

Volunteer Handbook



Contents

1. Volunteering at Saffron Hall Trust

- a. Welcome, from our Chief Executive
- b. How to use this Handbook

2. About Us

- a. Overview
- b. Volunteering starts with you
- c. How do volunteers contribute to Saffron Hall Trust?

3. Volunteer Roles

- a. Event Volunteers
 - i. Core duties
 - ii. What we offer and our expectations of you
 - iii. Things to note
- b. Together in Sound Volunteers
 - i. Core duties
 - ii. What we offer and our expectations of you
 - iii. Things to note

4. Volunteering Agreement

- a. About this agreement
- b. Our duty to volunteers
- c. What you can expect from us
- d. What we ask of you
- e. Additional considerations
 - i. Including confidentiality, equality and diversity, uniform, digital understanding, moving on etc

5. Getting Started

- a. Induction, onboarding, and first shifts

1. Volunteering at Saffron Hall Trust (SHT)

Welcome

This Handbook is for potential and existing volunteers – thank you for your interest and involvement.

Volunteers play an invaluable role at Saffron Hall SHT. For our visitors, audience, and participants, you are the people they will see the most, making you important ambassadors. You also play an integral part in keeping everyone safe.

In 2024, our volunteers were awarded the King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS) – the highest award given to volunteer groups in the UK, recognising their exceptional service within our community.

This Handbook sets out our approach to volunteering – both what you can expect and what we ask of you in return. It is designed to help you navigate your volunteering with us so that your experience is a safe and inclusive one, effective for us, and both meaningful and rewarding to you.

Everyone is welcome here, whatever your background, or experience, and we look forward to receiving your application.

Angela Dixon – Chief Executive

How to use this Handbook

This Handbook has been compiled to help volunteers understand our volunteering culture and expectations, all the while helping you to get the most out of your experience.

The Handbook covers who we are, how we work, and how volunteering relates to our mission. It also provides clarity on the standards and procedures we ask you to follow and uphold as well as what you can expect from us.

Though we encourage you to come to staff and fellow volunteers with questions, we hope it's a useful reference document for you, helping you to 'self-serve' and navigate your volunteering where possible. Additionally, alongside our FAQs section on the SHT website, this document should help answer any key questions you may have.

On occasion, we will need to make changes to this Handbook. When we do, we commit to ensuring volunteers are made aware of these.

If you have questions about this Handbook, please contact foh@saffronhall.com.

2.About Us

Saffron Hall is an award-winning concert hall, uniquely located on the campus of Saffron Walden County High School. Built with the generous support of the Yellow Car Charitable Trust, Saffron Hall has become a vibrant, pioneering model of community cultural provision and arts education since its opening in November 2013.

The Hall is a dual-use space, operating as both the school hall and as a world-class performance space, hosting some of the finest cultural experiences in the country, including both world-class and local soloists, folk and jazz ensembles, and orchestras. Other genres include dance, opera, talks, musical theatre, comedy and pantomime.

Beyond our concerts, our schools and community programme provides opportunities to experience and participate in the performing arts to people of all ages and backgrounds, such as performances, open rehearsals, side-by-side workshops and masterclasses for primary and secondary school students. This includes our pioneering music therapy project for people with dementia and their companions Together in Sound.

Volunteering starts with you

Wherever possible we seek to build our volunteering opportunities around you – what you're passionate about and what you feel you can bring to SHT. We see volunteering as a meaningful, two-way exchange that should be rewarding for you.

We acknowledge that volunteers bring experience we don't find elsewhere, which is why we seek to involve you in many areas of the Trust. We know some of you may also visit the Hall as audiences, live locally, and/or know us personally. We therefore recognise that you have unique insights to bring and as a result, a stake in our success.

For volunteers, we seek to offer a friendly environment with professional standards. Our current volunteers report very high levels of satisfaction; highlighting the social benefits and feeling of personal fulfilment they get from contributing to the ongoing ambitions of SHT.

