

AFC



WIMBLEDON

Volunteer Charter

July 2019

Introduction

1. Volunteers fill many roles at AFC Wimbledon¹ and are a vital and valued part of our Club. They are therefore also ambassadors for the Club, and their actions and behaviour will be judged by other supporters – our own and visiting supporters – as well as by the football authorities and the communities we serve. This Charter sets out the expectations in relation to the conduct and behaviour of volunteers and applies to all volunteers across AFC Wimbledon. In creating this Charter, we aim to support both our volunteers and the Club.
2. The Club relies on the support of volunteers both on a match day and in other roles throughout the year. Some volunteers offer their services regularly, whilst others may have less time to offer, but all volunteers are welcomed by AFC Wimbledon and all are treated equally. The Club undertakes to treat all volunteers with fairness and respect.

The volunteer structure

3. The Volunteer Liaison Officer (VLO) is appointed by the Club to act as liaison between the Club and the volunteers, providing information and support to all volunteers. Any volunteer can contact the VLO by email (volunteerofficer@afcwimbledon.ltd.uk).
4. Most matchday volunteers (those who fulfil their role on a match day) and some non-matchday volunteers have a team leader who oversees their work. If you don't have a team leader or are unsure who your team leader is, then the Club's VLO is very happy to support you whilst you are volunteering.
5. Team leaders may supplement this Charter with specific requirements for their team, e.g. with regard to handling money by programme sellers, customer service expectations relating to shop volunteers, or interactions with match officials and away team staff and players. Team leaders will share their contact details with their team members.

General

6. In addition to any such specific codes or procedures, we ask that all volunteers:
 - support our values,² which cover:
 - a. passion and commitment
 - b. integrity
 - c. open and honest communication
 - d. involving people in decisions
 - e. respecting other people's opinions

¹ AFC Wimbledon (or 'the Club') in the context of this document includes the Academy, the Foundation, the Dons Trust and the Ladies & Girls Section.

² <https://thedonstrust.org/aims/>

- comply with the spirit and letter of all laws and regulations, for example as set out by the relevant football authorities
- comply with health and safety regulations and any contingency or emergency procedures as necessary
- observe any particular codes set out for the area in which you work, e.g. dress codes
- behave with honesty and integrity and protect our confidentiality relating to privileged information
- treat those with whom you come into contact with courtesy, and for some roles in accordance with the necessary customer service standards as set out by the team leader.

Role, attendance and punctuality

7. Each volunteer will agree with their team leader the role they undertake and, where appropriate, the requirements for attendance and punctuality. If you are unable to undertake your volunteer duties, please inform your team leader (or the VLO if you don't have a team leader) at the earliest opportunity as your role may need to be covered by another volunteer.
8. If you are going to be late for your volunteering role, please inform your team leader (and the VLO) at the earliest opportunity. They can then make the necessary arrangements to cover for your delay or absence.

Dress code

9. Some volunteering roles may require you to wear a uniform or smart or protective clothing. Your team leader will be able to advise you on any appropriate clothing for the role you undertake. If there are specific requirements, you are expected to comply with them whilst undertaking your volunteer role.

Confidentiality and use of privileged information

10. Volunteers may, in the course of fulfilling their role, come across information that is not generally available to the wider fanbase or beyond. For some, that can be part of the attraction of volunteering – knowing what's going on at the heart of the Club we all support.
11. However, volunteers must appreciate that such information is often sensitive and needs to be kept confidential for a reason. For example, if an opposition club knew that a particular AFC Wimbledon player was carrying an injury, then that would give them an advantage. Similarly, if through your volunteering you knew a new kit design and launch date, or that there was going to be a move to a new supplier, disclosing those details could impact on the Club's merchandising strategy.

12. We do not want to stop volunteers from talking to friends and fellow fans about what they do at AFC Wimbledon, but please think carefully about what you say, and the impact it could have on the reputation of, or morale within, the Club.
13. If you are in any doubt about whether certain information is sensitive, speak to your team leader, and do not mention it more widely until you have done so and been told that it can be mentioned to others. Particular volunteers (e.g. Dons Trust Board secretariat or shop personnel) may be subject to stricter confidentiality agreements as set out by their team leader.

