

Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association

Volunteer Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles by which the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association promotes, manages and recognises the involvement and contribution of volunteers.

The Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association is a registered charity, founded in 1847 to promote the image, understanding and prosperity of agriculture and the countryside, primarily through its hosting of the Royal Norfolk Show, the county's annual two-day agricultural show.

Mission

The Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association aims to educate young people and adults, and to bring people and businesses together through a range of inspiring events, including the Royal Norfolk Show, Norfolk Spring Fling and HarFest, to promote a better understanding of food, farming and the countryside.

Commitment to Volunteering

Volunteers are an established and integral part of the life and success of the Association. The Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association is committed to working with volunteers at all levels of Association activity and welcomes and values their contribution to the achievement of its aims and objectives.

Definition of Volunteering

A volunteer is a person who undertakes unpaid work for the Association freely and by choice without concern for financial gain or other forms of benefit in kind. Volunteers include Members of the Board and Committees, honorary appointees, Royal Norfolk Show stewards and individuals who freely support other Association events.

Volunteering covers all aspects of the Association's work, from participation in governance through membership of the Boards and Committees to the work of volunteers at many different levels throughout the organisation.

Values and Principles

The Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association:

- Values volunteering as integral to its work at all levels and recognises the contribution of volunteers as fundamental to its well-being and success.
- Values volunteering as an inclusive act of participation that is in itself important in promoting the Association's work.
- Appreciates that volunteering is enjoyable and can change and enrich people's lives while bringing wider benefits to society.
- Welcomes volunteers with skills, knowledge and experience to match the needs of the Association and recognises volunteers' motivations, aspirations and their need for fulfilment in being involved in the work of the Association.

Volunteer Relationship with the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association

The relationship of the volunteer to the Association is one bound by trust, mutual understanding and benefit; it is a 'gift' relationship, with time given freely and willingly,

without expectation of financial or other reward by the volunteer. Neither the volunteer nor the Association regards the relationship as a contract of employment.

No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on the volunteer to attend, give or be set a minimum amount of time or carry out the task provided. Likewise, the Association cannot be compelled to provide regular work or benefit for any activity undertaken.

The relationship is based on the principle that volunteers add value to the Association's work by performing a wide range of roles, and by contributing time, specialist skills, and a flexible approach.

Although volunteers offer time freely and willingly and without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged including the attainment and maintenance of the high standards on which the Association's reputation depends and an adaptability to changing requirements.

Responsibility of Policy Implementation

Having been approved by the Board, the responsibility for the day-to-day execution of the policy rests with the Deputy Chief Executive and Show Director who is responsible to the Association's Chief Executive. The Deputy Chief Executive and Show Director has responsibility for the Association's volunteering programme, for the delivery of Association policy and for ensuring the management of volunteers is in line with Association practice and procedural guidelines.

The Association's Expectations of Its Volunteers

The Association recognises that volunteers seek to make meaningful contributions which use their skills and experience, and which provide opportunities for personal development and satisfaction. While respecting that volunteers will seek fulfilment from being involved in a particular aspect of its work, the Association expects volunteers to be committed to its corporate objectives. Volunteers must comply with expected standards of practice, attend training when appropriate and behave with respect towards the Association's members, visitors, staff, and other volunteers.

Volunteers will be expected to respect the Association's need for confidentiality and the sensitive handling of information regarding its work and objectives, particularly where such information is not in the public domain. All work produced on behalf of the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association (including, but not limited to, text documents, databases, photographs) remains the intellectual property of the organisation.

Enrolment, Development and Management of Volunteers

The Association is committed to fair and equitable enrolment, development and management of volunteers.

Enrolment

The Association is committed to equal opportunities and believes that volunteering should be open to all regardless of sex, race, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or age. While seeking to involve people of all ages and ability, the Association reserves the right to specify age limits and to define physical ability to ensure it complies with statutory and other externally imposed duty of care obligations.

The Association will enrol volunteers with the skills, knowledge, experience and values to match its needs and goals. Volunteers will be provided with guidance for the role they are applying for and will be asked to complete a volunteer registration form. Where a specific volunteering task or activity requires it, such as working with children or vulnerable adults, or with cash/finances, references will be sought, and if necessary, a Disclosure check (criminal record and background check) carried out.

Training and Development

The Association is committed to the appropriate training and development of its volunteers. Volunteers will receive induction training when they join the Association, and further training appropriate to their role, during their time with the Association.

Volunteer induction training will cover the aims and objectives of the Association, the organisation of their team, and the purpose and expectation of their role as a volunteer. Volunteers will be included and expected to participate in Health and Safety training.

Recognition

The Association recognises that although volunteers do not seek reward they do appreciate and are deserving of recognition. The Association will recognise the commitment of its volunteers through a range of awards, events and other benefits.

General Management, Communication and Volunteer Relations

Volunteers should be treated fairly and consistently as an integral part of the team. Association staff, at all levels, should seek and follow appropriate routes to ensure volunteers are included in the communication process, both in terms of involvement and participation and in receipt of information.

Volunteers have the right to seek the advice and support of the Association's HR Adviser in all matters pertaining to their relationship with the Association. In the event of a complaint about a volunteer or a grievance by a volunteer, the matter must be handled sensitively in a timely matter, with the volunteer's point of view sought, listened to and included in any action required by the Association.

Staff involved with volunteers should be trained to enable them confidently and competently to involve, support and manage the effective contribution of volunteers.

Health and Safety

The Association has a duty to all staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors and others who may be affected by its activities and it aims to protect all from risks to their health and safety as far as is reasonable.

The Association aims to provide a safe and healthy working environment for all, and employees and volunteers are expected to co-operate fully. The Association will provide the same standard of care for both staff and volunteers. Volunteers have a statutory duty to co-operate with the Association in the implementation of its Health

and Safety Policy and to ensure that they carry out their volunteering work without risk to themselves or others and to report risks to their supervisors.

Procedural Guidelines

Detailed guidelines on the enrolment, selection, training, development, recognition and general management of volunteers are contained in the Association's Volunteer Handbook. Full details of administrative procedures pertaining to volunteer records, insurance, travel/expense claims and protective clothing are also contained within the Handbook.