

Ravenscliffe Community Association

The Gateway Centre

Volunteer Policy



Contents

Page

- History of Ravenscliffe Community Association (RCA)
- Purpose of the policy
- Who the policy applies to?
- Who are the RCA volunteers?
- Why recruit volunteers
- RCA promises
- The value and benefits volunteers bring to the Gateway Centre

- **Responsibilities as a Volunteer**
- **Recruitment process**
- **Volunteer specification**
- **Volunteer Roles**
- **Support and supervision**
- **Recording volunteering**
- **Expenses**
- **Insurance**
- **Equality and Diversity**
- **Health and Safety**
- **Confidentiality**
- **Leaving RCA**
- **Volunteer feedback**
- **Staffing structure**
- **Code of Conduct**

History of Ravenscliffe Community Association

Ravenscliffe Community Association was established 25 years ago to meet the needs of a vibrant community situated in an area of multiple deprivation. The founders of the organisation saw the need in the area and the benefits for the community of being able to come together to discuss issues, create lasting friendships and set up new and varied projects. This was done with the aim of improving the outcomes for individuals and their families to determine a better future for themselves. The ethos of RCA has remained the same after all these years, but the organisation has grown massively, moving from the basement of our local housing office to a state of the art, energy efficient, purpose designed community centre named 'The Gateway' built 10 years ago in partnership with The Children's Society.

The charities objects as set out in 2003 are to:

‘Advance education and to promote facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and other leisure time occupation with the object of improving the condition of life for the residents of Ravenscliffe and Greengates.’



Purpose of this policy

The Volunteer Policy identifies and sets out the principles by which Ravenscliffe Community Association works with volunteers and the benefits it gains from volunteer and the benefits that volunteers are expected to gain.

This policy sets out the minimum standards for recruitment, induction and appointment of volunteers to ensure that both the volunteer and RCA expectations are met. It provides for fair and equal treatment of its volunteers and a framework of standards.

Who the policy applies to?

The policy is for staff that work with volunteers and provides support to volunteer, and for volunteers who provide support within their role and RCA activities. It is useful for partner organisations. This policy will be provided to all RCA volunteers.

Who are the volunteers?

RCA volunteers are people who give their time freely and undertake tasks and activities to support the aims of the Centre, without payment or the expectation of payment. This is a voluntary arrangement and can be ended by either party.

Why recruit volunteers?

The Gateway encourages people from the community to become involved with several of its projects and activities. Whilst the Gateway ensures that we will not use volunteers to replace paid staff the centre does rely on volunteer participation.

Please note that staff family members are not able to volunteer.

The Gateway Promises

- The Gateway will ensure that all volunteers are recruited according to the Gateway's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Volunteering should be an enjoyable experience and so we promise that volunteers will have adequate support from both staff and the volunteer support workers.
- Volunteers will have regular one-to-ones with a volunteer support worker and will have a dedicated contact point for any issues that may arise.
- We have a consistent and clear volunteer recruitment procedure and each and every volunteer will be dealt with fairly and honestly.
- The Gateway promises to listen to their volunteers and to deal with any concerns they may have. We also promise to let volunteers choose what they want to do and to not force them into unsuitable positions.

The value and benefits of volunteering

Volunteers can gain new skills and are offered new opportunities that can be challenging and rewarding, we endeavour to provide a platform for personal growth.

RCA recognises that volunteers are a huge resource in supporting the Board to meet the Ravenscliffe Community Associations aims and objectives.

Volunteers bring a wealth of expertise, knowledge, skills and experiences, they deliver and support many activities, services and events to support the community these include:-

- Face to face work
- Provide contacts and networking opportunities

- Offer specialist skills
- Provide a warm welcome and listening ear



Responsibilities as a Volunteer you should always:

- Arrive on time
- give apologies if you can't attend
- work as part of a team and take an active part
- support each other, listen to others, and try not to interrupt
- be prepared to share responsibilities and information
- ask if you don't understand something or need more information
- carry out what you have agreed to do
- remember, if you are representing the organisation at a meeting or event, that you are speaking on behalf of the Centre and not yourself
- be non-discriminatory and promote equal opportunities.

I should NOT...

- be disruptive or aggressive
- use bad or offensive language
- talk too much
- interrupt or shout
- keep information to yourself
- try to dominate the sessions, activities or meetings
- make others feel inadequate or stupid
- develop conflicts of interest
- undermine staff and fellow volunteers

What about rights?

