

South Warwickshire Local Food – Policy

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Volunteer Recruitment

A volunteer is a person who gives time and talent free of charge to advance the mission of the enterprise (South Warwickshire Local Food/ Five Acre Community Food), who makes a commitment and is accountable to the organisation and who is entitled to regular supervision, training and support offered by paid staff of South Warwickshire Local 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 regular volunteers are encouraged to become a social member of Five Acre Community Farm, costing £1 (concessionary) or £2 per month (=£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 and there is no obligation to become a member.

Equal Opportunities

At South Warwickshire Local Food (SWLF) we believe that volunteering should be accessible to all and that everybody has a right to volunteer. SWLF 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, on the grounds of age, gender, cultural or religious beliefs, different abilities, marital status, racial origins or sex 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.

Volunteer Recruitment

We aim to be fair and inclusive in our recruitment and to advertise our volunteering opportunities widely. Volunteers are recruited directly through SWLF and Five Acre Community Farm. Regular volunteering opportunities are advertised on our website, in a way that is accessible to all members of the community. Occasional volunteering opportunities are advertised to the members of Five Acre Community Farm. The publicity indicates what volunteers can gain from being involved as well as what they'll be required to do.

Young Volunteers

Young people under the age of 18 years may volunteer at SWLF:

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

All young people wishing to volunteer at SWLF independently of their parent/s / guardian/s, 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 SWLF safe-guarding policy)

Vulnerable Adult Volunteers

Vulnerable adults wishing to volunteer at SWLF can do so with a carer / support worker. We follow policies to ensure we support vulnerable adults and children who volunteer with us. This includes adequate staff supervision and behaviour guidelines for the staff but we do expect vulnerable adults to be on site with their own recognised carer/support worker.

Interview and Selection Process

For regular volunteering roles that require a level of commitment a comprehensive selection process ensures that all prospective volunteers are invited for an informal chat with the appropriate SWLF staff and a trial work day on site. It is important that all prospective volunteers are given the opportunity to explore whether their time, availability and skills match the requirements of SWLF. Having a criminal conviction will not automatically make you unsuitable for volunteering with us but we may require further checks such as a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Provided that the growers/staff 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 suitable role at SWLF the prospective volunteer will be informed. Where appropriate, it will be suggested that they contact the Council of Voluntary Service, where they may be able to explore alternative avenues. For occasional volunteering roles for specific tasks that are advertised only to the existing members of SWLF (e.g. work mornings), 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 role.

Volunteer Induction

All new regular volunteers should receive an induction programme to familiarise them with:

- The activities of SWLF
- The people involved in SWLF
- The workplace
- Health and safety
- SWLF's volunteer policy

Regular volunteers should fill in a contact form on their Regular Volunteer Agreement (see below).

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

Probationary Period

For regular volunteers, 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. For these there is no probationary period.

Review and Ongoing Support

Following the regular volunteer probation period volunteers will meet regularly with the staff/grower at a mutually agreed time to examine the volunteer's satisfaction and development. All regular volunteers 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
- Evaluate what they are learning in terms of skills gained
- Renegotiate any areas of work they wish to develop, expand or change
- Discuss potential training opportunities.

What Volunteers Can Expect From Us

In return for volunteering you will have supervision on the job and we will provide regular support through review sessions where we check you're enjoying your role. While they don't receive a wage for their service, volunteers do receive multiple benefits from working for our organisation:

- Regular volunteers can expect a produce share in exchange for their work time (from the harvest margin)
- Relevant training
- References, if required for a job application or any other reason

- Support and supervision according to their role

Volunteer's Rights and Responsibilities

SWLF recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- have adequate support in their volunteering
- receive appreciation
- volunteer in a safe environment
- be insured
- know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses
- receive appropriate training
- be free from discrimination
- be offered the opportunity for personal development

SWLF and Five Acre Community Farm expects volunteers to:

- be reliable
- be honest
- respect confidentiality
- make the most of training and support opportunities
- carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
- comply with the organisation's policies
- we do not allow oppressive language or behaviour
- we work in a safe and healthy environment. This responsibility is yours and ours. All accidents and 'near misses' need to be recorded in the Accident Book.
- we aim to set an example of environmentally friendly behaviour in all our activities and volunteers should respect this.

Regular Volunteer Agreement

Regular volunteers are expected to sign the regular volunteer 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. The sole purpose of the workshare agreement is to clarify the relationship between the social enterprise (SWLF) and our workshare volunteers.

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.

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 committee:

- Theft of property belonging to SWLF, Five Acre Community Farm, 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 the social enterprise, 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 SWLF's general insurance, which includes public liability and employer's liability insurance.

End of Volunteer's 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 SWLF.

Grievance Procedure for Volunteers

It is the aim of SWLF 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 SWLF staff.

If you have any problems or issues related to your volunteering at SWLF, 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. In the first instance the growers or administrator will try to resolve the issue by:

- 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.



Any resolution will take account of the feelings of the parties involved and will be agreed within the policy and practice of SWLF. If the growers or general administrator are unable to resolve the issue in this way, the volunteer is unhappy with the resolution or the issue is in connection with the one of the growers or the general administrator, the SWLF steering committee will deal with the issue and the above process will be followed by the committee to try to resolve the issue.

Agreed by the steering group on ~~~~~

Registration and Selection Process

We follow a registration process to ensure that we match up prospective volunteers with roles that suit them. The registration process also ensures that new volunteers understand what South Warwickshire Local Food is trying to achieve and knows about all our projects. For some roles we ask for CRB checks once volunteers have completed their taster periods.

Vulnerable Volunteers

Complaints and grievances

Reviewed by the Steering Committee on :

Review due:

