: www.forresarea.org which provides an overview of the FACT Board of Directors - who are Volunteers - and the paid FACT Staff Team

- Your main contact will be the Volunteer or Project Coordinator and/or Team Leader
- Everyone can be contacted by email via info@forresarea.org
- All FACT Staff can be contacted by phone on **01309 674388**
- The Volunteer Coordinator, Project Coordinator or Team Leader may also give you a mobile telephone number to contact if appropriate