



# Volunteer Handbook



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# HELLO & WELCOME

Thank you for offering to volunteer with Colwall Orchard Trust (known as Colwall Orchard Group/COG), a charity that exists to restore, promote and celebrate traditional orchards. COG wishes you a warm welcome as a volunteer and we look forward to and value the contribution you will be making to the group.

Volunteers are an essential part of COG as there are no paid staff. Whatever commitment you can offer it will be valued, and we hope that you will enjoy working with us. This handbook tells you what we do as a group, what you can expect from us and what we hope to expect from you. We aim to be flexible, so please let us know if we can do more to make your experience an enjoyable one.

The culture of COG is one where we want all members to feel valued and supported and where everyone's unique contribution is recognised and respected. We encourage everyone to help and support one another with a positive approach to learning and sharing skills and experience. We value and encourage the participation and contribution of individuals, regardless of age, class, disability, ethnic background, faith, gender and sexual orientation. We recognise that people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions. We believe that life is positively enriched for us all by the diversity of individuals in society and that everyone has a valuable contribution to make.

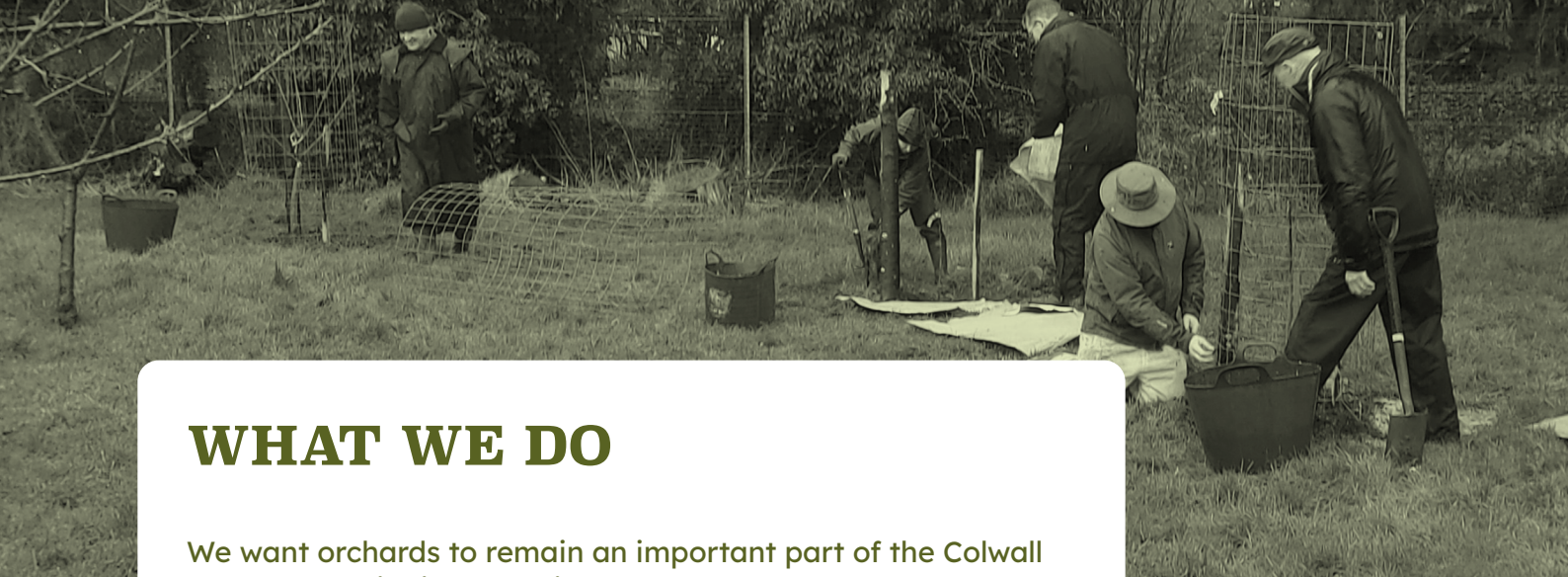
We always want to provide the right, targeted activities and give people genuine ownership over what goes on at COG. In order to help with this, we have guidance through a number of policies and procedures. This allows everyone to feel safe, valued, respected and looked after with an openness about what we expect from one another. This handbook provides an outline of these policies and procedures, but more detailed information is provided on our website. Links are provided to each of these procedures.

Our website [colwallorchardgroup.org](http://colwallorchardgroup.org) provides lots of information about our history, what we do, our governance, news and much more.

We hope you enjoy your volunteering experience with us and we will do all that we can to help and support you in your role.

