

Bohemia Walled Garden Association Volunteering Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for volunteering with the Bohemia Walled Garden Association (BWGA). It applies 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, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community. Volunteers may be involved in the garden on a one-off, short term or on a longer term, regular basis.

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.

BWGA will never enforce any obligation, contractual or otherwise, for volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks. Likewise, the organisation does not have a duty to provide either regular tasks, payment or other benefit for any activity that a volunteer carries out.

Volunteers offer their time freely and willingly without binding obligation, but within that, there is a presumption that the organisation and the volunteer will show mutual support and reliability to each other.

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.

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 its activities, and volunteers are expected to make themselves familiar with these documents.

Support

Volunteers are invited to share their views, suggestions or concerns directly to the Trustees via email or other contacts that have been provided.

BWGA also encourages all volunteers to come to the Annual General Meeting and make their voice heard.

Expenses

The organisation's volunteers can claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, as long as they can provide receipts as evidence of the expenditure. Any expense must be agreed with and approved by a Trustee in advance.

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. Volunteers are expected to check their email regularly and notify the organisation of any change of email. Additional contacts through other means such as WhatsApp groups or similar will be arranged as required.

Confidentiality

The organisation does hold contact information (name, address, telephone number and email) about volunteers, members and supporters 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".

Any sharing of email addresses or phone numbers between volunteers and BWGA for practical purposes and to make group volunteering easier, will only happen with the explicit prior agreement of each volunteer.

Volunteers who help with administrative tasks and have access to email addresses and other contact information will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement.

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