- be properly inducted to the organisation when you join
- be provided with the help you need to take a full part in your volunteer role
- receive training in the skills you need to be a volunteer
- receive the correct and up to date information in good time
- be consulted and have a voice in decision making.
- everyone should be encouraged to have their say, so if you think decisions are being made by one or two people or the staff are always deciding what happens, say so
- take credit for the work you and the organisation have done
- enjoy yourself

Recruitment Process

Apply

You will be asked to complete an application form and registration form

Invitation to interview

If your application is successful, you will be invited to interview. We will discuss in further detail the role you have applied for and your motives for volunteering with us. We may refer to another organisation if they suit your needs better.

Contact referees

Two references will be taken up as soon as possible in order to minimise delays in the recruitment process. We advise that prospective volunteers inform their referees early to avoid delays.

DBS check

If successful, you will be asked to fill out a DBS form online with us, you will need three pieces of ID and addresses for the last 5 years to complete a DBS (Disclosure & Barring Services) at this stage.

Mandatory training

We will ask you to choose a training date which best suits your availability. We have sessions throughout the year.

Training lasts for two / three hours with refreshments provided.

Training covers

- Fire safety
- Information governance
- Safeguarding, vulnerable adults and children
- Equal opportunities and diversity
- Complaints

Induction

You will then have induction session and be placed with a Mentor

Supervision

We will offer regular supervision throughout your time with the Centre

Volunteer Specification

Skills and knowledge for the roles

- An interest in the needs and welfare of people
- The ability to relate to and engage with people of all ages
- An understanding of the issues in the area
- Enthusiasm and motivation
- Willingness to get involved
- A commitment to equal opportunities and a non-judgemental approach
- Effective listening and communication skills
- The ability to establish and maintain professional and personal boundaries
- Reliability and punctuality
- The ability to liaise effectively with relevant agencies and professionals
- An understanding of the voluntary role and the responsibilities
- A commitment to volunteer with the Service



VOLUNTEER ROLES

We believe that Volunteer Role Descriptions are beneficial to both the volunteer and the Centre .

We hope these descriptions provide any potential volunteers with a clear understanding of the work that they might undertake.

Volunteer Role: [Office Assistant](#)

Reports to: Centre Manager **Number of hours:**2-3 hour sessions

When required: TBC

The Role of the Volunteer will be to:

Answer the phone and deal with enquiries and bookings. Update the diary and noticeboards, type letters, update the volunteer hours list and any inventories, produce spreadsheets and leaflets. Send out invoices and emails. Must be competent with Word, Excel, and the internet. Ability to use PowerPoint would be beneficial but training will be provided.

Volunteer Role: [Publicity and Promotion](#)

Reports to: Centre Manager **Number of hours:**2 hours per week

When required: TBC

The Role of the Volunteer will be to:

To update the website with news, events, volunteer opportunities and room hire details. Ability/willingness to produce a newsletter would be desirable but not essential.

Volunteer Role: [Gardener](#)

Reports to: Community Support Coordinator **Number of hours:**2 hours

When required: TBC

The Role of the Volunteer will be to:

To assist with growing fruit, vegetables, salads and herbs for the community café as well as maintaining the outdoor areas. Tasks will involve planting, feeding, watering, weeding and harvesting.

Volunteer Role: IT – Information Technology

Reports to: Centre Manager **Number of hours:**2 – 4 hours

When required: Any day (training/mentoring will be mainly on Mondays and Tuesdays)

The Role of the Volunteer will be to:

To deal with volunteer enquiries, send out application forms, update role descriptions, interview prospective volunteers, update volunteer details, record volunteer hours, identify and advertise volunteer activities, risk assess activities. Training/mentoring provided.

Volunteer Role: Cook/Kitchen Assistant

Reports to: Café Manager **Number of hours:**2-5 hours

When required: TBC

The Role of the Volunteer will be to:

Prepare salads, baking cakes, prepare sandwiches and hot food. You will have the opportunity to create new items for the menu or simply assist the Café Manager depending on your experience and what you would like to do. Ideally you will have completed a food hygiene certificate but this is not essential.

