

INTRODUCTION

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and is relevant to staff, volunteers and trustees within the Charity (The Eternal Forest Trust known as EFT). 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.

What is the policy for?

This policy provides a set of guiding principles to help with decision making, and in providing a consistent approach and to define the roles and relationships between various stakeholders of EFT.

Definition of volunteering -

The definition commonly accepted across the UK and used by the Welsh Government is:

‘Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship and an essential component of democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community and can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.’

1. Our commitments

We recognise volunteers as an integral part of EFT. Their contribution supports our mission and strategic aims, and complements the role of our Trustees, contractors and staff. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits EFT, its clients and the volunteers themselves.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that Trustees and any paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between themselves and volunteers.

Volunteers will not be used to replace staff. Most of our Trustees are volunteers.

We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer. We do not discriminate on grounds of race, gender, sexuality, or language.

We recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and will seek to ensure that adequate financial and personnel 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 volunteers' time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

2. Standards of good practice

Our management practice is informed by the Code of Practice for organisations involving volunteers and the Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard for volunteer management.

3. Roles and responsibilities

One or two designated Trustees (Volunteer Co-ordinators) will have responsibility for the development and co-ordination of voluntary activity within EFT, including volunteering policies and procedures and the welfare of volunteers.

All volunteers will have a designated Trustee/volunteer for guidance, support and supervision, and their 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 EFT 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 EFT expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of EFT.

EFT expects volunteers:

- to be reliable and honest

- to uphold EFT's values and comply with our organisational policies
- to make the most of opportunities given, e.g. for training
- to contribute positively to the aims of EFT and avoid bringing EFT into disrepute
- to carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- to hopefully gain a sense of fulfilment in working with EFT

Volunteers can expect:

- ☐ • to have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- ☐ • to receive adequate support and training
- ☐ • to be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment. EFT's Public Liability insurance covers volunteers
- ☐ • 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

4. Recruitment and selection

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted, in English and in Welsh, so as to attract interest from everybody. Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate. Applications can be made in person or on line. Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering including an outline of the sort of jobs that we need help with.

Recruitment will usually involve an informal interview, with two or three trustees and a completed application form. The process will be defined and consistent for any given role - for example the recruitment process for trustees, regular volunteers and for volunteers for one off events 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 Volunteering Wales website.

5. Induction and training

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

6. 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 / digital support, group meetings or one to one reviews. **While working in the Wood, at least two responsible people will be on hand - Trustees or manager for example.**

7. Recognition

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with EFT and its members.

Formal recognition of the contribution of volunteers is expressed through annual reports, website articles, social media, and during Volunteers' Week award celebrations.

8. Dealing with problems

EFT 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.
Volunteers will be made aware of EFT's Complaints Policy and how to use it. They will also be made aware of how inappropriate behaviour by volunteers, staff or trustees will be addressed by the EFT.

9. Expenses

Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.

10. 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 EFT for at least 3 months will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

11. Other relevant documents

Organisational policies relevant to volunteers include: Volunteering Policy, Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Data Protection & Privacy, Vulnerable Adults- /Safeguarding, Complaints.-

Date approved _____

Date of next review _____

Person responsible _____ **signed**

Print name

Date of change	Changed by	Policy approved by trustees