How do volunteers contribute to SHT?

SHT volunteers fulfil a range of duties, from enabling the safety, security, and experience of our audiences, to supporting how we function and deliver our charitable objectives.

The majority of our volunteers support the running of our events programme, which includes:

- Our own Events
 - Events programmed and presented by SHT.
- Hires
 - Where a local or national organisation pays to hire the Hall for their own performances.
- Learning & Participation Programme
 - Workshops, performances, and music therapy with community groups and schools.

Whilst enjoying or gaining unique access to our events and concerts is one of the common motivations for volunteers, we ask you to remember that the safety and security of the public and participants **must always remain your top priority**. This Handbook sets out the standard we ask you to uphold.

3. Volunteer Roles

Event Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to the culture and running of SHT. Whether acting as a wayfinder within the foyer, showing audience members to their seats, or selling programmes and merchandise, they are often the most visible face of the Hall. Not only are they there to provide a warm welcome, but critically, they work with staff to keep audiences safe and secure whilst on our premises.

Upholding this commitment and being attentive to the needs of guests throughout performances is at the core of this role and though enjoying the performances can be a perk, the safety, security, and enjoyment of visitors is always our top priority.

Core Duties:

- To fulfil a range of stewarding and related functions supporting the smooth delivery of our events (including our own events, hires, and events that fall within our Learning and Participation Programme).
- To support the provision of a warm, welcoming, safe and accessible environment for all visitors, collaborating with other volunteers and working under the guidance of our team of staff.
- To act with professionalism at all times, as a positive ambassador for SHT.

What we offer and our expectations of you:

- We offer a well-trained and well supported role, including shadowing opportunities to help you learn with confidence.
- We expect you to engage fully with the induction process, fulfilling all training requirements and willingly undertaking any periodic refreshers we consider necessary.
- We give all volunteers a clear point of contact at (and outside of) the events at which you volunteer, giving you different means of support and guidance and sharing any issues or concerns. We expect you to familiarise yourself with this Handbook and use our 'Assemble' online platform to book the shifts you want to volunteer for.
- We expect you to always act professionally with visitors and to respect your colleagues – other volunteers and staff – working within the spirit of the policies and values of SHT, as laid out in this Handbook and Volunteer Agreement.
- SHT is an arts and education charity. One of our primary purposes is to support local community groups and schools. It is therefore an expectation of ours that all SHT Event Volunteers sign up for a variety of events, including schools and community groups. We're aware that everyone's availability may differ, but we expect each volunteer to sign up for at least one of these events per year.
- We offer, as part of the event volunteer role, the opportunity to experience world-class performances from a diverse range of artists and genres.

Things to note:

- Those of you new to Event Volunteering may not be aware of both the physical and mental demands that come with the role. Therefore, please see below:
 - During an event, all volunteers are required to stand for prolonged periods of time (this can be up to 1-2 hours at a time).
 - Some roles may require you to work in different areas of the venue within the same event, so expect your step count to take a bit of a hit!
 - Some roles will require you to fulfil a role upstairs. Whilst we do have a lift available, this will not run in an evacuation. So, where possible, all stewards need to be able to comfortably and safely, ascend and descend our venue's staircases.
 - Most roles will require you to use a radio. You must be able to use it correctly and confidently to fulfil an evacuation role. Training will be provided during your induction.
 - Some roles will require you to handle money and use a card machine.
 - Volunteers are expected to know the seating plan of the Hall and be able to guide audience members to the appropriate entrance.
- The principal duty of an Event Volunteer is to safely evacuate the building, should it be necessary. Of course, you will be trained how to do so, however, if we feel that you are no longer capable of doing this in a safe and timely manner, we may ask you to step down from your duty as an Event Volunteer.
- Please note, if you do not volunteer for an event for three months or more, you will not be able to volunteer at an event again without attending refresher training.

We are happy to discuss individual requirements, at recruitment stage and throughout the volunteer journey, and will make reasonable adjustments and allowances to the above where possible. However, the safety, security, and wellbeing of everyone present at our event is our priority.

