

West Oxford Community Association Policy on Volunteering

West Oxford Community Association welcomes volunteers

Management Committee

Management Committee members are elected annually at the Community Association AGM. When a person is elected to the Management Committee, they become a Managing Trustee of a registered charity (charity number 304353).

By becoming a Management Committee member a person takes on various responsibilities which are described in more detail in the Charity Commission's "Welcome" document.

This document will be circulated to all new Management Committee members at the first committee meeting after the AGM, along with a copy of the Community Association constitution (or governing document).

Charity Trustees are the people who are legally responsible for the overall management and decision making in a charity. They must:

- Keep within the law
- Act only in the best interests of the charity
- Be involved in major decisions
- Take decisions jointly with other trustees
- Be unpaid

Trustees should find out about managing the money, managing people, managing resources, working effectively.

Your Liability as a Trustee

In principle you may be personally liable if your charity loses money as a result of a mistake you have made. However this is unlikely to happen if you have:

- Acted reasonably
- Worked within the governing document and
- Taken proper and appropriate professional advice where you don't know enough to make a decision, or where you are required to by law.

Areas to bear in mind where you may need further advice are contracts or liability for breach of duty. Other types of liability eg public / employers liability should be covered by insurance (assuming you have acted reasonably etc).

The Charity Commission website www.charity-commission.gov.uk is very helpful. So is the Community Matters website (WOCA is a member) www.communitymatters.org.uk

Volunteering to run an activity or help run an activity or to help with general café or administrative work at the Centre

The width and variety of activities that WOCA is able to initiate would be considerably smaller without the input of a substantial number of volunteers. However there is always potential for further activity and for further voluntary activity.

- Voluntary activity is an extremely important component of a strong and active community.

Volunteers are always welcome at West Oxford Community Centre.

There is a wide range of potential for voluntary activity, ranging from practical things like decorating, even cleaning, to working in the Café, supporting the administration of the organisation or running an activity.

All volunteers will receive an appropriate degree of training (usually talking the work through with someone, but potentially also training opportunities like a food hygiene course).

Training is a two way, continuing process. It is important that if any volunteer has a concern or query, they should ask an appropriate person. WOCA has access to a wide range of information and expert advice and will be able to provide relevant information and address issues appropriately.

Anyone working with children or vulnerable adults will be expected to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. WOCA has a Child Protection Policy. A summary of this can be found in the foyer. The full policy can be found on the website www.woca.org.uk or requested from the office.

WOCA expects all volunteers to be aware of and observe Health and Safety issues at all times. Training will include consideration of relevant Health and Safety issues.

Payment for Volunteering

In exceptional circumstances, WOCA is able to pay for “voluntary” work, though this will not normally be possible.

However a volunteer should not be out of pocket, and WOCA will reimburse any reasonable expense incurred on its behalf. Please note that where possible advance agreement for expenditure should be obtained. It is essential that advance agreement is obtained for any expenditure over £20.

Inappropriate Volunteering

If the behaviour of a volunteer is considered to be inappropriate by staff, centre users or committee, it should be reported immediately to the Centre Manager who may, with the agreement of an officer of the management committee ask the volunteer to leave the building immediately.

A range of alternative actions may be applied; a quiet word may be sufficient, but further steps will follow the staff disciplinary process.