

Bohemia Walled Garden Association

Volunteering Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in the Bohemia Walled Garden Association (BWGA). It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff, members, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility.

This policy is endorsed by Trustees and will be reviewed annually, to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of The BWGA and its volunteers.

Commitment

The BWGA acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways, that their contribution is unique and that volunteering can benefit users of the garden, local communities and the volunteers themselves. The BWGA values the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate positions and in ways which are encouraging, supportive and which develop volunteering.

Definition

Volunteers are people who are, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community.

Statement of values and principles

Volunteering is a legitimate and crucial activity that is supported and encouraged by the BWGA and is not intended to be a substitute for paid employment.

No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise the organisation cannot be compelled to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability.

Equal Opportunities

The BWGA is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs or offending background that does not create a risk to vulnerable groups including children.

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Training & Development

Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken.

All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to all the organisation's relevant policies, including those relating to volunteering, health & safety, safeguarding vulnerable groups and equal opportunities.

The BWGA Completes risk assessments for all it's activities and volunteers are expected to make themselves familiar with these documents.

Support

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions direct to the Trustees via Email or at the Annual General Meeting.

Expenses

The organisation's volunteers are able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. Any expense needs to be pre approved by a Trustee.

Insurance

The organisation's liability insurance policies include the activities of volunteers and liability towards them.

The organisation does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage

Communications

The organisation communicates with volunteers by email as this reduces cost by avoiding postage. Volunteers are expected to check their email regularly and notify the organisation of any change of email.

Confidentiality

The organisation does hold contact information (name, address, telephone number and Email) about each volunteer and does not share this information with anyone. Access is restricted to Trustees and committee members. All Email communications are sent out using a mail management tool and recipients are "blind copied".

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Health & Safety

The organisation will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the volunteers' health, safety and welfare while volunteering at the organisation's garden in accordance with the Risk Management Policy.

Settling Differences

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The organisation seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution.

The Trustees will assist where possible in handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct and these should be referred to them. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible.

Support will be provided by the organisation to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem. If a volunteer's behaviour is repeatedly or seriously unacceptable, they may be asked to leave the organization.

Rights and Responsibilities

The organisation recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- volunteer in a safe environment
- be insured
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses
- be free from discrimination

The organisation expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
- comply with the organisation's policies