

VOLUNTEER POLICY



INTRODUCTION

Knoll Gardens Foundation could not exist without its volunteers.

Recruiting volunteers who are passionate about gardens and gardening in a way that benefits peoples well-being and helps sustain wildlife and the environment is key to the success of the work of The Foundation.

The Knoll Gardens Foundation (The Foundation) recognises that volunteers offer a valuable resource by giving their time and dedication without pay. The volunteer policy aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are retained 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 that volunteers are an integral part of The Foundation and contribute to the success of the gardens. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits The Foundation and the volunteers themselves.

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

We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encourage a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from under-represented groups such as young people over 18, people with a disability, older people and people from ethnic or other minority groups.

We recognise our responsibility to volunteers to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively in order provide a fulfilling voluntary experience to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

WHO IS A VOLUNTEER?

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

Volunteers may be involved in a range of activities on a one-off, short term or on a longer-term regular basis.

They may be involved in any of the following ways:

- ▶ Welcoming visitors to the garden
- ▶ Maintaining the gardens, which may include projects to improve wildlife habitat
- ▶ Labelling plants within the gardens
- ▶ Planning/co-ordinating/carrying out wildlife surveys
- ▶ Contributing to fundraising activities on behalf of The Foundation
- ▶ Collation of plant collections within the garden by maintaining a database
- ▶ Assisting with planning/running events within the gardens
- ▶ Liaison with other organisations on behalf of the Foundation

Volunteers are valued for:

- ▶ Bringing additional skills and new perspectives to The Foundation
- ▶ Enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in our approach
- ▶ Championing our gardens within the community
- ▶ Enhancing the visitor experience

All volunteers will have a designated Volunteer Co-ordinator/Staff member for guidance, support and supervision.

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 Foundation to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement or benefits.

However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what The Foundation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of The Foundation.

The Foundation expects volunteers:

- ▶ To be reliable and honest
- ▶ To uphold the values and ethos of The Foundation
- ▶ To carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- ▶ To promote a spirit of co-operation with other team members within The Foundation.
- ▶ To acquaint themselves with and work in accordance with all appropriate policies, guidelines and procedures including Health and Safety and Safeguarding.
- ▶ To demonstrate appropriate behaviour at all times
- ▶ To respect the right to personal privacy, including the use of photographs on social media platforms.
- ▶ To use their own initiative and follow instructions where needed
- ▶ To use appropriate communication with visitors and answer questions when possible or direct visitors to the



appropriate personnel to find answer

- ▶ To be personable and approachable, and demonstrate a 'can do' attitude
- ▶ To be familiar with layout of the garden
- ▶ To be flexible, volunteers may be asked to undertake range of jobs within the garden and work with different people within the team

Volunteers can expect:

- ▶ To receive regular supervision and support.
- ▶ To have clear information about what is and what isn't expected of them
- ▶ To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- ▶ To be recognised and appreciated
- ▶ To be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unreasonable or unrealistic
- ▶ To know what to do if something goes wrong
- ▶ To receive adequate support
- ▶ To be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- ▶ To have the right to withdraw their volunteering services at any time

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Volunteers will be recruited and selected according to their suitability in helping meet the needs of the planned activities and the ethos and aims of The Foundation. Volunteers should be over the age of 18. Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, including written role descriptions which set out the purpose and nature of the volunteering role.

Recruitment will usually involve completion of an application form, taking of references and an informal interview with at least one of the Trustees and one of the Volunteer Co-ordinators. Volunteer roles which involve supervision of children or have regular contact with children will require a DBS check. 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 roles within The Foundation as appropriate.

SUPPORT

Volunteers will be given an induction to the role, and provided with support and supervision as appropriate.

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

All new volunteers will sign a written agreement, and retain a Code of Conduct which lays out general and specific expectations.

This does not amount to a contract of employment but clearly sets out what either party can expect from the other.

The Volunteer Agreement will specify, without being inflexible, the timetable during which volunteering will take place and the name and contact details of the designated Volunteer Co-ordinator.

