



Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust

Volunteer Management Policy

Last Updated: 1 May 2024

About this Policy

The Bethnal Green Nature Reserve Trust (the **Trust**) is committed to providing a positive volunteer experience for individuals who want to contribute their time and skills to support our mission. This policy outlines the principles and practices that guide our full volunteer management program lifecycle, including recruitment, orientation, training, supervision, evaluation, recognition, and concluding the volunteer relationship.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that volunteers are recruited, trained, supported, and recognised in a consistent and equitable manner that is aligned with the Trust's values and objectives. This policy aims to:

- A. Attract and retain a diverse and skilled volunteer pool that reflects the many communities we serve.
- B. Provide volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and expectations.
- C. Ensure that volunteers are treated with respect, dignity, and fairness.
- D. Promote a safe and healthy volunteer environment.
- E. Regularly evaluate and improve our volunteer management practices.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all volunteers who contribute their time, expertise, and resources to the Trust on a non-paid basis. It covers all aspects of the volunteer management cycle, including recruitment, orientation, training, supervision, evaluation, recognition, and concluding the volunteer relationship.

3. Volunteer Recruitment

The Trust welcomes volunteers who share our mission and values, regardless of their background, age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law. We strive to create a welcoming and inclusive environment that values diversity

and promotes equity. Further detail on our commitment to this is set out in our [Equal Opportunities Policy](#) and [Anti Racism Policy](#).

Volunteers may be recruited through various channels, such as:

- A. Word of mouth
- B. Local posters
- C. Social media
- D. Website
- E. Volunteer matching websites
- F. Community events
- G. Referral from partner organisations

We will always strive to encourage and nurture interests and curiosities of each individual. Volunteering should always be flexible and in line with the availability and interests of each person that steps forward to be a volunteer.

We as an organisation will always clearly outline the parameters of volunteer engagement, including times of sessions (start / end), staffing and trustee support structures on offer, benefits for volunteers regarding skills, community, and access to the Bethnal Green Nature Reserve (the **Reserve**).

4. Volunteer Orientation and Training

All new volunteers must first attend a welcome / orientation session that will provide the volunteer with an initial task-appropriate overview of the Reserve, including a tour of the relevant facilities and explanation of health and safety protocols.

Where a volunteer intends to return and wishes to become an independent key holder, that volunteer must attend a full orientation and site induction session. At this session, volunteers will also be given a copy of the *Volunteer Handbook* that contains relevant information about the Reserve and further resources including details around governance, health and safety, complaints, and other key policies. Volunteers will be asked to review the *Volunteer Handbook* and complete and sign the Volunteer Registration Form at the back of the handbook.

In addition to the full orientation, volunteers will receive training that is relevant to their volunteer role, such as:

- A. Health & Safety training
- B. Diversity and inclusion training
- C. Other role-specific training inc. habitat management, biodiversity surveying, horticulture

5. Volunteer Supervision and Support

Volunteers will be assigned to a site staff lead who will be their primary point of contact and volunteer supervisor throughout the duration of their volunteering. Each volunteer supervisor is on hand to provide guidance, support, and feedback to their volunteer, and to ensure that their volunteer understands their role, responsibilities, and expectations and has the necessary resources to carry out their duties.

Volunteers will have access to ongoing support and resources, such as:

- A. Regular check-ins with their volunteer supervisor
- B. Peer support groups

- C. Training opportunities
- D. Recognition programs
- E. Social events
- F. Access to free workshops and events

6. Volunteer Development and Evaluation

The Trust believes that volunteering provides a great opportunity for individuals to develop new skills and achieve personal and professional goals. The Trust encourages site staff and management to check in regularly with volunteers to identify areas of interest and greater learning and allow for feedback from site staff / management. A good opportunity for this would be at the beginning and end of each session.

A more formal feedback / evaluation process can also be carried out and can always be asked for by volunteers. An evaluation of this type may be based on various factors, such as:

- A. Access and learning needs
- B. Expanding knowledge in areas of interest
- C. Interpersonal skills development
- D. Adherence to policies and procedures
- E. Health & Safety proficiency

The general check-in and evaluation process is an opportunity for two-way communication and constructive feedback on the volunteer's contributions, areas of interest and future development opportunities volunteering with the Trust.

7. Volunteer Recognition

The Trust values the contributions of its volunteers and as part of the development and evaluation process described above, will recognise them in a meaningful and appropriate manner. Recognition may include:

- A. Verbal appreciation
- B. Certificates of recognition (where appropriate)
- C. Letters of appreciation
- D. Public recognition events
- E. Access to free training, workshops, or events

8. Ending the Volunteer Relationship

The volunteer relationship may come to an end for many different reasons. The most common reason is where the volunteer decides to resign as they want to pursue other opportunities or areas of interest. The Trust can also decide to end the volunteer's engagement at any time, though typically, any such termination will be for a performance related issue, for example:

- A. Failure to meet expectations or requirements of the volunteer role
- B. Failure to follow policies and procedures
- C. Misconduct or violation of policies and/or ethical standards
- D. Safety concerns

Volunteers will be given reasonable notice of termination and will be provided with an opportunity to appeal the decision by following the [Internal Grievance Handling Policy](#).

9. Volunteer Schedules

Volunteering schedules are confirmed annually and will be communicated to all volunteers, ensuring that people can plan for their participation. Additional sessions may be scheduled across the year based on the needs of the Reserve. Any additional sessions and the expectations to volunteer on those days will be clearly communicated with volunteers.

This policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, at least once a year. The Trust will amend this policy, following review, where appropriate.