Lindsay Williams | Chair of Board of Trustees





## WHAT WE DO

We want orchards to remain an important part of the Colwall landscape, bringing benefits for people and nature.

### As a group of volunteers

- We have created, own and manage two community orchards
- We help to look after local orchards
- We enhance our orchards for nature and people
- We run free admission seasonal events to celebrate our orchard heritage
- We share our enthusiasm for orchards through talks, walks and events, including regular sessions for school children
- We teach people practical orchard management skills
- We make and sell apple juice, and we encourage everyone to enjoy sustainable local orchard produce
- We have fun!

### Getting Involved

There are lots of ways in which you can help -

- If you enjoy practical work outdoors, why not join our work parties?
- If you love socialising, why not help organise and run our events?
- If you are a good organiser, we would love some help with behind-the-scenes admin
- If you enjoy cooking, why not help us with our event catering, or making our juice or cakes for volunteer coffee breaks?
- If you love history why not help us research and record our orchard heritage?.

### Volunteering Sessions

We usually run practical volunteer group sessions on a regular basis

- Friday mornings 10am to 1pm - at a variety of locations in and around Colwall
- Some Wednesday afternoons and ad hoc sessions including events
- Regular site maintenance and improvement sessions at Colwall Village Garden run by the Allotment Working Group
- We maintain email circulation lists for these groups and send out invitations to these sessions a few days in advance to provide information about what we will be doing.

### Our Services

- We offer advice on orchard and fruit tree management
- We prune orchard and garden fruit trees at modest rates
- We run events for school children
- We sell fruit trees, ornamental trees and soft fruit at very competitive prices



# GOVERNANCE

## Colwall Orchard Trust

Colwall Orchard Trust is a Private Limited Company by guarantee without share capital use of 'Limited' exemption (No. 07495461) and a registered charity (No. 1142573).

## Colwall Orchard Group

Colwall Orchard Group is the working name for Colwall Orchard Trust, which operates in accordance with its founding Articles of Association and charitable 'objects'<sup>1\*</sup>.

We are run by a small volunteer Board of Trustees, currently:

- Lindsay Williams (Chair)
- Jenny Papettas (Vice Chair)
- Andy Pyle (Treasurer)
- Pam McCarthy (Membership)
- Jilly Rosser (Lead on Orchard Liaison Service)
- Chris Blake (Joint Lead on Health and Safety)
- Clive Killick (Joint Lead on Health and Safety)

The Board employs no staff, but is kindly supported by:

- Lynne Drew (Secretary)
- Sue Armstrong (Allotments)

The Board meets 4 times per year, with occasional working groups set up to facilitate particular activities. We have an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in the spring.

<sup>1</sup><https://colwallorchardgroup.org/governance>



# OUR VOLUNTEER CHARTER

## Colwall Orchard Group will

- Introduce you to volunteering with COG to include this handbook
- Provide you with opportunities for training so that you can carry out your volunteer activities to the best of your ability
- Provide you with a named point of contact (a Lead Volunteer) for all activities undertaken
- Aim to make volunteer activities engaging, informative, entertaining and enjoyable
- Respect your skills, dignity and individual needs and do our best to meet them
- Keep you informed about volunteer activities and opportunities
- Insure you against injury you may suffer or cause due to negligence
- Apply our equality, diversity and inclusion policy
- Address any problems which you report to us
- Carry out risk assessments and act upon them to ensure your wellbeing and safety
- Provide a first aid kit at all activities and events, and wherever practically possible, provide a qualified first aider
- Provide you with the adequate tools and equipment needed for the tasks and advise you about any equipment you may need to provide yourself
- Request that you complete a **Volunteer Information Form (Appendix A)** to provide details of emergency contact details and known medical conditions.

## We expect you to

- Follow COG's rules and procedures, including Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and Confidentiality
- Declare any known health issues that may impact upon your ability to volunteer safely with COG
- Only volunteer with COG whilst not under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Act as an ambassador for COG whilst volunteering with us
- Follow the Code of Conduct (**See Appendix B**)

The charter is an agreement only and is not a legally binding document or a contract of employment.



# WHAT VOLUNTEERS SAY ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH US

A few quotes by volunteers

I enjoy helping out at COG because the group is very welcoming and inclusive. Although my level of expertise and input to the group and its orchard work could be classed as 'complete novice', I do feel that my help is always appreciated. The work each week is varied so I can guarantee that I'll learn something new each time I attend, whether it be a practical skill or just some new terminology. Everyone's love of the outdoors is infectious and I leave each time wondering where the time has gone!

