

Community Highways Volunteer Scheme Policy



SURREY
COUNTY COUNCIL

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Foreword

Surreys Community Vision for 2030 contains the ambition that:

“Residents live in clean, safe and green communities, where people and organisations embrace their environmental responsibilities”

This ambition reflects our desire to preserve their county for future generations and recognises that people and organisations are collectively responsible for ensuring Surrey is safe, free from pollution and has open, green spaces to enjoy in the future.

Surrey Highways has developed the Community Highways Volunteer scheme, to support residents and community organisations, to work together with the local highways team to enhance their local areas. Both Surrey County Council and local residents recognise the value of our environment and want to ensure that our communities are kept looking at their best.

As the Cabinet Member for Highways I support this initiative where we take local, collective responsibility for the areas in which we live and I look forward to seeing residents and community groups roll out this initiative across Surrey.

Matt Furniss

Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport



Introduction

Surrey County Council (SCC) as the Highway Authority for the County of Surrey is responsible for maintaining the public highway across the County. We recognise that there are some services which are important to local communities, and that they would like to undertake themselves to enhance what we already do.

In order to respond to the needs of the community the “Community Local Delivery” initiative enables community groups (through a town/parish council or residents association) to take on responsibility for the delivery of certain maintenance activities in their area.

Working on or close to the public highway (road, verge and footway) can be dangerous and it is possible to be seriously injured (or cause serious injury to others). All SCC (and contractor) staff undergo regular training and hold appropriate certification before carrying out work on the highway. In general, volunteers will not have benefited from the same level of training as SCC/contractor staff and are not experienced in working in close proximity to live traffic.

Community groups, individual volunteers need to ensure that works will be carried out safely and in accordance with the law. Whilst this may preclude certain activities, many tasks will be possible. This document provides guidance for community groups wishing to carry out minor highway maintenance activities in their local communities.

Volunteer Activities

It is important that we are fully aware about all the work you do. We are very grateful for the time and effort put in by volunteers, but the work must be part of an agreed programme to be covered by our insurance. If working on the public highway without the knowledge and approval of SCC, you may be acting unlawfully.

There are some restrictions about the type of work that can be carried out by volunteers and there may also be restrictions as to when certain activities are carried out. We will help ensure that there are no conflicts of work and where possible will provide advice or support from the Local Highways Group.

We have identified a number of groups and individuals who have responsibility for ensuring that volunteer tasks are completed safely and legally. Please note that registering does not automatically provide permission for volunteer tasks to be carried out.

To help support volunteer activities, we have put together a handbook which contains information that may be useful when planning and carrying out volunteer activities. If appropriate, SCC will also offer induction sessions to familiarise Group Leaders and Sponsoring Organisations with this guidance and their responsibilities within it. The sessions will also raise awareness about how to complete tasks safely and effectively on the SCC highway network.

Sponsoring Organisations

In effect, SCC will approve Sponsoring Organisations to use volunteers to carry out minor maintenance activities in the public highway. Sponsoring Organisations could be a Parish Council, Town Council, Residents Association (or other publicly accountable organisation) that may hold the required employers and public liability insurance.

Sponsoring Organisations will be aware of local priorities and may support a number of Local Community Groups. They are responsible for ensuring that this guidance is followed and that there are processes in place to monitor the work being carried out.

They must confirm that they support the Local Community Group, however it is up to each organisation to agree the level of involvement required with each Local Community Group and to ensure that they are appropriately insured.

