

SPENNYMOOR TOWN COUNCIL



BOB ABLEY ART GALLERY VOLUNTEER POLICY

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In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000, this document will be posted on the Council's Website www.spennymoor-tc.gov.uk and copies of this document will be available for inspection on deposit in the Council Offices, Town Hall, Spennymoor. Costs are as per the publication scheme.

Key Aims and Objectives

1. Our Vision/Key Aims Are To:

- Provide accessible art to all;
- Provide space for local, regional and national artists and individuals to sell artwork;
- Ensure the social history of the town and region are enjoyed and understood both now and in future years, by promoting the Cornish brand and products as well as other regional and relevant artists;
- Develop and promote the gallery as a regional, national and international visitor attraction; and,
- Partner other regional key art and visitor attractions to create a cultural hub within the area.

2. Context

The Town Council Art Gallery opened in 2011 and was later named after the late Bob Abley. The gallery is based within the Town Hall in Spennymoor and is a free to the public facility that is open between the hours of 12.00 – 4.00pm Monday – Friday and 10.00am – 2.00pm on a Saturday. Whilst strategically and operationally managed by the Town Council it is staffed on a daily basis by volunteers.

The gallery consists of a range of areas for the display and sale of art:

- Stairs and Corridor
- Robert Heslop Room
- Norman Cornish Room
- Jim Smith Room
- Council Chamber Foyer

The gallery over recent years has moved from having periodic exhibitions of a limited number of artists, with periods of time when the gallery had no exhibitions, to a more customer focused experience. This includes the Norman Cornish permanent and for sale works which are complemented by a large range of other artists and individuals who own art work, with often over 100 pieces of local / regional art available for the public to view and purchase on top of the Cornish experience. This ensures the public have a positive customer experience, and as such we have seen a significant increase in visitor numbers and positive visitor comments following the change.

The inclusion of the Norman Cornish works within the gallery has helped the gallery establish partnerships with a range of key art and cultural providers within the region. This has helped us to promote the gallery as part of the cultural hub of the region, for example we now have a relationship with the Mining Art Gallery in Bishop Auckland, Beamish Museum and MIMA within Middlesbrough, as well as being able to have links with the Mining Museum that is based in the Town Hall.

The commission from the sale of art also enables the funding of marketing and promotion of the gallery.

3. Detail of Council Art and its Value

The Council has as part of its ASSET Register all details of ART owned by the Council over the value of £10k. With regards to insurance cover each of these paintings are listed individually. Paintings and art work below this figure are covered within the Councils standard insurance cover.

4. Requests for Art to be exhibited in other locations outside the Town Hall

As the Gallery's profile and reputation grows there may be requests for other galleries or exhibitions to feature work owned or on loan at the Town Council. Any such requests require Council approval before being granted and all insurance and transport arrangements must be in place before doing so.

5. So what kind of Art Gallery do we want to be?

- 5.1 Sustainable:
Efficient on resources and a continuing value and use to people locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- 5.2 Important:
The Art Gallery should be seen as a vital resource and visitor attraction to people locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- 5.3 Valuable:
As many people as possible should understand the value that the Gallery brings to them and how it both informs and educates regarding art and social history.
- 5.4 Interesting:
It should provide a range of art and products that create a venue that people want to visit.
- 5.5 Popular:
As many people as possible should use it including schools so that they understand the value of art and social history and for them to be enriched by the experience.
- 5.6 Experimental:
Art in the broadest sense, is the mechanism that evolves human development. We should try things that might or might not work so that we are acknowledged as a creative venue for up and coming and established artists of different types and styles.

5.7 Habitual:
The gallery should not be for someone to visit on a special occasion, but a resource that people can use on a regular basis to see and experience a variety of work and to understand our social history as told through art.

5.8 Useful:
For a social experience, as well as to purchase art and products, and where nice people meet other nice people in a warm and welcoming environment.

6. Key Actions/Objectives

The Art Gallery has a number of key actions / targets for the period of 2018 – 2020 which are detailed in the table below.

7. Key Actions for 2018 – 2020

Objective	Action	How it will be measured
Introduce a volunteer's policy and information document	Development and introduction of policy and information documents.	Report to Council and implementation.
Continue to provide access to local, regional and national artists and individuals who wish to sell art.	Hosting of artists and individuals who own art work in the gallery throughout the year.	Recording the number of artists who have exhibited their work.
Increase visitor numbers through promoting the gallery and the Cornish brand.	Introduce a gallery leaflet / flyer and place adverts in local media.	By recording the number of people who attend / visit the gallery.
Maintain or increase sales to fund the marketing of the gallery	By promoting the sale of Cornish and other artists work and receiving commission on work sold.	By measuring the sales of work sold.
Enhance the gallery visually in line with other regional galleries	By painting the gallery areas in different colours.	By visitor and artists comments and feedback.
Establish further links and partnerships with other visitor / cultural venues.	Establish referral partnerships with Bishop Mining Art Gallery and other galleries.	By recording the number of locations who promote the gallery.