I admire the collaborative and friendly nature of the organisation, and the way the strengths of individuals are put to use whilst acquiring new knowledge and skills.

The features of COG that make this group excellent for me are two fold, firstly the volunteers who are without exception the friendliest and most welcoming bunch of people who care deeply about our local environment. Secondly it's the array of skills these people have and the willingness to share and teach others.

Colwall Orchard Group fosters a welcoming, nurturing, and fun environment in which to volunteer. It has strong leadership, with clear goals for each session, and the other volunteers have a vast wealth of practical knowledge taken from all manner of past and current professions, that is generously shared.

Furthermore, there are opportunities to undertake related training and to learn valuable skills.

# WHAT BENEFICIARIES SAY ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH US

## Colwall Primary School

‘COG have been proactive in setting up a programme of events, throughout the year, for all classes, nurturing the children’s curiosity and enjoyment of the natural world.

The programme involves activities such as apple juicing, pond dipping, mini beast investigation, allotment walks and wild flower identification (in the beautiful wild flower meadow they have reinstated). All led by the wonderful team of enthusiasts and dedicated volunteers, who are willing to share their extensive combined skill set for the good of the community. They do this not only for Colwall Primary, but for two other local schools.’

‘The impact of COG’s work extends beyond physical improvements; it fosters a sense of community and collaboration among parents, staff and pupils. Their passion for enhancing our outdoor spaces has inspired others to contribute, creating a shared commitment to providing a rich learning environment. They have also welcomed the community into the areas that they have lovingly redeveloped in other parts of the village.’

## Colwall Parish Council

‘In the years since COG’s establishment the Group’s achievements have been truly impressive and exceeded what could be expected of a local community organisation, with impacts reaching far beyond the boundaries of the Parish - equally through education, collaborative work with larger organisations and through environmental impact.’

‘The magnitude and impact of COG’s work, as well as its importance for the local community, would truly be difficult to overstate. They raised thousands in grants investing in nature, dug tonnes of soil, affected millions of blooms and bees, produced smiles and continue to change lives and the world around for the better.’





## TRAINING

COG will provide you with opportunities for training so that you can carry out your volunteer activities to the best of your ability. A lot of training is undertaken on site by lead volunteers who each have their own expertise in a particular skill. Other certificated training courses are free of charge, but more specialist ones carry a subsidised fee.

## ESSENTIALS

### Accidents and Incidents

We have clear policies for reporting accidents and incidents for volunteers, whether these occur on our sites or elsewhere. Volunteers must report any accident or incident to a lead volunteer immediately, ensuring no one is left in any vulnerable or unsafe position or place. First aid kits are provided at each activity and trained volunteers should be called to attend. An accident or incident report will need to be completed. In serious or emergency situations, emergency services must be contacted.

### Health and Wellbeing

There are many reasons why you may have volunteered, and volunteering can itself impact positively on your general health and wellbeing. We do need to know if you have any health conditions that may affect your volunteering. These are any physical and mental health conditions together with any medication. We ask that you complete the Volunteer Information Form (Appendix A). All information is treated in the strictest confidence. This will be kept securely and confidentially in accordance with the terms of our GDPR policy. The information provided will be used to help inform emergency first aiders and to contact your designated contact person in the case of an emergency

# LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Our policy, procedures and guidance are available in full on our website Colwall Orchard Group website.

## Safeguarding

Colwall Orchard Group is committed to safeguarding children and adults at risk and will not tolerate inappropriate relationships between volunteers and children or adults at risk.

All volunteers working for COG have a responsibility and duty of care to report any suspicion or concern, and a right to do so in confidence by reporting to one of the COG named Safeguarding Officers.

**COG Safeguarding Lead**

**Phil King**

**Tel – 07774 921597**

**E-mail – [safeguarding@colwallorchardgroup.org](mailto:safeguarding@colwallorchardgroup.org)**



**But do not delay if you believe the situation to be urgent.**

If you, as a volunteer for COG, believe that a child or an adult at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been abused, you have a responsibility to immediately contact:

**Herefordshire Council on 01432 260800 (children) or Herefordshire Adult Services Team on 01432 260715 during office hours.**

If the situation is urgent, outside of office hours contact:

**Emergency Duty team on 01905 768020 or the Police on 999.**

After doing this, please pass details to the Safeguarding Officer named above and email COG at [secretary@colwallorchardgroup.org](mailto:secretary@colwallorchardgroup.org) as soon as possible.

Group leaders, including teachers, of any activities run by COG for children or adults at risk will be informed about our Safeguarding Policy. The Safeguarding Policy will be posted on the COG website to ensure that those wishing to work with us are aware of it.

