



Group Organiser Guidance

Application guidelines

Before you apply, there are some general principles, information and explanations that we'd like to share to help you make the most of your application:

- **There's a deadline.** Your application should be sent to festival@beltane.org before the deadline. The Blues and the Board are happy to discuss your application in advance, but it must be submitted in its final form, before the deadline! This allows the same time frame for everyone to prepare their proposal and ensures there is enough time after the deadline for decisions to be made and for preparation for the Open Meeting. Late proposals will not be considered.
- **There will be an opportunity to meet with Board members, Blues, experienced and prospective Group Organisers (GOs)** on the Saturday 16th July 2016 at Kilderkin in Edinburgh from 2pm-5pm to discuss your ideas in advance and ask for support (great if you have a fantastic idea and are looking for a another GO!). If you are planning on submitting an application for a core group this is an important chance to discuss your ideas with the Blues and Board members.
- **You may be called to a meeting with the board and Blues to discuss your application further before a final decision is made.** The dates for the interviews are listed on the application form and you will be informed with as much notice as possible if you are required to come for interview. All GOs must attend this interview, if this is not going to be possible please inform the board of this when submitting your application so alternative arrangements can be made.
- **You may submit TWO applications for two different groups.** Please consider this if you're planning to apply for a group that you suspect may be a popular option. Board decisions on groups will be final, so if your application isn't accepted there will not be an opportunity to submit an additional application after the deadline or create a group further on in the process. If we get two applications for the same or very similar groups we will inform both sets of applicants so second proposals can be submitted. Details of who has put in a second application and for which group will not be disclosed to the Board until decisions on first applications have been made so that this cannot influence decision making. If submitting a second application, please make it clear which is your first choice as this will be the one that is circulated to the Board and considered first.
- **Consider fire!** Samhuinn is a fire festival so it is worth thinking about how you may incorporate fire into your performance.
- **Be flexible.** Be aware that being accepted as group organisers doesn't mean that your application is now set in stone – there will still be a lot of work to do to combine all the applications into one single story, and all groups will be expected to have some give and take.



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Bear in mind that your group members will have as much to say on what your group does as you do, this is why we just ask for concepts and themes rather than a full storyline.

- **Be prepared for disappointment.** No matter how totally awesome you think your proposal is or how many times you've done it before it is possible you won't get it. The Board of Trustees will meet to discuss applications on the 1st August 2016 and you may be called for an interview on the 2nd or 3rd of August before a final decision is made. We will let you know as soon as possible afterwards. Applicants will be informed by their preferred contact method before the public announcement is made.

A few general guidelines for application:

- Over 18's only. It's our policy for Membership.
- It's a common misconception to believe that we must have all the groups from last year. Feel free to propose something alternative or to refresh and renew an old character.
- Feel free to contact the Board (festival@beltane.org) and/or Blues (blues@beltane.org) with anything you'd like to discuss.
- You must be available for the following:
 - Board Interview.
 - Group Organiser Weekend.
 - The Open Meeting.
 - Tuesday evenings for Group Organiser meetings in the run-up to the event.

Guidelines for the form:

- Don't be afraid – there are no trick questions. We just want to know your background and ideas so we know how you'll fit into the festival. If you don't understand anything, please ask.
- Keep it short. There will be a lot of applications to read through, so keep it font size 11+ and bullet points. Don't be too specific either, as a lot of things will change between your application and the final event. Keep it broad and interesting.
- GOs are responsible for facilitating a positive and cohesive festival experience for a group of volunteers. We ask for at least TWO fully informed and prepared GOs to be included on this form to ensure that this will happen even if one of you becomes unable to organise the group.



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Recruiting someone from the group is not appropriate as all GOs should be considered and approved by the Board in advance. If you are struggling to find a co-GO please contact us and discuss this with us.

- **Full contact details.** Full name, telephone, email, and preferred contact time and method.
- **Maximum number:** This is the absolute maximum number of people that you would want to have in your group including, helpers, fire tech and so on. If you're unsure about this, please ask us for guidance.
- **Leadership experience.** As it says on the tin: experience in leading groups can be from BFS events or in other situations. You don't have to have been a BFS organiser before – but we'd still like to know of your experience in leading and managing groups in other areas. It won't necessarily count against you if you don't have this experience but it will help us identify where support may be needed.
- **Performance experience.** You don't have to have previous experience in this area but if you have had we'd like to know about it in order to be able to offer support and guidance when and where it is needed.
- **Your summary description of the concept, character and core themes for your proposed group.** Give us a clear idea of your overall idea, the character and main themes that matter most to your group – this is the framework that you are going to ask your volunteers to hang their ideas off. This allows us to get a feel for your idea and how it might fit with the overall story.
- **Interacting with the crowd.** The audience will want to interact with you – how are you going to interact with them? Are you going to have an interactive or passive audience? Are you outgoing or distant? Friendly or hostile? We want the audience to experience something they'll remember and a major part of that is what they see.
- **Recruit your group and lead it.** How are you going to recruit and then select your group? How are you intending to lead it? We have a general policy that this must be in a “cooperative and collaborative environment” - tell us how you intend to create this. Don't be too worried though. The Open Meeting is a fantastic place to recruit your initial volunteers! As well as the Open Meeting, you will be able to request shout-outs on the BFS blog and social media.
- **Specific skills or knowledge.** Do you intend to do specific skills like fitness training, acro, stilt walking or fire spinning? Do you have the skills and knowledge to personally train your volunteers and if not, how do you intend to pass these on to your group?
- **Additional support.** If your group involves fire or is extremely physically-based then we to know as you will may be required to meet with the Health and Safety officer before an agreed date to



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make sure that you are able to put your performance together in a way that is both safe to your group and to the other members of the festival.

- **Money.** It costs money to be in a group. How much do you think group members will need to spend and how would you like to organise this? You could do it centrally and get economies of scale or save yourself the effort and leave it up to the individuals. It's good though to have an idea in advance of what you want to do. When looking at the group budget please bear in mind that there can be 'hidden costs' such as costume and cloaks or props as well as group costs. BFS also offers a subsidy for the paint used by groups on the night of the event. If you are unsure about this please ask for guidance.
- **Minimise risks and instil responsible behaviour.** You're responsible for your group, so what basic things can you do to keep the activities safe and ensure everyone behaves responsibly?
- **Contingency planning.** From time to time things happen to everyone that can not be predicted. It's important to go into your group and the next few months of your lives knowing that if the unexpected were to happen you have measures in place to minimise the effects on the group and the festival. For example, keeping group members informed about the details of the festival throughout the run-up, asking for volunteers from within the group to take more responsibility if absolutely necessary, etc. BFS has many resources and experienced members that can be called on to help. When you're thinking about your backup plans remember you're not expected to take on everything alone and the rest of the production team, the Board and the Blues are all here to provide support if you are to need it.
- **Illness or Disabilities.** Not everyone has the same level of ability and not everyone can access all groups equally. Not everyone has the physical ability to do certain activities or the health to stick to strict attendance regimes. We will not tell you how accessible you should make your group but we would ask you to spare a thought to whom you might be excluding and how you can be more inclusive.