To put out the tables and chairs, set the tables, clear tables, pass food orders to the kitchen, keep condiments stocked, take payments for food, deliver change to customers and help with kitchen tasks as and when required. Other duties might include clearing the tables, and keeping all areas clean and tidy to maintain excellent hygiene standards.

Volunteer Role: Activity Support Assistant

Reports to: Session Lead **Number of hours:**2-5 hours

When required: TBC

The Role of the Volunteer will be to:

Support activities running in the centre including setting up activities and clearing away equipment after activities. There will be some support of administration and paperwork which is required and support for the person running the session. Volunteers will not be responsible for anyone during sessions and will be given tasks directly from the member of staff in charge of the session. Session might include learning session, play activities, outdoor activities, trips, baking session, literacy sessions and include working with families, including children and adults.

Volunteer Role: [Board Member](#)

Reports to: Chair **Number of hours:** 2 – 3 hours

When required: TBC

Th

Role of the Volunteer will be to:

To become a member of the committee with local knowledge and skills to support the running of the organisation. If you have people and management skills, fundraising experience, able to support groups and the work we currently do along with attending meetings etc

Opportunities - to set up your own group with support from the Association are a possibility come along and have a chat

Support and supervision

The main support for volunteers at the Gateway will be provided by the dedicated volunteer support worker team.

The volunteer support workers are available to talk to any volunteers about any concerns whatever their area of work.

Each volunteer will have a named contact that they will have regular updates with to enable the volunteers to reassess their position in the centre.

Recording volunteering

Every volunteer will be required to complete and sign a monthly record of the hours that they donate to the Gateway.

This is beneficial to not only the Gateway but also to the volunteer as it enables the centre to recognise the individual contribution of each and every person.

Every single hour that you donate to the centre is valued and essential to the ongoing success of the centre.

Expenses

To ensure that volunteering at the centre is assessable to everyone certain expenses will be met by the Gateway (a comprehensive list is available in the expenses policy -

please ask Ebony for a copy). Generally reasonable expenses will be reimbursed but the below list covers the majority;

- Travel undertaken whilst volunteering, i.e. bus fares, petrol, etc
- Cost of protective clothing
- Meal expenses (if working more than 4 hours in one continuous shift and over a meal time)
- Cost of trips and outings
- Training expenses

To claim expenses volunteers need to complete a Volunteer Expenses Form, which is available from Ebony.

Expenses need to be claimed fairly regularly either weekly or monthly and during the same tax year (basically before the following April of the year which the expenses have been made and at least quarterly).

We do need to keep evidence for items such as bus fares so please ensure that you keep any receipts

Insurance

RCA provides Employability and Professional Indemnity cover for all volunteers are covered by an insurance policy whilst they are on the premises or engaged on any work on behalf of the Gateway.

Equal Opportunities

The Gateway is committed to the provision of a service to local people regardless of race, gender, age, sexuality or gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief or disability.

Our equal opportunities policy endorses this commitment for all employees, volunteers and users. No one involved in The Gateway should inflict or suffer racist, sexist or any other forms of abuse or harassment and immediate action will be taken should this occur.

The Gateway feels that having a diverse group of volunteers makes the centre more welcoming and representative of the local community and that a more diverse volunteer population helps to throw up new ideas and fresh approaches.

Health and Safety

The Gateway recognises that the health and safety of all employees, volunteers and users must be paramount.

Volunteers must take reasonable care of themselves and others while volunteering for RCA and follow health and safety advice and instruction given for their role.

All volunteers will have access to relevant training and support and personal safety issues will be a priority for this training.

Volunteers must report accidents and incidents- including near misses that could have led to injury.

Volunteers should not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

Volunteers, as with paid staff will always be advised to withdraw from situations where there is a threat of abuse, aggression or violence towards them.

Any matter that comes to our attention will be investigated and the volunteer given a fair hearing before any action is taken.

If a volunteer has a complaint, they may speak in confidence to the centre manager or a trustee of their choice who will instigate an appropriate response.

Confidentiality and data protection

Volunteers during the course of their work in the centre will engage with other volunteers, staff, trustees and our service users.

It is important and a condition of your continued access to the centre that you keep all personal information on all parties confidential to yourself and not share this with anyone outside the centre.

Such knowledge is on a need to know basis and if you have any concerns about confidentiality or breaches of it, speak to the volunteer coordinator or the centre manager.

Leaving RCA

Our lives change and with that our commitments and you may want to leave, we just

ask that where possible you give notice so that we can ensure support continues for our service users.

