



## Canalside Community Food

a community supported agriculture scheme

### **Volunteer Policy**

*A **Canalside Community Food volunteer** is a person who gives time and talent free of charge to work under the supervision of paid staff on defined tasks. Their involvement is to advance the mission of the scheme, and volunteers make a commitment, are accountable to the organisation and are entitled to regular supervision, training and support offered by paid staff of Canalside Community Food.*

*Volunteers act with respect for the beneficiaries of the scheme and for the community.*

**Volunteer involvement mutually benefits both the volunteer and the organisation.**

All volunteers are asked to become a social member of Canalside, costing £24 per year (or £12 per year concessionary rate for those in receipt of state benefits or who self-assess themselves to be in a similarly low-income household). The membership fee covers the whole household. **In a few very exceptional cases the membership fee can be waived.**

### **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

At Canalside Community Food we believe that volunteering should be accessible to all. Canalside Community Food intends to ensure that equality of opportunity is afforded to all volunteers.

No volunteers will be discriminated against or disadvantaged in the recruiting and retaining process, training or in the provisions of services, including (but not exclusively) on the grounds of age, gender, cultural or religious beliefs, different abilities, marital status, racial origins or sexual orientation, physical challenges, class, employment status or HIV status. We will endeavour to establish and maintain a positive working environment where no volunteer feels under threat or intimidated. Breaches of the policy will lead to a disciplinary investigation and possible disciplinary action. Please also refer to our Equality and Diversity Policy.

### **VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT**

Volunteers are recruited directly through Canalside Community Food via the staff team.

Regular volunteering opportunities are advertised on the Canalside Community Food website, in a way that is accessible to all members of the community.

Occasional volunteering opportunities are advertised to the members of Canalside Community Food through the email newsletter and/or through social media.

## **YOUNG VOLUNTEERS**

Young people under the age of 18 years may volunteer at Canalside Community Food:

- with a parent/guardian;
- by themselves under a recognised volunteer scheme, such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

All young people wishing to volunteer at Canalside Community Food independently of their parent(s)/guardian(s), e.g. for their D. of E. award, will be asked to complete a form (which provides basic information that will be handled in accordance with data handling laws) and attend two work mornings with a parent/guardian before volunteering independently. A parent/guardian of young people under the age of 16 years must give permission for their child to volunteer independently. Young people who are aged 16 or 17 years are asked to discuss their volunteering with a parent/guardian and state that a parent/guardian is supportive of their plans.

See also Canalside safeguarding policy

## **VULNERABLE ADULT VOLUNTEERS**

Vulnerable adults wishing to volunteer at Canalside Community Food can do so with a carer/support worker, either as a participant of sessions with the Willows project, or as a Canalside member.

## **INTERVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

### **REGULAR VOLUNTEERS**

For regular volunteering roles that require a level of commitment (i.e. as a volunteer workshare) a comprehensive selection process ensures that all prospective volunteers are invited for an informal chat with the Canalside growers and a trial work day on the Canalside Community Food site. It is important that all prospective volunteers are given the opportunity to explore whether their time, availability and skills match the requirements of Canalside Community Food.

Provided that the growers consider the prospective volunteer to have the necessary skills for the area of work they are interested in, and the volunteer wishes to work with us, a volunteer agreement will be signed.

When it is considered that we cannot offer a volunteer a suitable role at Canalside Community Food, the prospective volunteer will be informed. Where appropriate, it will be suggested that they contact Warwickshire CAVA (Community And Voluntary Action) - <http://www.wcava.org.uk/>, where they may be able to explore alternative volunteer openings.

### **OTHER VOLUNTEERS**

For occasional volunteering roles for specific tasks that are advertised only to the existing members of Canalside Community Food, the task is allocated to the first person/people who declare/s themselves able to complete the task according to the schedule required and who is considered able to fulfil that.

## **VOLUNTEERS INDUCTION**

## REGULAR VOLUNTEERS

All new volunteer workshares should receive an induction programme to familiarise them with:

- The activities of Canalside Community Food
- The people involved in Canalside Community Food
- The workplace
- Health and safety
- Canalside Community Food's volunteer policy

## OTHER VOLUNTEERS

Other volunteers at work mornings or for occasional volunteering roles will receive appropriate health and safety briefings, according to the task being undertaken.

## **PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

For volunteer workshares, there will be a probation period of 2 months, to ascertain whether the volunteer is suitable to work within the team. This will be established by the growers, through working with and supporting the volunteer.

Other types of volunteering are either undertaken as frequently/infrequently as the member chooses, or involve a one-off task as allocated by the growers. For these there is no probationary period.

## **REVIEW AND ONGOING SUPPORT**

Following the volunteer workshare probation period, the volunteer workshare will meet at periodic intervals with the growers at a mutually agreed time to examine the volunteer's satisfaction in the role and their development.

