

Beltane Fire Society

Volunteering Policy



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☐ Policies relevant to each section are named and marked with a checkbox.

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1. Overview

This policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers. This document is aimed at being a resource whereby all of the policies regarding volunteers are easy accessed and should be updated regularly to reflect new policies or policy changes.

2. Introduction

Beltane Fire Society (BFS) exists to:

- advance the education of the general public in the traditions of the Celtic lunar calendar fire festivals and their relevance to contemporary culture.
- further an awareness of and promote participation in the Scottish traditions of street theatre, music and pageantry.
- advance the performing arts through the development of skills in professional performance and production within a cooperative and collaborative environment.

It does this by working with a community of volunteers to hold events across the year to mark the quarter day festivals.

BFS is a volunteer-run organisation, committed to involving volunteers directly within the organisation to:

- Contribute to the delivery of our festivals and activities
- Form our board of management and membership
- Make sure we are responsive to the needs of our volunteers and members
- Provide different skills and perspectives
- Share skills and promote awareness of traditions

3. Principles

Beltane Fire Society:

- Recognises that voluntary work brings benefits to volunteers themselves and to BFS.
- Will ensure that volunteers are fully valued and integrated into the planning, running of and decision-making around BFS activity and festivals.
- Expects that contractors of all kinds will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their work.

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- Recognises that volunteers require satisfying work and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their work effectively.
- Will endeavour to identify and cover the costs of involving volunteers.
- Recognises that the management of volunteers requires designated responsibilities within specific posts.
- Will endeavour to involve volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and abilities and ensure our volunteering opportunities are as accessible as possible

4. Recruitment

Recruitment of volunteers will generally be from all sections of the community, and will be in line with the BFS Equal Opportunities practices. Positive action in recruitment may be used where appropriate.

People interested in becoming festival volunteers with BFS will be invited to attend a BFS open meeting, and open group meetings with the appropriate group organiser / contact person. They will be given an information pack including general information about BFS and specific information on the volunteer post in which they are interested. Volunteer Board Members will be given a role specific induction and information pack by the outgoing or current board chair.

All festival volunteers will be asked to complete a simple registration form appropriate to the role that they are interested in once they have formally been accepted into a particular group. Where applicants are not placed in the role applied for, they will be given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles both with BFS, should they wish to - contact the Volunteer Secretary at volunteers@beltane.org if you would like information on any other available opportunities.

Some volunteers with BFS may have greater levels of responsibility - such as group organisers and Blues. They will therefore require a longer selection process and be asked to provide further information about their skills and personal qualities before being asked to take on the role.

All BFS volunteers must be over 18 years of age.

5. Equal Opportunities

Volunteers and contractors will work in accordance with the BFS equal opportunities practices and will prevent discrimination on any grounds and actively seek to remove barriers to inclusivity where possible.

- ☐ Equality and diversity policy
- ☐ Equity of access policy



6. Volunteer Agreements and Voluntary Work Outlines

Volunteers will receive a volunteer handbook and volunteer agreement containing full information about their role and a clear idea of their responsibilities and the volunteer's responsibilities to BFS.

- ☐ (Blue / Court / GO / Festival) Volunteer handbook
- ☐ (Blue / Court / GO / Festival) Volunteer role descriptions

7. Induction and Training

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken. The training given will be specified in their volunteer agreement.

- ☐ (Blue / Court / GO / Festival) Volunteer agreement

8. Keeping up to Date

We aim to keep our membership up to date with what's going on throughout the year with information such as how to get involved in BFS, festival plans, issues affecting our community and opportunities to contribute. There are a number of ways for volunteers to get information about what is happening within the Society.

During the festival your main contact for specific information should be your Group Organiser (GO), if a volunteer, or named contact / Event Coordinator for others.

Website - www.beltane.org - The website publishes important information about the society, alongside snippets of what's going on behind the scenes. The website members section also has a number of our policies and procedures on it which members can and should read.

Email - If you are a volunteer, your email address will be added to the announcements list for the festival. The announcements list is used for important society updates for the entire membership of BFS. Emails are infrequent, and generally cover important information. You can be added to this list by emailing board@beltane.org.

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1557751577581420/> - our main facebook page is currently used to forward updates from the website and post images and general festival information. We coordinate public events via facebook events.

Our members facebook page - [goo.gl/yMLaUA](https://www.facebook.com/yMLaUA) will specifically update members on issues which are internal. We will coordinate many of our internal events via facebook events and Group Organisers may use it to contact their group members.