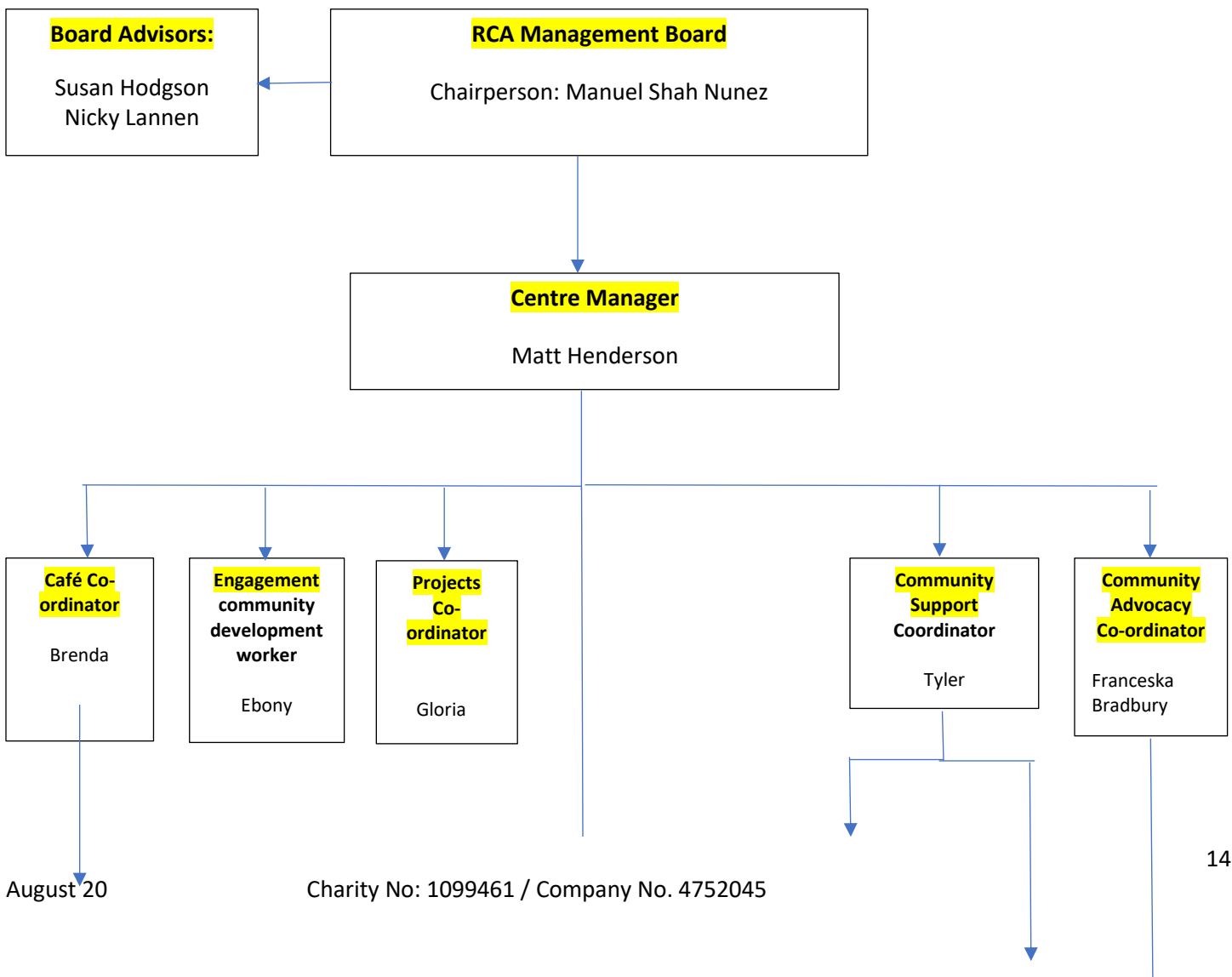
It might be that RCA has cease the volunteering for various reasons and again this would be discussed.