Together in Sound (TiS) Volunteers

Together in Sound is a partnership project with Anglia Ruskin University for SHT's project for people living with dementia and their companions. SHT staff and volunteers provide all administrative and logistical arrangements for the project, with Anglia Ruskin leading on the music and music therapy content, which is delivered by both qualified and trainee music therapists.

Sessions take place on Fridays during term time at the Salvation Army Hall, Abbey Lane, Saffron Walden with several groups meeting during the day. Volunteer cover is divided into two shifts on a Friday, 9am to 12.30pm, and 12.30pm to 4pm, with two volunteers covering each shift. Volunteers are also required for termly sharing events which take place in Saffron Hall.

Due to the nature of the project our group of Together in Sound volunteers are often contacted and communicated with separately from Event volunteers, although many do of course volunteer for both types of activities.

Core Duties:

- To collect keys and registers/project materials from the SHT office and return them at the end of the day.
- To unlock and prepare the venue for the group session including:
 - Unlocking car park bollards
 - Setting out reserved parking signs
 - Checking fire exits and toilet access
 - Supporting the Music Therapist to set up instruments and therapy space as required
- To greet participants and provide tea and coffee on arrival, providing a welcoming and friendly environment throughout the session
- To top up refreshment supplies on occasion as provided (petty cash is provided!)
- To pack down the venue including wiping surfaces and general cleaning/tidying as required and returning furniture to original positions
- To provide first aid cover where applicable (1 volunteer per session is a trained first aider)

What we offer and our expectations of you:

- We will provide introductory and regular refresher training, including an introduction to music therapy, working with people living with dementia, relevant safeguarding information as well as covering the practicalities of working in the venue.
- We will provide clear instructions and checklists for working in the venue and will provide a designated point of contact and structure for reporting any issues or concerns.
- We expect TiS volunteers to provide a warm, friendly welcome and support the creation of the inclusive, compassionate and understanding environment which is at the heart of the ethos and values of TiS.

- We expect TiS volunteers to carefully follow the checklists and guidance provided to help ensure that SHT is fulfilling the requirements of its term of hire of the venue.
- We expect TiS volunteers to maintain confidentiality of participants, and to report any concerns appropriately (please see further notes below).

Things to note:

- Volunteers are not expected to have Duty of Care or be responsible for participants – the expectation is that people living with dementia are always accompanied by a companion, and that participant pairs are able to attend independently.
- Volunteers should not expect to provide physical support to participants when standing/sitting or moving between session spaces.
- Should volunteers see or hear anything which causes concern about a participants' wellbeing they should refer to the lead Music Therapist or to SHT's Designated Lead – basic safeguarding will be covered in initial and refresher training.
- TiS music therapy sessions are a closed environment for the groups – volunteers do not attend the music therapy part of the sessions, which take place in a separate room from the refreshments area.
- Notwithstanding the above, TiS volunteers may hear, or be told confidential information regarding participant's circumstances – it is expected that confidential information is not shared with anyone other than, if appropriate, the Saffron Hall Designated Safeguarding Lead, or Together in Sound Music therapist.
- Whilst a rewarding and fulfilling role, we are aware that volunteering on TiS can at times be emotional or even upsetting. Our training and refresher sessions provide more information on the context of dementia, and an opportunity to discuss any issues arising, and TiS Music Therapists and the SHT team are always available to provide support or links to other relevant guidance or services.

4. Volunteering Agreement

About this Agreement

This agreement, to which we ask you to agree and abide by throughout your volunteering with us, does not involve entering any kind of contract. Instead, consider it an agreement based on an exchange of expectations.

The volunteering agreement exists as a way of defining appropriate boundaries. For our part, we recognise that you have offered your time and talents freely and that there is no requirement for you to be here. We are extremely grateful for your contribution, and you are of course free to leave your volunteering at any time.