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Twitter - @beltanefs - Informational updates from facebook / website are generally cross-posted to twitter.

9. Support

Volunteers will be provided with regular support - this may be from the Event Coordinator, Blues, Board, or Group Organisers. Support will provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue about the development of the volunteering role and any advice and guidance as needed. Where the volunteering role is emotionally demanding these sessions also give volunteers the opportunity to access emotional support from the organisation.

This support can be offered in a variety of ways, including:-

- Informal day-to-day support, e.g. checking in with volunteer at the end of each practice
- Regular, pre-arranged group information sharing and support sessions
- Review/development/evaluation debrief sessions at fixed points round the festivals.
- Getting in touch at key points, e.g. after a potentially stressful practice or meeting
- Group support – getting volunteers together to share ideas and experiences
- Peer support – using experienced, long-standing volunteers to support new volunteers.
- Training or skill sharing

Those in a supporting role and volunteers should discuss the ways of providing support that are most helpful at the beginning of a volunteering role.

❑ (Blue / Court / GO / Festival) Volunteer agreement

10. Contact

The Society provides a number of routes of contact for those interested in taking part in the festival or who wish to flag up issues.

Group Placement

If someone wishes to be a volunteer, but has not yet found a group, they should direct queries through the volunteers@beltane.org email address.

If a festival volunteer requires particular information on the festival they should, if they are already within a group, refer most things to their Group Organiser, who will direct the queries to the relevant parties.

Complaints / Issues

If a festival volunteer has complaint they should also, first, bring this through their Group Organisers. If they do not feel they can go through their Group Organisers then this should be sent direct to the

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Blues, via the blues@beltane.org email address, and if they feel this is inappropriate they may send complaints to the Board via board@beltane.org

For GOs complaints should be directed to the Blues. If that is not suitable, then the board may be contacted.

For the Blues, the Board is responsible for handling complaints which they wish to direct at others, if they cannot resolve them informally - the Board should be kept informed on the status of such complaints.

11. Resolving Issues

BFS has several policies to help deal with issues that volunteers may have - the Resolutions policy and Grievance procedure. In line with this policy volunteers have the right to discuss any concerns they may have with their named contact / GO at any time.

If the contact person is unable to resolve the problem they will refer the matter to the Blues and ultimately to the Board of trustees. If the problem is with a GO, a volunteer may bypass them and take an issue directly to the Blues or Trustees who will advise them on how to proceed.

- ☐ Resolutions policy
- ☐ Grievance procedure

12. Volunteers as members

Once a volunteer is accepted into a group or volunteer role, they become members of BFS for a period of three years from the last festival they were involved in (unless you tell us you do not wish to be, by indicating so on your registration form or emailing us at board@beltane.org).

BFS is a membership organisation, and members may attend our annual general meetings, 'blethers' (community discussions on key issues), or stand to be elected as a trustee of our board.

- ☐ Volunteer handbook

13. Expenses

BFS will ensure that there is a clear and accessible system regarding volunteer expenses. This will be outlined briefly in the volunteer handbook, and in more detail in an accessible policy document on request.

- ☐ Expenses policy

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14. Insurance

Volunteers are not covered by BFS insurance, and this will be clearly communicated to volunteers. Volunteers are recommended to get their own insurance to cover performance and practice times - especially those performers doing acro or fire skills training.

15. Health and Safety

BFS will take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the volunteers' health, safety and welfare while volunteering with BFS, in accordance with the Health and Safety policy. However, as set out in the volunteer agreement, volunteers are responsibly for their own safety and this will be clearly communicated. If you have any questions regarding this, or are concerned about a particular aspect of Health and Safety within a group or BFS event please speak to a Group Organiser, Event Safety Officer. Event Coordinator or member of the Board.

- ☐ Health and Safety documents
- ☐ Health and safety policies

16. Records

Minimum details will be kept on volunteers. This will include their registration/application form, role details, crisis contact, correspondence and any other relevant information in accordance with BFS confidentiality and data protection policies.

- ☐ Data protection policy

17. Endings

When volunteers move on from their role with BFS they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully with their contact person, group organiser or a board member if they wish.

On the basis of their voluntary work, volunteers will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

BFS has a policy on how it will deal with any disciplinary issue regarding a volunteer.

- ☐ Disciplinary policy

18. Monitoring and Evaluation

BFS will monitor and evaluate the role of volunteers with reference to this policy.

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THIS POLICY WAS FORMALLY APPROVED BY THE BFS BOARD ON:	14 AUGUST 2017
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