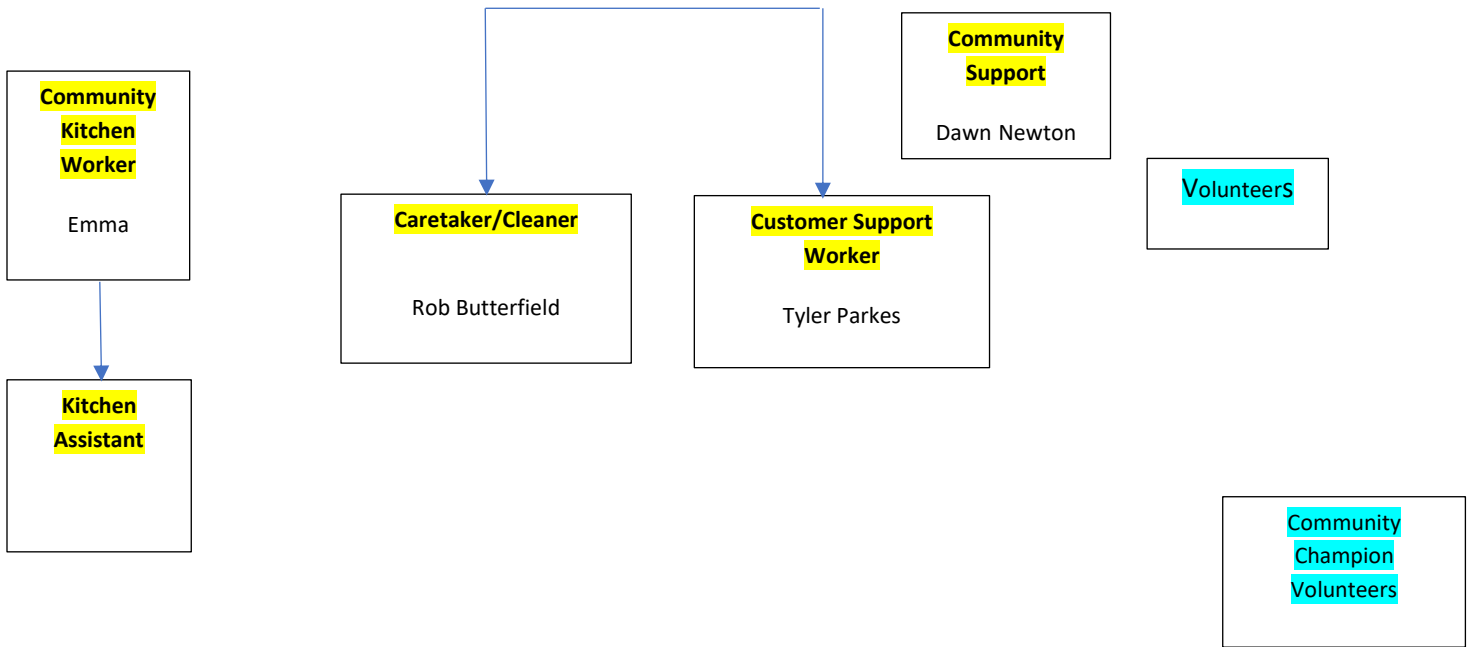
Volunteer Feedback

Volunteers are actively encouraged to give feedback and we provide a range of opportunities from support sessions, to reviews and consultations.

If a volunteer wished to make a complaint, we do have a complaints policy and procedure, which are responded to by the relevant people.

RCA Structure and Staffing





Code of Conduct

- Ravenscliffe Community Association expects a high level of good conduct from its volunteers, its employees and from other centre users.
- Everyone deserves respect and to be able to enjoy the peace, friendship and facilities of the centre without disturbance.
- Volunteers, Staff, Trustees and other users of the centre are required to refrain from offensive language and behaviour, to respect the centre and to avoid damage to the building or to the property of others.
- Everyone will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age.
- Centre users will not display or distribute posters, leaflets or other forms of information that fail to treat all people with respect or which would be likely to cause offence.
- At all times people's feelings will be respected, we recognise and value differences.
- Language or humour that people find offensive will not be used e.g. racist jokes, or comments or jokes that are derogatory

- No one will be harassed, abused, or intimidated on any grounds and incidents of harassment will be treated severely
- If a matter cannot be resolved by way of an acceptable apology and an undertaking that the offence will not be repeated, the following action will be taken: -
 - i) The alleged offender will be asked to leave the centre.
 - ii) In a case involving employees of the centre, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the grievance procedure.
 - iii) In a case involving a member of the community association he or she shall be suspended from membership until such time as the incident can be investigated and resolved