Communications

14. Most volunteers will be representing the Club in their role, so you should consider the impact of your communications with others. There are several formal and informal ways of communicating, and requirements for these are set out below. You should also bear in mind that even when you are not formally volunteering, others may still perceive you to be in your role as a volunteer and/or acting with some authority on behalf of the Club. In your communications you should always make it clear whether you are acting on behalf of the Club. This can be done by adding to your social media profiles that any views are personal and not those of the Club.

Written communications

15. If you correspond³ on behalf of the Club, perhaps while volunteering in the office or in the merchandise team, you will need to adhere to requirements laid down by the Club and by the football authorities.
16. Correspondence must not contain controversial statements or opinions about organisations or individuals. In particular racial or sexual references, disparaging or potentially libellous/defamatory remarks or anything that might be construed as harassment must be avoided.
17. Any communications from volunteers on behalf of the club should be in line with the Club's style guide and branding policy.

Limited personal use of Club IT systems

18. Volunteers whose role involves using the Club's computer technology may be permitted limited personal use, if such use does not interfere with Club business. Volunteers are expressly forbidden from using Club technology to visit sites which contain material of an offensive or inappropriate nature. The Club retains the right to examine internet usage on Club technology, and its use by a volunteer may be revoked at any time by the team leader, the Club Secretary or a Director.

³ This covers all types of communication on behalf of the Club, including by letter, email, social media and SMS.

19. When using the Club's technology for limited personal use, volunteers must, at all times, avoid giving the impression that they are acting in an official capacity.

Personal use of social media

20. Many volunteers use social media to interact with others, to have conversations and build connections, whether for themselves or as part of their volunteering. The club welcomes the use of social media by volunteers but also encourages them to exercise good judgment and common sense (the EFL guidance in Appendix A offers some good guidelines).

21. Volunteers should avoid social communications that might be misconstrued in a way that could damage the Club's reputation, even indirectly, and are reminded that what they communicate via social media may well become available to be read far beyond their intended audience, including other Club volunteers, your team leader, work colleagues, future employers and social acquaintances.

22. Volunteers are personally responsible for what they communicate via social media (as part of their role or on personal sites).

Data Protection

23. The Club's charter and equality policy,⁴ which is on the official website, has a section on data protection. Whilst volunteering you must treat all data in line with the Club's Data Privacy Policy.⁵

Complaints

24. This Charter sets out the expectations in relation to the conduct and behaviour of volunteers and applies to all volunteers across AFC Wimbledon. It supports and protects both volunteers and the Club. However, we recognise that sometimes things don't go as we would have planned and there may be cause for complaint. The process for complaints is set out in Appendix B and aims to support all volunteers.

⁴ <https://www.afcwimbledon.co.uk/club/club-charter/>

⁵ <https://www.afcwimbledon.co.uk/afcw-privacy-policy/>

Appendix A: EFL guidance on the use of social media

The EFL recognises the growing use of social media (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, YouTube) and its positive effects for clubs engaging with their support, marketing and publicity, and has issued guidelines (which derive from the FA) which apply to anyone using social media on behalf of a member Club. The guidelines are available upon request and are summarised here:

- All comments on social networking sites may be considered by the FA to be public comment.
- Any comments which are improper, bring the game into disrepute or are threatening, abusive, indecent or insulting may lead to disciplinary action.
- Comments about match officials which imply bias, attack the officials' integrity or are overly personal in nature are considered improper.
- Comments which include a reference to a person's ethnic origin, colour, race, nationality, faith, gender, sexual orientation or disability may be considered aggravated and attract a higher disciplinary sanction.
- Re-tweeting another person's post may lead to disciplinary action if the original comment was improper.
- Deleting or apologising publicly for an improper posting, whilst advisable, does not prevent disciplinary action being taken.
- An individual is strictly responsible for any posting on his/her account. Participants should take every care to ensure that others do not access their account as the fact that a posting or comment may have been made by a third party will not prevent disciplinary action being taken against the account holder.
- Care also needs to be taken by participants to ensure that tweets/posts do not breach any relevant regulations or codes of practice of any other body, e.g. the Advertising Standards Authority.

Appendix B: AFC WIMBLEDON COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Volunteers are an integral part of AFC Wimbledon. They carry out essential roles within the Club, and are entitled to recognition and support for the work they do. In return, volunteers agree to perform their roles as requested by the Club and their volunteer group leaders.

