



## Volunteering Policy

### 1. Purpose

This policy applies to volunteers working on behalf of the Guild of St George. The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles for voluntary involvement in activities organised or sponsored by the Guild of St George (the Guild).

This policy is endorsed by the Board of Directors and will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of the Guild and its volunteers.

### 2. Scope

The Guild values the right that people have to enhance the life of their communities and their own lives through volunteering. It acknowledges that volunteers contribute in many ways to activities organised by or on behalf of the Guild, that the contribution can be of unique value and can benefit other participants as well as benefitting the volunteers themselves.

The Guild is committed to involving volunteers in appropriate roles and will continue to support and develop volunteering. The Guild recognises its responsibility to arrange its volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of the volunteer's time is best used to the advantage of all concerned.

### 3. Values and Principles

Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship. Volunteers are people who, unpaid and of their own free will, contribute their time, energy and skills to benefit the community. Their efforts are often essential to the success of charities and public services. As such, volunteering is strongly supported and encouraged by the Guild.

The role of volunteer is complementary to roles played by Companions, paid staff, consultants, artists or craftspeople, adding further richness to the range of benefits these people bring. All those involved in the work of the Guild will understand the importance of volunteers and good working relationships will be sustained. The Guild will strive to provide meaningful & responsible opportunities which are interesting and attractive to volunteers.

The volunteer role is a gift relationship, binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on volunteers to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time to carry out the tasks involved in their voluntary activity. Likewise, the Guild cannot be compelled to provide either regular work or payment or other benefit for any activity undertaken by the volunteer.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged, both of what the Guild expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the Guild.

#### **4. Volunteer Co-ordination**

All volunteers will have a nominated representative of the Guild assigned to them who will offer guidance and advice. Volunteers will be informed of whom to contact to receive support and supervision where this is necessary.

A member of the Board of Directors will have overall responsibility for the development of voluntary activities. This person will be responsible for oversight of the management and welfare of volunteers. However, the day to day management of volunteers will be delegated to officers or representatives of the Guild with responsibility for the agreed area of work.

#### **5. Recruitment & Selection**

- a. The Guild is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, religion and political beliefs.
- b. The acceptance of volunteer assistance for a particular role will be made on merit, the sole selection criterion being the individual's suitability to carry out agreed tasks or to demonstrate notable interest or expertise in a given area of activity.
- c. Any ancillary information about a potential volunteer will be disregarded by the Guild in the recruitment and selection process.
- d. Where working with children or vulnerable people full DBS checks will be made on any candidates being considered for volunteering activity. It will be the responsibility of the Guild officer or representative concerned to ensure these checks are carried out. The Director responsible for overseeing volunteering will receive reports on this process from the responsible officer(s) or representative(s).
- e. Volunteers who are considered unsuitable for a particular task but who conform with the Guild's charitable ideals will either be offered alternative voluntary involvement or signposting to an alternative suitable placement within another voluntary organisation.
- f. All volunteers will be asked to produce two references and will be required to comply with the Guild's recruitment policy
- g. Volunteers will have a clear and concise role description which will be subject to review.
- h. Volunteering opportunities will be widely promoted within the Guild network in ways that makes them accessible to wide sections of the community.
- i. New volunteers will be properly inducted into the organisation.
- j. Volunteers will be properly briefed about the activities to be undertaken and given all the necessary information and equipment to enable them to fulfil their role with confidence.

#### **6. Training & Development**

- a. All volunteers will be made aware of and have access to the Guild's relevant policies and will be offered training specific and relevant to their role.
- b. The development of training and support for volunteers is a high priority for the Guild in terms of equipping them with the necessary information and skills to carry out their tasks.
- c. It will be the responsibility of the designated officer or representative to ensure that this training is provided. It will be the responsibility of the volunteer to attend relevant training offered to them.
- d. Training in the management of volunteers will be provided for those officers, representatives and volunteers who assume supervisory responsibility.

## **7. Support, Supervision and Recognition**

- a. Volunteers will have a named person to whom they can take their volunteering concerns and seek guidance and support.
- b. Volunteers will have access to regular support and supervision. This will enable both the volunteer and the supervisor to identify, monitor and evaluate the volunteer's involvement, recognise achievements and identify individual training needs, including any that are relevant to their particular volunteering role and to their wider personal development. The frequency, duration and format of these sessions will be negotiated between the volunteer and the designated officer or representative.
- c. Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions at meetings or feedback sessions.
- d. The contribution of volunteers will be noted in formal reports, media coverage and information will be submitted to the Charities Commission in the annual return.

## **8. Expenses**

- a. The Guild recognises that the reimbursement of expenses incurred in travelling to and from the place of volunteering or in the course of volunteering is important from an equal opportunities point of view. This is necessary to ensure that all individuals have access to voluntary opportunities.
- b. Volunteers will be able to claim reasonable out of pocket expenses, subject to the production of receipts as evidence of the expenditure. What can be reclaimed from the Guild and the calculation of expenses will be explained to the volunteer before they start any activity likely to give rise to expenses.
- c. The organisation has a consistent and transparent approach to the reimbursement of expenses which are the same for volunteers, staff and representatives, and are approved by the Inland Revenue for tax purposes.
- d. It is the responsibility of the officer or representative of the Guild to make volunteers aware of the procedure for the reimbursement of expenses.

## **9. Insurance**

- a. The Guild's liability insurance policy includes the activities of volunteers. In circumstances where the volunteer might be undertaking specific activities (e.g. driving or providing professional services) where additional insurance cover might be required, this must be discussed with the volunteer prior to the activities being undertaken to ensure that the volunteer has appropriate personal cover in place. Where this incurs an additional expense (e.g. a motor insurance administration charge) this would be reimbursed provided it is agreed in advance.
- b. The Guild does not insure the volunteer's personal possessions against loss or damage

## **10. Confidentiality**

The Guild will advise the volunteer on its confidentiality procedures, where relevant. This would include those relating to personal information held by GCL relating to the volunteer and would fall under the Guild's policy on Data Protection.

## **11. Settling Differences and Complaints**

- a. The Guild aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently and will ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly. The aim will be for a positive and amicable solution based on the provisions of its Complaints Policy.

- b. In the first instance volunteers should discuss any concerns with the individual responsible for providing their supervision and guidance who would be responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct.
- c. In the event of a more serious problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible and the Director responsible informed immediately.
- d. Support will be provided by the Guild to the volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem in an informal manner. If an informal resolution proves impossible, the Guild's wider disciplinary, grievance or complaints policies and procedures (which include volunteers) will be referred to.

## **12. Summary of Rights and Responsibilities**

The Guild 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. have safe working conditions
- 5. be insured
- 6. know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- 7. receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses
- 8. receive appropriate training
- 9. be free from discrimination
- 10. be offered the opportunity for personal development

The organisation expects volunteers to:

- 1. be reliable
- 2. be honest
- 3. respect confidentiality
- 4. make the most of training and support opportunities
- 5. carry out tasks in a way that reflects the Guild's aims and values
- 6. work within agreed guidelines
- 7. respect the work of the Guild and not bring it into disrepute
- 8. comply with the Guild's policies

### **Review**

This document will be reviewed annually or as necessary.

**FEBRUARY 2023**