That said, there is an element of responsibility on both sides. The events and projects we run represent a commitment we make to our customers, visitors, participants and partners, and in volunteering with us you are giving us your support to help us honour those commitments. In light of this, it is important that our expectations of each other are clear.

We ask that you read this agreement carefully and ensure you are comfortable with its expectations both before you start and throughout your time volunteering with us. You will be asked to sign a document to confirm your commitment to the agreement. Before signing you will have the opportunity to ask questions to ensure you are comfortable with its spirit and intentions.

Our duty to volunteers

With a few specific exceptions, 'volunteering' is not formally legally defined in UK law. So, to ensure our volunteers are treated fairly, consistently, and respectfully, we look to employment law as a benchmark, providing equity and equivalence between volunteers and paid staff in all appropriate spheres of activity.

For example, as is true for staff and all visitors on our premises, we have a duty of care to our volunteers which includes:

- Ensuring your protection through our health and safety policies and the actions we take to enforce them.
- Checking and ensuring that our relevant insurance policies also cover the activities of volunteers.

Though we strive for equity across our workforce, which includes staff and volunteers, we seek to engage volunteers only where they complement the activities of staff. We do not base role descriptions around tasks we would expect staff to fulfil, ensuring volunteers do not (and are not perceived to) replace or act as a substitute for staff, but instead enhance visitors' experiences through volunteers' unique contributions.

What you can expect from us

- After your initial expression of interest, you will be invited to attend two 'Buddy Shifts', in which you will shadow a current volunteer on an event.
- Upon successful completion of the above shifts, we will provide an induction. This will include all necessary training for you to feel confident and fulfil our expectations.
- On the day of an event, the Duty Manager will provide a briefing to assign specific roles.
- We will provide you with a Saffron Hall shirt to wear at all times when you are volunteering.
- We will follow all policies, procedures, and standards of the organisation in fulfilling our duty of care to you.
- We will offer flexibility within your volunteering role wherever possible.
- We will provide a designated point of contact and structure for reporting any issues or concerns.
- We will aim to resolve any concerns you may have quickly and fairly.
- We will work within the spirit of equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- We offer references for people that have volunteered their time with us (beyond a minimum period of six months and a minimum of six volunteering appearances).
- You will have the opportunity to experience some of the finest cultural experience in the country.

What we ask of you

- To be punctual and reliable in relation to the volunteering commitments to which you have signed up.
- You must attend all necessary briefings pertaining to your specific volunteering commitments.
- To be proactive and timely in your communicating with SHT's staff, especially where you need to make changes to commitments you have made.
- To show empathy and respect in your conduct with fellow volunteers, staff and visitors, audiences, and participants.
- To be smart in appearance and to wear your uniform when you are volunteering (unless otherwise stated).
- To follow the policies, guidelines, expectations, and spirit of this agreement and Handbook.
- To participate in all mandatory training, including refresher sessions.
- To act in the best interests of all visitors and offer excellent customer service.
- To let us know promptly if there are any changes to your contact details, availability, health and mobility, or any other circumstances which may affect your ability to volunteer with us.
- And finally, to always undertake your roles with dedication, commitment and the best of your ability.

Additional Considerations

Being a good Ambassador

Please remember that you are an important ambassador and should always represent SHT's best interests. For many people you are the 'face' of SHT, so please always extend a warm welcome and treat visitors with respect and courtesy.

Bullying and Harassment

All those involved with SHT should be treated with dignity and respect, and should not be subject to bullying, harassment or any discriminatory treatment. We expect all employees and volunteers to honour and respect this intention. Should a situation arise where you feel that you have not been treated in a fitting manner then you should in the first instance, discuss this with your main contact or if not appropriate, the CEO of SHT.

Confidentiality

As a volunteer you may be party to personal or confidential information, including information covered by legislation or simply with sensitivities, concerning SHT's activities that is not in the public domain. You are required to keep such information strictly confidential and not to communicate it further.

Equality & Diversity

SHT recognises and values diversity and difference. It is committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all employees, volunteers, Board members, service providers and suppliers.