AFC Wimbledon values the contribution to the club that volunteers make. If any problems arise, the Club will aim to deal with them in a fair and consistent way, as set out in this Complaints Procedure. Its aim is to encourage volunteers to achieve and maintain satisfactory standards of conduct and performance, while ensuring that the club maintains its commitment to fully supporting the volunteers in the work they undertake, in an environment in which they feel valued and supported. It covers both complaints made about volunteers in the conduct of their roles, and complaints brought by volunteers about their treatment by the club. A complaint about the Club and paid staff should be made according to the procedures set out in the club charter.⁶

COMPLAINTS ABOUT VOLUNTEERS

Informal Procedure

If a minor problem about your performance or conduct (e.g. poor timekeeping or unreliability) is reported, your team leader will hold an informal discussion with you to support you in resolving the problem.

If the problem persists, your volunteer team leader will hold an informal meeting with you, attended by the Volunteer Liaison Officer, to decide on the best course of action. Possible courses of action include:

- making reasonable changes to your role to enable you to carry it out in a better way
- moving you to a different volunteer team and giving you a role that would suit you better.

A timeframe will be agreed within which to address the problem, and progress will be reviewed at the end of the agreed timeframe.

Formal Procedure

If a more serious problem about your performance or conduct is alleged, or there is no improvement in relation to a minor problem that has been addressed informally, then the following formal procedure will be followed.

- a) Investigation. Your team leader and the Volunteer Liaison Officer will investigate the matter and prepare a report for the Club Secretary.
- b) Review meeting. A member of the Football Club Board (FCB) or the Dons Trust Board (DTB) will hold a review meeting with you, along with your team leader and/or the Volunteer Liaison Officer. You will be notified in advance of the allegations that have been made against you

⁶ <https://www.afcwimbledon.co.uk/club/club-charter/>

and given time to respond to them before the meeting takes place. You are entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a friend or colleague.

- c) **Action.** If, following the review meeting, the Club Secretary and the FCB/DTB member find the allegation to be upheld, then they will decide on an appropriate course of action, depending on the severity of the problem. Two possible courses of action are as follows (although they do not preclude other/alternative courses of action):
- to issue a formal warning (to be confirmed in writing) advising you of future expectations, a specified review period (if appropriate) and an indication that the role will be terminated if expectations are not met
 - to terminate your volunteer role with immediate effect (to be confirmed in writing).

Very serious problems

If a very serious problem is alleged, the club may suspend you from your role (and, if circumstances demand, require you to leave the stadium immediately) while the case is being investigated. If the Club Secretary and the FCB/DTB member find the allegation to be upheld, then your volunteering role will be terminated with immediate effect.

Appeals

You may appeal against any formal action taken under this procedure. If you wish to do so, you should put the grounds of appeal in writing to the Club Secretary within 14 days of receiving notification of the formal action. The Club Secretary's decision will be final.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT THE CLUB

AFC Wimbledon always tries to ensure that the volunteering experience is a rewarding one. We endeavour to get things right, but if you feel we fall short of your expectations we want to hear from you. If something is not resolved to your satisfaction, you have a right to make a formal complaint.

All complaints made by volunteers, whether by phone, by letter, by email or in person, will be dealt with as quickly as possible, handled fairly and investigated fully.

Informal Procedure

You should in the first instance make your concerns known to your volunteer team leader. They will try to resolve the matter immediately and informally, but if this is not possible you will be asked whether you wish to make a formal complaint.

If the complaint is regarding your team leader, you should make your complaint to the Volunteer Liaison Officer. If your complaint is regarding the Volunteer Liaison Officer, you should make your complaint to your team leader.

Formal Procedure

If you wish to proceed with a formal complaint, you will need to put it in writing to the Club Secretary. Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing or by phone within 3 working days, and the club will aim to resolve the complaint within 15 working days. If this target of 15 days cannot be met, you will be informed of the delay and the reason for the delay, and of the new target for responding. If the complaint involves the Club Secretary, you may address it directly to the FCB/DTB.

Formal complaints will be dealt by the FCB/DTB, who will carry out an investigation and provide a response within 30 working days.