Safeguarding Policy and procedure:  
<https://colwallorchardgroup.org/governance>



## Code of Conduct

Our policies and procedures are designed for the health and safety of all involved. Our Code of Conduct is aligned with the Safeguarding Policy which take into consideration a trauma informed approach. This code applies to volunteers and sessional workers, the board of trustees or anyone working or volunteering on behalf of COG, as well as anyone attending COG.

Code of Conduct <https://colwallorchardgroup.org/governance> and see attached handout at Appendix B.

## DBS

All volunteers who are involved in leading education, training, events or volunteer sessions will be subject to appropriate DBS checks.

No trustee or volunteer will be expected or permitted to work alone with children or adults at risk. Guidance and training will be provided to help our volunteers avoid being in this situation.

Trustees and volunteers working with children or adults at risk will have sufficient volunteer, parental, or carer support to ensure that they never need to work alone with a child or an adult at risk.

When attending or participating COG events and activities, children or adults at risk must be supervised by a responsible adult such as their parent, guardian, teacher, key worker or an allocated youth group leader from a recognised body (eg registered charity) at a ratio of at least 1:6. Any adults that are identified as needing additional support for volunteer activities, for their own safety or for the safety of other participants, must be accompanied by their carer or guardian to always ensure one to one support.

## Confidentiality and Data Protection

Volunteers must comply with the Data Protection Act and our Data Protection Policy and Procedures where any task you are involved in requires access to the personal details of other volunteers or any other person that you may deal with on behalf of us.

We will keep records of all our volunteers confidentially and solely for the purposes of keeping you informed about volunteering with COG and to deal with any accidents and emergencies as outlined in the Volunteer Information Form. Your information will not be shared with anyone else.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We actively seek to recruit volunteers from all backgrounds, cultures, abilities and ages and aim to ensure that opportunities for volunteering are made available without bias or discrimination.

We treat all people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination with an understanding that all are individuals with individual needs. We respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems (as defined by the Equality Act 2010), and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation. We will challenge bias, discrimination and prejudice.

## Health and Safety

We take Health and Safety very seriously and undertake H&S risk assessments for our volunteer work and have other supporting documents to inform our work activities, such as Safe Ways of Working.

As a volunteer it is important that:

- you carry out tasks in such a way as to not risk your own health and safety or that of other volunteers and the public
- you follow our health and safety policy and procedures
- report any health and safety concerns you may have in good time to your lead volunteer, or if you feel uncertain about anything.

Much of our practical work is undertaken outside. We encourage you to have an up to date vaccination against Tetanus if you wish to join in with our outdoor practical work. See <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tetanus/> for more details.

Health and Safety Policy and Safe Working:  
<https://colwallorchardgroup.org/health-and-safety-1>



## Whistle Blowing

COG is committed to working ethically and to high standards of quality, integrity, accountability and professionalism. We also recognise that there may be occasions where we do not always get things right or that you may have concerns. In these instances, we all have a right and responsibility to speak up.

This whistleblowing policy and procedure applies to all who work and volunteer within COG. It outlines when, and how, to raise any genuine and serious concerns that do not align with these values and the protection you are afforded as a whistleblower.

Whistle Blowing Policy: <https://colwallorchardgroup.org/governance>

## Disagreements, Disputes and Complaints

Although dealing with complaints can be difficult, it can give us a positive opportunity to improve what we offer. We try to deal with these matters informally wherever possible, but there is a formal process.

We have a complaints policy and procedure to ensure that we respond to all complaints, whether informal or formal, and that the complainant sees that we will respond quickly to any complaint. If you wish to make a complaint or you receive a complaint from someone about what we do, please pass this onto your lead supervisor or our complaints trustee

Complaints Policy: <https://colwallorchardgroup.org/governance>

## CONTACT DETAILS

Here are our main contacts details:

Address: Colwall Village Garden, Old Church Road, Colwall WR13 6HB

Postal Address: Colwall Orchard Group, Brookmead, Old Church Road, Colwall WR13 6HB

[secretary@colwallorchardgroup.org](mailto:secretary@colwallorchardgroup.org)

Phone number: Lindsay Williams 07947 869400

# Thank you!

**We can never say  
this enough!**

**We thank you for your  
time, energy, willingness  
and commitment to help  
make things better for  
the environment, wildlife  
and people.**

# APPENDIX A

## TO BE COMPLETED BY ALL VOLUNTEERS



Name	Date of Birth
Address	
Postcode	
Telephone (Home & Mobile)	
Email	
Emergency Contact Name:	
Relationship to you:	
Contact Telephone Number:	
Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or take any medication that we might need to be aware of? For example - allergies, diabetes, special blood group?	