All volunteer workshares should be offered equal access to ongoing support and supervision on a regular basis with the growers/other supervisor (e.g. general administrator). This should provide volunteers with the opportunity to:

- Reflect on/share volunteer experiences
- Share/discuss problems that have arisen
- Discuss any areas of work they wish to develop, expand or change

## **WHAT VOLUNTEERS CAN EXPECT FROM US**

While they don't receive a wage for their service, volunteers do receive multiple benefits from working for our organisation:

- Relevant training
- References, if required for a job application or any other reason
- Support and supervision according to their role
- Relevant insurance
- Relevant out-of-pocket expenses as pre-agreed with the grower/staff team.

## **VOLUNTEERS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**Canalside Community Food recognises the rights of volunteers to:**

1. Know what is (and what is not) expected of them
2. Have adequate support in their volunteering
3. Receive appreciation
4. Volunteer in a safe environment and be insured
5. Know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
6. Receive appropriate training
7. Be free from discrimination
8. Be offered the opportunity for personal development

**Canalside Community Food expects volunteers to:**

1. Be reliable
2. Be honest
3. Respect confidentiality
4. Make the most of training and support opportunities
5. Follow instructions and carry out tasks within agreed guidelines provided by grower(s) or staff member on site
6. Carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
7. Respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
8. Comply with the organisation's policies and follow procedures and standards including health and safety and equal opportunities in relation to its staff, volunteers and members

**VOLUNTEER WORKSHARE AGREEMENT**

Volunteer workshares are expected to sign the volunteer workshare agreement when they start their role. There is no intention for this to be a legally binding document, nor is there any intention to enter into a legally binding relationship. It is an agreement binding in honour only. The sole purpose of the volunteer workshare agreement is to clarify the relationship between Canalside Community Food and our volunteer workshares.

Neither of us intends any employment relationship to be created either now or in the future.

**COMPLAINTS**

Any volunteer may report a grievance in accordance with the Grievance Procedure for volunteers.

If there are any complaints against the volunteer then the grower manager / other supervisor (e.g. general administrator) will discuss the matter with the volunteer and a written record will be kept. A volunteer will have the right to appeal in case of any complaints made against them. For details see the grievance procedure.

**TERMINATION OF PLACEMENT**

We hope that all volunteers will find working with us an enriching experience. However any of the following actions will result in the volunteer being asked to leave by the steering group.

- Theft of property belonging to Canalside Community Food, another volunteer, a paid member of staff or the wider membership;
- Acts of violence towards a member of staff, another volunteer or against wider membership;
- Malicious damage of property (e.g. private property, property of other volunteers);
- Conviction for a criminal offence that undermines a volunteer's suitability;
- Behaviours or an attitude that may cause harm to the reputation of Canalside Community Food, harm to staff members or other volunteers, or that may impair the ability of others to do their work (whether paid or voluntary).

## **INSURANCE**

All volunteers are covered under Canalside Community Food's general insurance, which includes public liability and employer's liability insurance.

## **END OF VOLUNTEER PLACEMENT**

All volunteers will be encouraged by the general administrator to fill in an exit questionnaire. This will help us to develop and improve the future quality of volunteering at Canalside Community Food.

## **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR VOLUNTEERS**

*It is the aim of Canalside Community Food that all volunteers have a positive and rewarding experience while working with us. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that volunteers have a clear channel for airing issues and for making any grievances known to Canalside Community Food staff.*

If you have any problems or issues related to your volunteering at Canalside Community Food, you can raise these at the earliest opportunity with the one of the growers or the general administrator. The sooner we are made aware of a problem, the sooner we can deal with it.

Any issues/problems discussed will be treated as confidential. Any written information regarding the issue or problem will remain in the volunteer's personal and confidential file.

If after first raising the problem or issue with a grower or the general administrator you feel further action should be taken you will be invited to communicate your grievance in writing to [steeringcommittee@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk](mailto:steeringcommittee@canalsidecommunityfood.org.uk) (to be received by members of the steering group). Your grievance will be subject to fair consideration.

Within 30 days of receiving the complaint, an appointment will be made with you to meet with three members of the steering group, appointed as needed.

After the meeting, the three steering group members will decide what other action is appropriate in relation to the specific grievance.

**The meeting between you and the steering group members may be followed by one/some of the following:**

- ◆ Agreeing with you any action that will be taken and the timetable for it.
- ◆ Meeting with other relevant staff or volunteers to try to resolve the issue.
- ◆ Agreeing a monitoring process (further meetings etc to ensure that the issue doesn't arise again).
- ◆ Meeting with you subsequently to report on any action taken.

The decision and additional actions will be recorded and logged in the relevant individual's/individuals' file(s).

Any resolution will take account of the feelings of the parties involved and will be agreed within the policy and practice of Canalside Community Food.

Update: Agreed by the steering group on 14th December 2022

To be reviewed December 2023