For more information on volunteer policies, values and principles please refer to the Volunteer Policy document, information on volunteer understanding, training and support can be found in the Volunteer Understanding document.

Volunteer Policy

1. Definition

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship as well as an important component of democracy. Volunteers are people who are unpaid and of their own free will contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

2. Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by Spennymoor Town Council Art Gallery and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and that in creating our workforce foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers.

Volunteers will not be used during times of industrial action to do the work of paid staff.

The Volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend. Likewise, the organisation cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by a volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged, both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

3. The Policy

This policy outlines Spennymoor Town Council's approach to volunteering. It should be read in conjunction with the volunteer welcome document, which lays out the shared expectations that volunteers and Spennymoor Town Council can have of one another. Also the Key Aims and Objectives document.

Spennymoor Town Council recognises that volunteers are an important part of the development of Spennymoor Town Council Art Gallery's plans, with a distinctive and complementary role to that of paid employees.

**Our Vision for Volunteering is that:
Individuals from all walks of life will be able to access
volunteering opportunities that will provide the added
value to services that Spennymoor Town Council Art
Gallery requires to deliver its purposes and priorities.**

4. In the continuing development of volunteering, the Council are committed to:

- Making volunteering inclusive and embracing.
- Ensuring a fair and consistent approach to the recruitment, training and management of volunteers.
- Ensuring that managers, paid staff and volunteers fully understand why volunteers are involved and what their role is within the Council.
- Demonstrating a commitment to good practice with regard to volunteers and, by doing so, demonstrating the value placed on volunteers by the Council.

5. In order to achieve this, we will endeavour to support volunteers in the following ways:

5.1 Induction and Training

- We will provide a Volunteer Understanding, which sets out the mutual expectations that the Council and the volunteer can have of each other.
- We will provide a copy of the volunteer handbook to each volunteer.

5.2 Supervision and Support

- We will provide guidelines and procedures for those with responsibility for volunteers within the Council.
- We will recognise volunteer's contribution with an annual event of thanks.
- We will provide regular opportunities/forums where volunteer's ideas and views can be shared and discussed.
- We will provide Employer Liability and Public Liability Insurance cover for volunteers whilst undertaking voluntary work approved and authorised by the Council.
- We will try to resolve fairly any problems, complaints or difficulties volunteers may have whilst engaged in volunteering roles.

- We will provide volunteers with an opportunity for an informal interview with the Facilities Manager or Town Clerk, on leaving your role with the Council.
- We will ensure provision of references to all volunteers and all employment opportunities at the Council will be highlighted to volunteers.

5.3 **Polices**

- We will develop and provide policies for the recruitment, training and management of volunteers. Council policies will apply to both paid staff and volunteers and be referred to as a workforce. Where this is not appropriate, separate policies will be provided for volunteers.
- We will provide adequate training in accordance with the Council's Health and Safety, Equality & Diversity and Safeguarding Polices, which apply to volunteers.
- We will ensure that Council paid staff and volunteers are clear about the role of Volunteers within the Council. Records of volunteer's personal details are strictly confidential and we will ensure that they are maintained in accordance with the Data Protection Act.
- The Volunteer Policy will be reviewed at least once every two years.

5.4 **Volunteers' Responsibilities**

- In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the accompanying Volunteer Understanding, the Council hopes that individuals volunteering will help to maintain a mutually beneficial volunteering relationship with the Council by performing their volunteering role to the best of their ability. We ask that volunteers be aware that they will be seen as representatives of the Council, and as such should be careful not to act or speak in ways which may compromise the Council's purpose and priorities.
- The Volunteer Understanding describes the non-contractual arrangement between a volunteer and the Council, including what the volunteer can expect from us and what we ask of the volunteer. The arrangement relies on mutual trust between the volunteer and the Council and is binding in honour only. It is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party.
- Volunteers are also responsible for receiving donations for the Art Gallery. It is the volunteer's responsibility to receive the donations in a gracious and friendly manner as they are representing not only of the Art Gallery but also the Council as well. If the donations are in the form of paintings or drawings then the Facilities Manager must be made aware of all drawings donated by the general public. These will be stored / displayed, recorded and acknowledged.

