

Volunteering Policy



Revision History

| Date | Details | Author | Review date |
|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| March 2013 | New policy | John Cliff | April 2015 |
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1. Introduction

- The Triangle Garden is a community garden, created and cultivated by local people of all ages and abilities, in Ransom's Rec, Hitchin. We aim to enable people to experience and explore their relationship with the natural world through a variety of different activities. We want people to feel welcome to get involved in whatever way they feel able.

2. Aims of the Volunteering Policy: -

- To set out the principles and working practices for voluntary involvement in Triangle Community Garden and ensure that best practice is followed
- To provide a reference document which cover all aspects of Triangle Community Garden's relationship with volunteers for everyone who is concerned with recruiting, supporting, developing and managing volunteers and promoting voluntary activities.
- To ensure that volunteer involvement in Triangle Community Garden is understood and accepted by paid staff, volunteers and trustees and there is clarity about why we involve volunteers.

- 3. As a community organisation, Triangle Community Garden welcomes, and benefits from, local people taking on a wide variety of roles with a wide range of intensity of activity, from Trustees, through Growing Ability support volunteers attending on a weekly basis, event and activity organisers to those people who attend for occasional activity days.
- 4. All contributions are valued, however it is not possible, nor appropriate, to apply the same level of support and interaction for those casual volunteers who attend for say one activity session of 2 hours as for those who are regularly committing time and effort to TCG.

TCG will therefore apply the arrangements in this policy and specifically the 6 point standard areas (see below) on a basis commensurate with:

- **The safeguarding needs for a particular role;**
 - **The health and safety needs of a particular role;**
 - **The frequency and duration of the commitment;**
 - **The reasonable expectations for support from those involved.**
- TCG will reflect the above in the role descriptions**

5. **Volunteering** is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of the community, and can take many forms. It is undertaken by choice, without concern for financial gain.

6. **Core values**

- Everyone has the right to volunteer without experiencing discrimination, and Triangle Community Garden has a responsibility to treat volunteers fairly
- Volunteering is a matter of free choice and there can be no compulsion to become a volunteer.
- Volunteering is a valuable and integral part of society and volunteers deserve support and recognition.
- Volunteers assist in effecting social change and improving quality of life, and play an essential role in alleviating the effects of poverty, ignorance, inequality and injustice.

7. Triangle Community Garden recognises the unique and special contribution that volunteers make to society and in particular to the work of this organisation. Volunteer involvement in appropriate tasks and projects is welcomed as it has a positive effect on our services. Volunteers bring a variety of skills and a fresh perspective, adding value to all activities and supporting our sustainability. They have a unique role which is quite different from that of paid workers. They can offer time and passion to a particular project, cause or issue, and by involving volunteers Triangle Community Garden is able to build stronger links with the community in which it works. Volunteers act as ambassadors, promoting the organisations activities and services.

8. Triangle Community Garden:

- Makes every effort to ensure volunteers are not introduced to directly replace paid staff (in some cases this may be unavoidable due to changes in funding)
- expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work
- recognises that volunteering is a two way process, with volunteers giving their time to help, and in return gaining some benefits for themselves.

9. Triangle Community Garden' is working towards being accredited to the Valuing Volunteer Management 6 point promise standard for its involvement with volunteers. This covers the 6 areas below:-

9.1 Planning for Volunteer involvement

- Triangle Community Garden recognises the importance of planning. Volunteer involvement requires the investment of time and resources, particularly for new volunteers.
- Volunteer tasks are developed imaginatively with short term and ongoing opportunities.
- Role descriptions are produced and volunteer tasks are thought out thoroughly before advertising for help.
- When planning new projects, volunteer's expenses are included in budgets so that volunteer activities can be appropriately supported.
- Policies which cover volunteer activities are regularly reviewed by the Board.

9.2 Recruitment and selection

- The recruitment of volunteers follows good practice guidelines.
- Volunteering is open to everyone and Triangle Community Garden is committed to equal opportunities; in its services and in the recruitment of its volunteers.
- Volunteers are recruited using a variety of advertising methods.
- Potential volunteers are contacted promptly by phone, letter or email and recruitment processes are fair, efficient and consistent.
- Volunteers are required to complete a simple application form.
- All prospective volunteers are interviewed to find out what they would like to do, their skills, suitability and how best their potential might be realised.
- Triangle Community Garden will endeavour to ensure that a volunteer is suitable for a role. Where there is a choice of volunteers for a role, Triangle Community Garden will select the candidate based on merit. This might be their relevant experience or knowledge, or previous commitment to the organisation.
- If the volunteer, or Triangle Community Garden, decides that the volunteer task is inappropriate / unsuitable for whatever reason, feedback and discussions will include the opportunity to explore other options.
- Volunteers will be selected and screened for suitability through one or more of the following methods, dependent on the role:-
 - Informal interview
 - References - all volunteers are required to give names of 2 people who can be approached for personal references. Acceptable referees do not include family members, and should have known the potential volunteer for at least 1 year.

- Trial period
- In all circumstances where an individual will be undertaking a **regulated activity** in the presence of children or vulnerable adults an enhanced level DBS check will be required. Refer to DBS policy.

9.3 Induction

- The initial welcome and induction that new volunteers receive is key to their retention
- An information pack will be provided for new volunteers.
- All volunteers will receive an induction relative to their role so that they are prepared for the tasks allocated to them.
- All volunteers will be given a named person to contact
- Triangle Community Garden will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisation and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to our work.
- Growing Ability, New Shoots and Triangle Tribe volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff and are required to sign a confidentiality statement.

9.4 Support and safety

- All volunteers will have a named person as their main point of contact. They will be provided with appropriate support, which will offer opportunities for feedback on progress, discussion of future developments and the chance to air any problems.
- Volunteers are covered by insurance and are included in health and safety policies.
- Out of pocket expenses are met wherever possible and practicalities of expense reimbursement are laid out in the Volunteer Guidelines
- Volunteers not wishing to claim their expenses can donate them back to the organisation. Expenses, other than for travel/phone tec. may be met, providing approval is sought in advance. All volunteers are required to itemise and submit expense claims on a simple, standard form.
- In some circumstances, expenses will be paid in advance with the approval of the Project Manager.
- Rates of reimbursement (e.g. for mileage) will be set and reviewed regularly by the Board.
- Triangle Community Garden will aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage. A procedure covers complaints either by or about volunteers.

9.5 Training and personal development

- Triangle Community Garden recognises that volunteers' motivation for volunteering may change over time and the skills they develop in their

volunteering may change what they want to do.

- Training relevant to volunteer's roles will be provided
- Volunteers' motivations are met with appropriate tasks and those with extra support needs are enabled to volunteer wherever possible.
- Triangle Community Garden recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their tasks effectively.
- Volunteer support/supervision sessions establish volunteers' satisfaction with their current role and identify training needs, suggested changes to the role etc.

9.6 Involving, rewarding and recognising volunteers

- Volunteers contribute to decision making and are fully involved in the organisations activities.
- Team meetings are held which include paid staff and volunteers.
- Newsletters/email updates keep volunteers up to date with the organisations activities
- Volunteers receive appropriate recognition for their efforts. We don't forget the importance of a simple thank you!

10 Publication

- This policy will be available at all permanent Triangle Community Garden locations, on the website www.trianglegarden.org and on request from the Project Manager via info@trianglegarden.org or by writing to Triangle Community Garden, c/o Hitchin Initiative 1A Churchyard, Hitchin SG5 1HR.
- This policy will be issued (electronically or in hard copy) to current and new trustees, staff and volunteers.