Umbrella Sussex

Supporting the Sharing Economy in Hastings and Rother

This is the Volunteer Handbook for Hastings Library of Things, an Umbrella Sussex Project

Opening Statement

Umbrella Sussex is a collective of non constituted wealth sharing projects who work together to support and maintain sharing economy projects for the benefit of the communities of Hastings and Rother.
Sharing Economies focus on building community wealth and working cooperatively to overcome problems caused by poverty, or lack of access to things. In the sharing economy emphasis is on fair access to things rather than owning things. Sharing economy projects try to avoid transactional relationships, and obligations are social rather than financial.

At present, Umbrella Sussex is formed of its 2 founding projects, Make and Mend Bexhill and Beyond, and Hastings Library of Things.

Umbrella Sussex is a community interest company, with an asset lock, which operates on cooperative principles to support community sharing projects.

We recognise that even as an informal and member led group we have responsibilities towards members, visitors and volunteers and that they will develop over time. This document lays out the main areas we have considered, what we will do and what expect of library members, volunteers, visitors, stakeholders and partners.

Umbrella Sussex aims to appoint a volunteer with specific responsibility for volunteers, including arranging briefings and training and for keeping the policy up to date.

Volunteers, members and visitors should be proactive in raising any concerns they have by emailing info@umbrellasussex.org.uk

The volunteer handbook policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years 1st review: 2025

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Volunteer Agreement and Handbook

Volunteering for the Library of Things

Anyone who does unpaid (voluntary) work for an organisation is a volunteer.

Voluntary work can be short term or regular, formal or informal.

Hastings library of things is a member led organisation. Members join the library to borrow things, and members run the library. Some members will be able to offer more to the library than others, volunteering to be librarians or to take on other roles to help keep things going.

What you can expect from the library if you volunteer

We will make sure that you know

1. What roles and activities are available
2. Who to speak to if you have a problem
3. Where to get information about our policies and procedures

Opportunities tailored for you

If you want to develop in a particular area, or use a particular skill you have, we will be happy to discuss it with you. We will try to agree a personal plan that allows you to grow and develop.

Our Commitment to you

1. We will listen to you, and treat you as an individual
2. We will offer you out of pocket expenses in line with our expenses policy
3. We will offer training appropriate to your role
4. We will try to make sure there is always someone you can talk to, who will take care of your induction, reviews and who you can speak to about any issues affecting your role
5. We may write you a reference if you ask for one

What we require from you

We will ask you to:

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1. Follow our polices, including our safeguarding, data protection, equality diversity and inclusion policy.
2. Provide emergency contact information
3. Agree what tasks you will take on, how many hours you expect to offer
4. Participate in volunteer reviews and training
5. Let us know if you need help, want a change or have any worries or concerns about your volunteer experience
6. Attend on the days and times that you have offered, or let us know in advance if you cannot. (if you do not attend when we were expecting you, and have not let us know we may try to contact you, and then your emergency contact to check that you are okay)

Expenses

You shouldn't be out of pocket for volunteering, so we will always try to make sure we have enough money in our budget to cover travel costs.

See Expense policy for full details and how to claim

Equality and Diversity

The most up to date version of our equality and diversity statement can be found on our website www.umbrellasussex.org.uk/opendata

Data Protection

The most up to date version of our data protection policy can be found on our website www.umbrellasussex.org.uk/opendata. We will keep a copy of your personal details while you are volunteering with us, and for up to 6 months to a year afterwards. You can ask to see any of the information we store about you (your personal data) at any time.

Health and Safety

You are required to take all reasonable steps to safeguard your health and safety, and that of any other person who may be affected by your actions.

You must report to any accidents, even if you do not consider them serious to us.

The most up to date version of our data protection policy can be found on our website www.umbrellasussex.org.uk/opendata

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Complaints
If you are unhappy about any aspect of your volunteer experience we urge you to speak to us. You are welcome to raise your issue in writing or verbally, and to have a friend or advocate to help you express yourself. We will treat any issue you raise with us as confidential. As an informal group we try not to have a single person “in charge”, but if you email info@umbrellasussex.org.uk we will respond.

Ending the volunteer agreement
if you need to stop volunteering with us we ask that you give us as much notice as possible.
If, in exceptional circumstances we need to end your volunteer opportunity early we will speak to you and let you know why. If we can help you find a suitable alternative opportunity we will.

Agreement:

This agreement is in honour only. It is not intended to be a legally binding contract and either Hastings library of things or the volunteer can end the agreement at any time.

As a volunteer you agree to:

4. Take part in training we offer to help you in your role
5. Be positive about and support our work
6. Follow and operate within our policies and procedures, including our Health and Safety, Data Protection and Equal Opportunities policies
7. Act responsibly and within the law
8. Maintain confidentiality of the people we work with, our team and our procedures
9. Let us know if you are having any problems or if you have any feedback
10. Meet agreed time commitments and give reasonable notice when you’re not available

In return, as well as the things laid out in our commitment on page 1, we will:

6. Respect and listen to you
7. Try to resolve any concerns fairly and reasonably
8. Be mindful of your health, safety and welfare relating to your role
9. Help you progress by offering signposting and appropriate references if asked

Signed
Date

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Current Projects: Hastings Library of Things and Make and Mend, Bexhill and Beyond
A Community interest company: Company Number: 14001035
info@umbrellasussex.org.uk