Volunteer Documents

Welcome:

The Town Council would like to welcome you as one of our Art Galley volunteers. The Council recognise and value the role of the volunteer and we hope this document will aid and help you settle into your role as volunteer.

If there are any questions that you may have that are not covered within the pack please contact us and we will be delighted to help. We hope working with us provides you with a friendly and positive experience; and that you share your passion and enthusiasm with our visitors as they attend our wonderful facility.

Who's who within the Town Hall and contact details?

Town Clerk: Katherine Hierons 01388 815276
Facilities Manager: Colin Ranson 01388 815276 or 07568168785
Office Staff: 01388 815276

Background of the Art Gallery

The Bob Abley Art Gallery is made up of both large and small rooms hosting a large selection of sensational and affordable art for sale as well as a fine collection of permanent works demonstrating Spennymoor's great heritage of mining art. Whilst owned by the Town Council, the gallery is run on a daily basis by hard working and committed volunteers who will happily show you around and explain things for you. The main gallery is the Norman Cornish Room. The Coming Home exhibition hosts the work of Spennymoor's most famous artist and includes a selection of original pieces of his work, loaned by Northumbria University, the Town Council and the Cornish Family. There is also a large selection of original work by Norman Cornish for sale as well as a range of framed and unframed prints, books, post cards and posters. With video footage of Norman talking about the area and how and why he painted in the way he did playing throughout your visit, this really is an experience not to be missed.

The art gallery displays are complemented by a range of other local and regional artists and individuals who own art, whose work is for sale and who change on a regular basis. You can see who is exhibiting with us, further down.

In addition to lots of Spennymoor folk, people have visited the art gallery from across the County, the Country and as far afield as Germany, Australia and Canada!

Our gallery is an ideal venue, easy to locate, accessible, and with ample free parking to the rear.

Opening Times

Monday – Friday 12:00noon – 4:00pm

Saturday 10:00am – 2:00pm

‘Please note that the gallery will also open its doors to visitors or groups who pre-book outside of these times’.

Why do we require volunteers and what are the benefits they bring?

As the Gallery is a free facility to the public of Spennymoor and the wider community, the role of the volunteer is a very important one, and is there to be the ‘face’ of the gallery and welcome visitors and show them around the gallery; and where relevant explain a little about an artist and their work.

However more importantly it is about providing a welcoming smile and a positive and friendly attitude to our many visitors. Your behaviour will often impact on whether the visitor will make a return visit or recommend us to their friends, family or colleagues. So being friendly, positive and welcoming is so important. We often describe the gallery ‘as a place where nice people come to view art and meet other nice people’, with many of our visitors returning to see our volunteers as much as the art.

Without our hard working and committed volunteers the gallery would not function. It is through their ability to meet, smile, greet and show our customers around the galley that our visitor numbers are now in their thousands.

The gallery’s general aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of the gallery are to present and promote both established and new artists to the public. We have an established Norman Cornish Room where a permanent collection of his work is available to view, as well as work by Norman Cornish for sale from the Robert Heslop Room. While the main focus is about displaying art and making it accessible to the public, clearly sales of art help support promoting and marketing the gallery as well as increasing awareness of the galley to the wider public. Therefore, we are continually trying to create sales to help the individual artists exhibiting their work as well as the gallery itself.

Who are our customers?

Our customers are local, regional, national and international visitors. We encourage everyone to visit the gallery and in particular young children and groups. We welcome all people and provide facilities for those with disabilities.

Who are our Artists?

We have our established Norman Cornish permanent exhibition and work for sale, and to compliment this we generally have around a further twenty other individual artists exhibiting their work and general public owned art. These additional artists can range from highly established artists to the not so well known. We enjoy a large

collection of permanent work 'not for sale' by a variety of artists in the Jim Smith Room as well as Robert Heslop work in the aptly named Robert Heslop Room.

Who selects our artists and how

The Facilities Manager deals with the selection of artists and individuals who wish to sell art based on the Gallery's aims and objectives. Often volunteers will pass on the contact details of artists who have visited the gallery and have expressed an interest to exhibit their work, adverts are also placed for the public to sell their own art work. Also the Facilities Manager will visit other galleries, exhibitions and events where artists are displaying their work. The internet is also a valuable tool to research new and up and coming individual artists and groups. As well as recruiting through the local media.

Roles and Responsibilities of a Volunteer

The roles and responsibilities are quite simple. We require you to be friendly, positive and embrace our team culture. You are expected to smile, meet and greet our visitors and show them around the gallery and where possible explain a little about the artists and their work. But always remember the Facilities Manager is always around and the Facilities Assistants or a member of staff within the office downstairs should you require assistance or help. Also you are giving up your valuable time so we want you to enjoy the experience and hopefully have fun while you are with us.