I understand that this information will be kept securely and confidentially in accordance with the terms of the Privacy Policy which can be found on the COG website. The information provided will be used to help inform emergency first aiders and to contact my designated contact person in the case of an emergency.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Data Protection: This form will be held by Colwall Orchard Group and details will be held securely on our database online. It will be accessed by appropriate Lead Volunteers should the need arise. Its purpose is to allow contact to be made with, and up to date information given to, other parties in the event of an emergency involving you. In an emergency, this sheet may be given to the Emergency Services.

This information is sensitive information under the General Data Protection Regulations and is being collected to promote health, safety and wellbeing whilst volunteering with Colwall Orchard Group. Please gain the consent of your emergency contact to use their personal information. Return the completed form to either Chris Blake or Lindsay Williams or return via [volunteers@colwallorchardgroup.org](mailto:volunteers@colwallorchardgroup.org).



# **APPENDIX B – COLWALL ORCHARD GROUP (COG) CODE OF CONDUCT - HANDOUT**

## **The purpose and scope of code of conduct**

This Code of Conduct outlines the behaviour that COG expects from all our volunteers. This includes trustees and anyone who is undertaking duties for the organisation, whether paid or unpaid.

The code of conduct is there to help us protect all from abuse.

COG is responsible for making sure everyone taking part in our activities has seen, understood and agreed to follow the code of conduct, and that they understand the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

## **The role of volunteers**

In your role at COG, you are acting in a position of trust and have a duty of care towards anyone we work with. You are likely to be seen as a role model by people we work with and are expected to act appropriately. We expect people who take part in our services to display appropriate behaviour at all times.

## **Responsibility of staff and volunteers**

You are responsible for:

- prioritising the welfare of children and vulnerable adults
- providing a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults
- ensuring equipment is used safely and for its intended purpose
- having good awareness of issues to do with safeguarding and taking action when necessary
- following our principles, policies and procedures including our policies and procedures for safeguarding, whistleblowing and online safety
- staying within the law at all times
- modelling good behaviour for all to follow
- challenging all inappropriate behaviour and reporting any breaches of the code of conduct to the chair or deputy of the trustees
- reporting all concerns about abusive behaviour, following our safeguarding and child protection procedures, which includes inappropriate behaviour displayed by an adult or child and directed at anybody of any age.

## Respecting children and young people

You should:

- listen to and respect children at all times
- value and take children's contributions seriously, actively involving them in planning activities wherever possible

**If you need to break confidentiality in order to follow safeguarding procedures, it is important to explain this to the child or young person at the earliest opportunity.**



## Diversity and inclusion

You should:

- treat all people fairly and without prejudice or discrimination
- understand that all are individuals with individual needs
- respect differences in gender, sexual orientation, culture, race, ethnicity, disability and religious belief systems, and appreciate that all participants bring something valuable and different to the group/organisation
- challenge discrimination and prejudice
- encourage young people and adults to speak out about attitudes or behaviour that makes them uncomfortable.

## Appropriate relationships

You should:

- promote relationships that are based on openness, honesty, trust and respect
- be patient with others
- ensure your contact with children and young people is appropriate and relevant to the nature of the activity you are involved in
- ensure that there is a designated responsible adult present during activities with children and young people

## Inappropriate behaviour

When working with children and young people, you must not:

- allow concerns or allegations to go unreported
- take unnecessary risks
- smoke/vape, consume alcohol or use illegal substances
- develop relationships with children and young people which would contravene the safeguarding policy and this code
- make promises to children and young people which you cannot keep, given the safeguarding policy and guidelines
- engage in behaviour that is in any way abusive including having any form of sexual contact with a child or young person
- let children and young people have your personal contact details (mobile number, email or postal address) or have contact with them via a personal social media account
- act in a way that can be perceived as threatening or intrusive
- patronise or belittle children and young people
- make sarcastic, insensitive, derogatory or sexually suggestive comments or gestures to or in front of children and young people.

## Upholding this code of conduct

You should always follow this code of conduct and never rely on your reputation or that of our organisation to protect you.

If you have behaved in a way which is outside of this code, you will be subject to our disciplinary procedures. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, you might be asked to leave COG. We might also make a report to statutory agencies such as the police and/or the local authority child protection services.

If you become aware of any breaches of this code, you must report them to the chair or deputy chair of the trustees. If necessary, you should follow our whistleblowing and safeguarding procedures.