Our aim is that our volunteers will, as far as possible, be representative of all sections of society and that each volunteer should feel respected and be able to give of their best. SHT will ensure that no volunteer is discriminated against either directly or indirectly on the grounds of gender, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy, maternity or paternity, race, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, HIV status, employment status, unrelated criminal conviction or any other point of difference.

All employees, volunteers, suppliers and/or anyone associated with SHT in a professional capacity are expected to pay due regard to the provisions of this Policy and are responsible for ensuring compliance with it.

Dealing with difficult situations

Saffron Hall aims to treat all our volunteers fairly and objectively. We do recognise that situations may arise from time-to-time which volunteers, or employees working with volunteers, need assistance to resolve. If you have a problem concerning any aspect of your volunteering, we ask that you take this up directly with us at an early stage. Your views will always be heard and given full consideration. If this does not result in a mutually acceptable resolution, you should contact graham.king@saffronhall.com who will give you guidance on how to put your concern in writing.

Uniform

Upon successful completion of your induction, you will be provided with a Saffron Hall branded black shirt. Alongside this shirt, you will be expected to wear the following:

- Black trousers - black jeans are acceptable, but they should be one continuous colour, with no rips/holes.
- Black shoes - comfort is key. Trainers are permitted, but please ensure the majority of the shoe is black in colour. Please no open toe shoes.
- To note - it can get quite chilly in the Hall, so please feel free to wear a top underneath your branded shirt.

Saffron Hall branded gilets are available, but they will need to be purchased.

Using social media

As a volunteer your public comments may also reflect on SHT - even when made in a personal setting such as your own social media accounts. Social media in particular is a public domain where a single comment can be shared by many people in a very short period of time. We encourage volunteers to promote their connection with SHT but please be aware that you are identifying yourself as a representative and your actions can reflect us. As with any type of public comment, please be aware of how your words may be viewed or reported by others, in particular those who may not share your opinions. If you require further guidance in this area, please speak with our Visitor Services Manager.

Digital understanding and access to a device

As a volunteer, you will need access to a computer device, email address, and the internet. This is as the Visitor Services Manager regularly contacts and updates all volunteers via email. In addition, we use an online volunteering management system called Assemble. It is here you are able to view and sign up for all volunteering opportunities.

Personal phone use & personal property

Whilst we understand that you will likely want to keep your phone on your possession – this must not interfere with your duties as a volunteer at any point. We ask that it is switched off, or on silent, with no upcoming alarms set, whenever volunteering; this is particularly critical when you are on duty within the auditorium or during a performance.

Once leaving the briefing room, we ask that you refrain from using your phone, unless it is an emergency. If you do need to use it whilst on duty, we ask that you do it out of eye shot of any audience members/visitors and only do so if you are able to leave your current post/position. Radio the Duty Manager if you need to take a call or move to a different area of the building.

Please note, for all event volunteers, there will be a locked space available to you to leave any belongings that you do not wish to take into the auditorium, coat, bag, mobile phone etc.

Volunteer Performance Tickets

As part of our commitment to volunteer training and to allow all volunteers to experience a performance from the point of view of an audience member, two tickets will be available to each volunteer per season, free of charge. One of each of these tickets must be for the volunteer. *Please note tickets are distributed at the discretion of the SHT Management and are never guaranteed.*