Local Community Groups

In practice, Local Community Groups are responsible for the organisation and management of volunteers and for ensuring the following requirements are met:

- Local Community Groups need to work under the umbrella of a Sponsoring Organisation and need to register their intention of organising and managing volunteering activities in their local area by completing the Sponsoring Organisation Registration form.
- All Volunteers must be eighteen (18) years old or over and be registered with SCC prior to any work being undertaken (please complete 'Volunteer Registration' form). There are also maximum age restrictions (please refer to the Insurance section).
- Work activities and tasks need to be identified and agreed with a Sponsoring Organisation. A notification of volunteer tasks form should be sent to SCC who will review and approve the tasks as appropriate. Only tasks that have been approved by SCC may be carried out.
- The generic risk assessment (provided by SCC) needs to be considered when activities are being planned. If any additional hazards are identified, they should be added to the assessment and sent to SCC along with the notification form.
- A point of work risk assessment (provided by SCC) must be completed (on-site) prior to any work commencing. Any changes (e.g. weather conditions) and additional controls should also be recorded.
- When the work activities are complete, a copy of the Volunteer Task Completion sheet together with risk assessments and before and after photos need to be sent to SCC.

Group Leaders

Local Community Groups should identify a Group Leader who in addition to making sure that the requirements for Local Community Groups are met, will:

- Know the locations and requirements of the volunteer tasks and understand the conditions under which they are to be carried out including the acceptable standard and finish.
- Ensure that all Volunteers are well briefed and that they are aware of and follow statutory regulations and guidelines.
- Know how to deal with enquiries and how to report accidents or incidents to SCC.

Insurance

Public Liability

It is important that when carrying out work, often in areas with public access, volunteers are not exposing themselves, their sponsoring organisation or Surrey County Council to risk from third party claims. All volunteers under the Council's guidance are indemnified under the Council's insurance policy against claims for injury or damage to property. Following the guidance issued by the Council and any other specific advice from Highways Officers before or during works, will ensure that volunteers are covered by the policy.

Personal Injury

Lower age limit for full benefits – 12 years

Upper age limit for full benefits - 75 years

Reduced benefits available for 75-80 years (working with the prior knowledge of Surrey County Council)

Benefits

The policy covers any volunteer appointed by Surrey County Council who suffers accidental bodily injury which independently of any other cause, results within two years in death or disablement.

Exclusions

The policy excludes death or disablement caused directly or indirectly as a result of intoxication, illegal use of drugs or exposure to unnecessary danger, other than in an attempt to save someone's life.

Conditions and Restrictions

- Volunteers are only be permitted to work on pavements, footpaths and bridleways.
- Volunteers are not permitted to work on the vehicular carriageway itself.
- Volunteers should not be put, or put themselves, at any further risk than a pedestrian would by using the pavement.
- Volunteers must not break open the ground under any circumstance.
- Before carrying out any task, volunteers must carry out a risk assessment.
- Volunteers are not permitted in any circumstances to work at height (work which if there were no precautions taken a person could fall a distance liable to cause personal injury), work in confined spaces or to carry out asbestos, electrical or gas works.
- Volunteers are not permitted to use power tools.
- All waste or arising's must be removed from site and disposed of appropriately and in accordance with relevant legislation. The waste removal process should be agreed with the SCC when planning the work.
- Any solvent or product to be used by the volunteers whilst carrying out their tasks must be approved prior to the commencement of work. Details should be included with the initial notification.
- Volunteers are not permitted to work alone.
- Volunteers must not undertake any task that may exacerbate any health condition.
- SCC reserves the right to require volunteer activities to stop and may withdraw permission if the tasks are not being carried out appropriately or if any of the council's conditions or restrictions are not being complied with.
- If there is an incident on the Highway, no matter how minor, volunteer tasks must stop and the incident reported as soon as possible to the Contact Centre (on 0300 200 1003) who will notify the appropriate officers.

Further Information

Any enquiries about this scheme should be sent to highways.volunteering@surreycc.gov.uk

There is a wealth of information on the Health and Safety Executive website, some particular pages that may be useful are:

- [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#)
- [Health and Safety made simple](#)
- [Guidance leaflets](#)
- [How to control risks](#)
- [Avoiding danger from overhead power lines](#) (PDF)

The [Surrey County Council roadworks webpage](#) shows upcoming roadworks and diversions.

Where we ask you for personal information through a form, this information will only be used for the purpose indicated and it will be held in a secure manner. It will not be used for any other purpose.