How do we handle a sale?

We have a set procedure for handling a sale or alternatively if it's a Monday – Friday please refer the customer to the office downstairs where the office staff will deal with it.

What facilities are available to volunteers?

To ensure that you are relaxed and enjoy your time with us we have an office where you have access to a computer. (Please note that you will be required to sign to say that you will comply with the Councils IT Policy prior to usage) – This is to protect both yourself and the Council.

There is a kitchen with a microwave and kettle facilities so that you can make yourself something to eat or drink while you are volunteering. The Council provides tea, coffee, milk, sugar and biscuits. However, please be aware that the kitchen isn't exclusively for the use of the volunteers, so please leave it as you find it.

Volunteer meetings

There are normally a minimum of two volunteer meetings per year where updates and changes of artists are shared together with any news or ideas on how we can improve things. However, please don't wait for a meeting if you have a good idea, let us know as soon as possible as we need to keep things fresh and relevant for the visitors.

Other social activity/events

There are sometimes exhibition preview evenings where we invite the volunteers to meet the new artists and see the work prior to the general public. Our current volunteers are also very sociable and hold a Christmas night out together. So if you have any ideas, we are always keen for a night out.

How does the sales and the artists commission work

The way the sales work is that the artists hang their work, at no cost to the Council. On the success of a sale the Council take the payment in full and then pay the artist the money, less a percentage commission on the sale. This way there is no financial risk to the Council and the artist will hopefully sell a lot of work.

What to do if:

- **I receive a request to purchase an item or painting**
If it is Monday – Friday please refer them to the office with the item to purchase and pay. If it is a Cornish original painting please record their detail on the forms provided in the office and place a red dot on the painting. The Cornish family will arrange the packaging of it for the customer and they pay in the office downstairs when collection takes place. On a Saturday please take cash only payments for anything other than Cornish originals – for these record customer details on the sheet and place a red sticker on the painting and they will be contacted on the Monday to progress the sale.
- **A customer would like to pay by debit or credit card**
Transactions by card can be done Monday – Friday in the office down stairs. This facility is not available on a Saturday.
- **I don't have an answer to a question**
Be honest and say I'm sorry I don't know the answer; however, I will contact someone to find the answer or come and talk to you about your question. Please take a contact number if necessary so we can get back to them with an answer.
- **I feel intimidated or threatened**
Fortunately this is a very rare thing, however should it happen please make your way to the art gallery office and ring the Facilities Manager or the Office immediately and if necessary lock the door and wait for assistance.
- **I'm unable to cover my day**
Firstly if you can, contact another volunteer to see if they can cover or swap. Or alternatively just ring the Council Office and make them aware.
- **I'm going on holiday**
If you can let the Facilities Manager and/or the other volunteers know, then cover will be arranged. Enjoy your break!
- **There is an emergency/fire alarm or building evacuation**
The alarm will sound and you should vacate the building, as will as members of the public, and go to the registration point which is the public toilet area in

the Aldi Car Park. The Town Council staff will manage the evacuation and let you and the public know when it's safe to return.

- **I have a friend or know someone who would also like to volunteer**
This is great news, so please contact the Facilities Manager who will arrange a suitable meeting.
- **Someone asks if they can exhibit their work within the gallery**
Should this happen you can pass them a business card for the Facilities Manager or take their details and pass them onto the Facilities Manager who will make contact with them.
- **I need to make contact with the other volunteers**
Listed in the office are the names and contact details of the current volunteers.
- **I would like to make a visitor a cup of tea or coffee**
If this is what you would like to do, then please feel free to do so. We have no restrictions on you making a drink for a customer, however, please be mindful of the fact that this is something that we can't offer all guests and by doing it for one may upset others. But if it's quiet and that's what you would like to do please go ahead.
- **A visitor would like to make a financial donation**
There is a collection bucket in the Norman Cornish Room for anyone wishing to make a financial donation.
- **Someone would like to sell or have valued 'their own' Norman Cornish Painting**
We don't sell or value other people's Norman Cornish work, nor will the Cornish family.
- **The Art requires hanging for display**
All hanging is done by the individual artist. This can be picture hook hanging or by screwing the art to the wall whichever is most suitable to the artist.
- **I am receiving art donations**
Any art donation should be accepted gracefully and the Facilities Manager should be made aware of all donations contributed to the Art Gallery in the form of art or drawings.

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