- There are two seasons, 'Spring' and 'Autumn', across the period from the start of September to the end of following August (September to January and February to August)
- We cannot guarantee that we can give Volunteer Performance (VP) tickets for the concert or event of a hirer. Note that Britten Sinfonia, Saffron Walden Symphony Orchestra, and Saffron Walden Choral Society are all hirers. You can ask for VP tickets for the concert of a hirer, but we might not be able to allocate any VP tickets for some concerts depending on what the hirer decides. Please also be aware that VP tickets may not always be available for commercial events such as comedy or musicals.
- To order VP tickets, email foh@saffronhall.com who will ask Marketing to hold 2 tickets provided the volunteer has not already had their allocation for that season. Where in the auditorium the seats will be depends on sales and where SHT are holding seats. The Visitor Services Manager will email the volunteer to confirm that tickets are being held for them.
- The tickets should be picked up from the Box Office by the volunteer on the day of concert.
- If we get a lot of requests for VP tickets for the same concert, we reserve the right to limit the number of VP tickets.
- New volunteers must have been on duty for at least six events before they can request VP tickets.
- Volunteers must be active to be awarded VP tickets. SHT reserves the right to decline a request for VP tickets to a volunteer who has not been on duty at sufficient events in the three-to-six months before the request is made.

If you wish to see a specific event, then you are advised to buy a ticket via the Box Office in the normal way as we cannot guarantee tickets to any concert.

Moving on

We are grateful for the commitment and time our volunteers give us, without whom, SHT would not exist. However, we recognise that volunteers may choose to stop volunteering at any time. We will invite volunteers to feed back on their experience either through a short exit interview (in person or on the phone), or through a feedback form. The results will be used to inform the development of the volunteer programme.

If you have volunteered with us for six months or more, we would be happy to provide a reference for you in the future, should you need one. Please contact the Visitor Services Manager to request a reference.

As mentioned earlier in this Handbook, the principal duty of a SHT Volunteer is to work with staff to keep audiences safe and secure, and safely evacuate the building, should it be necessary. There may come a time when you are unable to fulfil these duties. Following a conversation with you and the SHT team, we may decide it is appropriate for you to reduce your duties or step down from your SHT Volunteer role.

There may be an opportunity for you to follow a phased exit plan, allowing you to volunteer within a reduced role over a limited period should you wish. This will form part of the above conversation with you and the SHT team.

We understand that this might be a difficult conversation, and we enter this with the best intentions for both you and SHT.

5. Getting Started

We want you to start your volunteering in the best possible way, which is why we will support your early stages to ensure you have everything you need to stay safe, support our audiences, and get the most out of your volunteering.

Expression of Interest

If, after reading this document and the 'Volunteer with Us' section of our website, you decide you wish to join our team of volunteers, please do so by getting in touch with us a foh@saffronhall.com with your name and a little bit about yourself and a member of the team will be in touch.

Buddying: opportunity to shadow an experienced Volunteer

You will have the opportunity to join two events as a 'buddy' of an experienced volunteer, shadowing them on their shift. This will give you a fantastic first-hand experience of what volunteering is like and what you may be called upon to do. We hope this gives you some clarity on what to expect and whether volunteering here is right for you.

The buddy sessions should be seen as an opportunity for you to see if you think you could and would like to fulfil the role. Similarly, on our side, it is an opportunity for us to see if we think you'd be a good fit within the team and are capable of all aspects of the role. We reserve the right to decline someone based on their performance on these 'shifts'.

Familiarisation and Core Training

After two successful 'buddy shifts', you will be offered a guided tour of the Hall and training in our evacuation procedures and radio use. This generally takes around two hours and is carried out by the Visitor Services Manager or a Duty Manager.

Learning to use Assemble to select your shifts

Volunteer 'rotas' are managed through an online system called Assemble. You will receive a full user guide once induction is completed, with your own unique log in, and we expect you to manage your volunteering through this system, using Assemble to sign up to our shift opportunities.

Forthcoming events are usually uploaded into Assemble before the start of a 'season' (there are two seasons per year – Spring, from January to August, and Autumn, from August to January).

Your points of contact

The Visitor Services Manager will contact all current volunteers weekly with any updates, reminders, and the 'Call Sheet' for the upcoming weekend. This will include all of the event information for the weekend ahead, including timings, who is signed up to attend, and who will be the Duty Manager and therefore contact for each event. The Duty Manager's telephone number will be included should you need to pull out of

a commitment at short notice. All other communication should be made via the Visitor Services Manager at foh@saffronhall.com.