

# **VOLUNTEER POLICY**

## **Introduction**

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement. It is of relevance to staff, members, and directors of the organisation.

This policy was renewed by the management committee in June 2021 and will be kept under review to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of its volunteers.

## **Commitment**

Volunteers are integral to our work. Inviting the community into our organisation ensures that we have the community's support and input into our activities. Volunteering provides benefits which are above and beyond those supplied by statutory services, and which improve the quality of peoples' lives. Without the involvement of volunteers in this organisation we would not be able to provide the range of services and activities.

Gerddi Bro Dyfi Gardens are committed to working with volunteers to meet its purpose and objectives. Voluntary involvement in appropriate tasks is welcome and encouraged at all levels of the organisation.

## **Values and principles**

Recognises volunteering as a means of fulfilling its purposes.

Values volunteering as an inclusive act of participation that is itself important in promoting the work of the organisation;

Appreciates that volunteering is enjoyable and can change and enrich the lives of individuals.

Successful volunteer involvement takes account of individuals' motivations, aspirations and fulfilment;

Acknowledges volunteering as of wider benefit to society and its beliefs and values;

Will endeavour to match volunteers' skills, knowledge, experience and motivation in a way that best meets the organisation's needs;

Respects volunteers in both listening to and learning from what they have to say;

Values and respects the individual through providing equal opportunities for active involvement within the scope of the organisation's needs and resources;

Values volunteering as integral to its work at all levels and recognises the gifts of time from volunteers as critical to its well-being and success;

Distinguishes volunteering from employment and makes use of its flexibility.

## **Definitions**

A volunteer is someone who, without expectation of financial compensation beyond the reimbursement of expenses, performs a task at the request of and on behalf of the committee. Trustees are responsible for the entire management and structure. It is essential that balanced, effective and mutually beneficial relationships are established between volunteers, contractors,

the public and paid staff. Whilst we cannot operate without volunteers, we do not intend volunteering with us to be a substitute for paid employment.

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, give or be set a minimum amount of time or carry out the tasks provided. Likewise Gerddi Bro Dyfi cannot be compelled to provide regular work, payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly and without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expects of the organisation – as well as attainment of the high standards on which the organisation's reputation depends.

### **Responsibilities**

Gerddi Bro Dyfi acknowledges the need for a clear, consistent organisational framework for voluntary involvement which creates a positive climate for development.

Each volunteer is invited to attend informal organisational meetings and informed of whom to approach for support and have regular access to that person. They are all also invited to monthly Volunteer Meetings to discuss wider strategic planning.

The project co-ordinator is responsible for the effective deployment and development of day-to-day voluntary activity at the garden.

### **Recruitment and selection**

Gerddi Bro Dyfi is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion, political beliefs, sexual orientation. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role is made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks.

Volunteers will be selected on their suitability for the volunteering tasks, matching volunteer's skills and interests with the organisation's needs. There is no lower age limit for the recruitment of younger volunteers provided they are able to make a useful contribution, they are undertaking suitable tasks for which there is no legal minimum age, they are supervised and not left alone, and a parent or guardian has given permission if they are under eighteen.

There is no upper age limit and the organisation recognises the valuable contribution made by older volunteers in terms of knowledge and experience. Volunteers are asked to take on tasks in the weekly organisational meetings. The need and nature of the tasks will be made clear during these meetings.

### **Training and development**

New volunteers are made to feel welcome and are given a registration form. Training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the organisation in order to provide them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks.

The views of staff, volunteers and members will be sought to identify opportunities to develop volunteering

### **Support and recognition**

Volunteers will also be encouraged to contribute ideas and views on the development of volunteer-led services.

Volunteers are able to claim out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts.

### **Conditions of service**

All persons involved are expected to take reasonable care of their own and others health and safety.

The organisation does not insure the personal possessions of volunteers against loss or damage.

Personal information recorded about volunteers is stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality. Volunteers are informed of their rights, under data protection legislation, to have access to personal records.

The organisation advises volunteers of the need for confidentiality where they have access to sensitive information about the organisation which is not public knowledge.

The organisation recognises that volunteers may cease their involvement at any time. Exit interviews are offered to ascertain why a volunteer is leaving, share any learning points and establish whether they may want to be involved again in the future.

### **Settling difficulties**

Gerddi Bro Dyfi aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. The project co-ordinator is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer conduct or complaints. They seek to ensure that volunteer's views are heard, noted, acted upon promptly, and aim for a positive and amicable solution.

### **Rights and responsibilities**

Gerddi Bro Dyfi recognises the right of volunteers to:

Know what is expected of them

Have clearly specified lines of help and support

Be shown appreciation

Have safe working conditions

Know what their rights and responsibilities are if something goes wrong

Be paid expenses

Be trained

Be free from discrimination

Have the opportunity for personal development

And in return it expects volunteers to:

Be reliable

Be honest

Respect confidentiality

Make the most of training and support opportunities

Carry out tasks in a way which reflects the aims and values of the organisation

Work within agreed guidelines and remits.

