



Coedwig
Genedlaethol Cymru
National Forest
for Wales



Gardd Goedwig Gymunedol
naturewise
Community Forest Garden



Cronfa
Treftadaeth
Heritage
Fund



Mewn Partneriaeth â
Llywodraeth Cymru
In Partnership with
Welsh Government

Volunteering Policy

Introduction

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and is relevant to staff, volunteers and directors within the organisation. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the management of volunteers.

The volunteer handbook gives further details about the support and procedures in place for volunteers.

Our commitments

We recognise volunteers as an integral part of Naturewise Community Forest Garden. Without volunteers the five -acre Community Forest Garden would not be able to run. Our Volunteers are integral to the gardens' maintenance and development. This beautiful natural space full of produce and medicinal plants, ponds areas and big views has been created from the start by the consistent work of many volunteers. Volunteers are central to Naturewise achieving its mission and aims. We want volunteers to benefit from being at the garden, which we know has much to offer us all. We aim to encourage volunteers to get the most from their experience with us. We want to support volunteers so that the garden is looked after as best as we are able to, with the resources available to us.

Paid staff will be clear about the role of volunteers and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers. Volunteers will not be used to replace staff.

We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from under-represented groups such as youth, people with a disability, older people and people from ethnically diverse communities.

We recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and will seek to ensure adequate financial and staffing resources are available for the development and support of volunteering.

We recognise that people have a right to participate in the life of their communities through volunteering and can contribute in many ways. We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

What is a volunteer?

What is a volunteer?

Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of our organisation, unpaid and of their own free choice.

The [Welsh Government Volunteering Policy](#) (2015) defines volunteering as activity which

- is undertaken freely, by choice
- is undertaken to be of public/ community benefit
- is not undertaken for financial gain

Work experience placements and internships are not the same as volunteering.

Volunteers

Volunteers may be involved on a one – off, short term or on a longer term, regular basis.

They may be involved:

- in the maintenance and development of the 5 acre community forest garden.
- in community engagement to raise awareness of our work
- in one off events and promotional activities
- doing administration work on behalf of Naturewise
- doing social media work
- in planning for the garden's development and towards the fulfilment of the overall aims of Naturewise

Volunteers are valued for:

- Creating, developing and maintaining the sumptuous forest garden at Parc Teifi.
- Enhancing the quality of our work through the application of their skills and their understanding and knowledge
- Bringing additional and diverse new skills and perspectives to Naturewise
- Enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in our approach
- Championing our cause within the wider community
- Promoting the wellbeing of everyone at the garden, volunteers, staff, local communities and themselves.

Standards of good practice

Our management practice is informed by the [Investing in Volunteers](#) Quality Standard for volunteer management.

Roles and responsibilities

There are currently two members of staff who take responsibility for the development, management and co-ordination of voluntary activity within the organisation and the welfare of volunteers. Claire Turner takes responsibility for the volunteering policies and procedures.

All volunteers will have a designated and named staff member/volunteer for guidance, support and supervision. Staff responsibilities for volunteers will be explicitly referred to in their job/role description.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the organisation to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits.

However, 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.

The organisation expects volunteers:

- To be reliable and honest
- To uphold the organisation's values and comply with organisational policies
- To make the most of opportunities given, e.g. for training, mentoring etc.
- To contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- To carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Volunteers can expect

- To have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- To receive adequate support and training relevant to role
- To be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- To receive out of pocket expenses
- To have opportunities for personal development
- To be recognised and appreciated
- To be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- To know what to do if something goes wrong

Recruitment and selection

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted, in both English and in Welsh and in other languages as appropriate, so as to attract interest from different sectors of the community.

Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate. Online application is encouraged but non-digital methods of application are also available. You can use the Volunteering Wales digital system to manage a shortlisting process or can use it in conjunction with your own application form.

Most people turn up at the garden to volunteer within the garden and this is where we give them information about the kinds of jobs they could be doing. Every week we have a board of jobs and we enquire with volunteers what they would like to do that day- which could also be a mixture of jobs, to suit their changing needs.

Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, including written role descriptions which set out the nature and purpose of the volunteering role, key tasks, skills required and benefits. A risk assessment will be undertaken on all volunteer roles and identified risks and steps to mitigate risks will be shared with the volunteer.

Recruitment for gardening volunteers is informal and we will work with members of the public who come to the garden on a volunteering day and enquires. We give them a tour of the site and an induction. They would be required to fill in an information form so that we have their details, including health and emergency contact details.

Volunteers who offer to do administrative task for Naturewise would need to fill in an application form and will usually involve an informal interview, and the taking of references. The process will be defined and consistent for any given role - for example, the recruitment process for directors, regular volunteers and for volunteers for a one off event will be tailored in each case and may differ from one another.

Where applicants are not able to be placed in their preferred role, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles, or signposted to the local volunteer centre or the <http://www.volunteering-wales.net/> website.

For roles which involve care giving and/or sustained and direct contact with young people or adults in a regulated service, volunteers will be required to have a full DBS disclosure check which will be arranged by the organisation. DBS disclosures are dealt with in the strictest confidence. A criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering. Currently we do not provide care giving.

Induction and training

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

Support and supervision

Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include telephone support, group meetings or one to one reviews.

Recognition

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation via staff and volunteer team meetings, planning events, focus groups and/or volunteering surveys. Formal recognition of the contribution of volunteers is expressed through annual reports, website articles, social media, and during Volunteers' Week award celebrations.

Dealing with problems

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly.

We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty. Where informal resolution is not possible, the organisations Complaints Policy will be adhered to.

Volunteers will be made aware of the organisation's complaints policy and how to use it. They will also be made aware of how inappropriate behaviour by volunteers will be addressed by the organisation.

Expenses

Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim. Volunteers will receive all out of pocket expenses incurred by their volunteering activities. We will only repay bus fares within a ten mile radius.

Moving on

When volunteers move on from volunteering with us, they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully.

Volunteers who have remained with the organisation for at least 3 months will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

Other relevant documents

The Volunteer Handbook includes detailed, useful information for volunteers including template forms.

Organisational policies relevant to volunteers include; Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Confidentiality, Social media, Safeguarding, Complaints, Settling Differences.

Date approved	06/10/2026
Date of next review	October 2026
Person Responsible	Claire Turner

