

Saffron Hall Volunteer Handbook

2019-2020

About Saffron Hall

Saffron Hall is a space designed to inspire through music and the arts, a space for professional, amateur and young performers and for audiences keen to enjoy the very best that the performing arts have to offer.

The result of a progressive partnership between Saffron Walden County High School [SWCHS] and the Yellow Car Charitable Trust, Saffron Hall is a flexible state-of-the-art hall with equipment to match and exceptional adjustable acoustics. It opened at the end of November 2013 and provides a home for concerts and other arts events, both own-promotions and hires. The programme combines school and amateur events, performances with an extremely high standard of professional artists and ensembles of national and international stature, and projects that maximise the educational and outreach opportunities provided by the siting of the Hall on the SWCHS campus.

Volunteers provide a valuable role as ambassadors for Saffron Hall Trust; it is they and not the permanent staff who interface the most with our audience members. As well as carrying out vital functions during an event, by giving their time voluntarily they save the Trust, which is a registered charity, significant sums of money that would otherwise have to be diverted from the artistic programme.

Types of events

Saffron Hall promotes three types of events:

Own Promotion – this is where Saffron Hall engages an artist(s) to perform at the Hall.

Hire – this is where a local/national organisation (including schools) pays to hire the Hall for their own event.

Learning and Participation – these events are aimed at the local community and range from workshops and schools performances to weekly music therapy groups.

Events tend to be scheduled on Wednesday and Friday evenings, and on weekend daytimes or evenings.

Main role of volunteering

Saffron Hall volunteers are mainly responsible for contributing to the safety and security of our audiences and the building. Whilst enjoying concerts is one of the motivations for volunteering in the first place, volunteers must at all times remember that their overriding priority must be to fulfil their role in looking after the paying public properly and professionally. During performances, staying alert to the audience's needs is of prime importance.

Time commitment

We ask our volunteers make themselves available to work at least 2 shifts per month, and that they volunteer for a variety of events, both Saffron Hall's own promotions, hires and learning and participation events.

Hours

Volunteer shifts start one hour and 15 minutes before the scheduled event start time, and finish approximately 30 minutes after the scheduled event finish time. The start time may be brought forward by 15 minutes if a large audience is expected – this will be communicated to the volunteers

in the week leading up to the event. Any larger variation to this (for example earlier volunteer calls to facilitate pre-show talks) will be communicated as early as possible.

Induction process & training

New volunteers are invited to attend a trial shift where they will be given an induction by the Duty Manager, they will then shadow an experienced volunteer for the remainder of the shift. New volunteers can request a second shadow shift before 'going solo'.

All volunteers will be invited to regular training sessions – some will be voluntary, some sessions will require attendance. Where possible, training sessions will be offered on multiple dates so that volunteers can fit them around their other commitments.

Volunteer Probationary Period

The new volunteer induction and shadowing an experienced volunteer for a shift will hopefully give a new volunteer enough information to decide whether they wish to join the Saffron Hall team of volunteers. Additionally, during the induction the Saffron Hall Duty Manager will assess the suitability of a potential new volunteer. In addition, new volunteers will have a 3 month or 6 event, whichever is the longer, probationary period during which their suitability will be further considered during the events at which they are volunteering. At the end of this period, each volunteer will be informed of the outcome of their probationary period.

How rotas are scheduled

Volunteer rotas are managed through an online system 'Go Assemble'. Shifts are published on the website in 3 month blocks, and volunteers can sign themselves up to, or decline, any shift. The website will detail the call times for each shift plus any other information about the event. Each volunteer has an individual log in for the website, and will be able to see on a calendar which shifts they are signed up for. Shifts are allocated on a first come first served basis - the website operates a reserve list so that volunteers wishing to sign up to an oversubscribed shift will be notified if any spaces become available. From a health and safety aspect, the minimum number of volunteers needed for most events is 9 (11 if the event is sold out), and due to limited seating, the maximum number of volunteers per shift is about 18. Due to the nature of certain events, the number of volunteers may occasionally be limited to under 9.

A detailed user guide for Go Assemble will be sent to each new volunteer once they have completed their induction shift. Additional copies can be requested from the FOH Coordinator.

A monthly 'heads up' will be circulated via email by the FOH Coordinator, showing which volunteers are signed up to which shifts for the following calendar month, followed by a weekly call sheet that will inform volunteers of any changes to start times etc. for the events in the following 8 days.

Once the weekly call sheet has been published, if any volunteer needs to cancel a shift they should inform the FOH Coordinator and remove themselves from the shift on Go Assemble. If the cancellation occurs before the weekly call sheet is published the volunteer just needs to remove themselves from the shift on Go Assemble, even if this is after the monthly heads up has been circulated. If on the day of the event a volunteer is unable to attend their shift due to illness or unforeseen circumstances they are required to ring the duty manager for that shift to let them know. Duty Manager contact details will be circulated in the weekly call sheet before each shift.

Communications

Communication between Saffron Hall and its volunteers will be conducted via email in the most part,

alongside the Go Assemble scheduling system. The FOH coordinator is the main point of contact for volunteers and can be reached at foh@saffronhall.com, or on 01799 588545.

Volunteer roles – basic outlines

These descriptions are meant as a guide and may be added to as required by the Duty Manager, Front of House Manager or Technical Director. All volunteers are allocated key roles in the evacuation of the audience in the event of an emergency - full evacuation training and literature will be given. At the start of each shift volunteers are briefed by the Duty Manager, this is when any specific information relating to the volunteers for that event is passed on.

In most cases volunteers are able to watch most or all of the performance/event.

Stewards – Stewards either stand on the auditorium doors, checking tickets and directing audiences to their seats; or they are stationed by the foyer entrances to welcome patrons to the Hall. Stewards often sell programmes to the audience, and hand out flyers for upcoming events at the end of the performance. During performances Stewards sit in the auditorium in allocated seating and are responsible for the comfort, safety and enjoyment of the audience.

Merchandise/Ice Cream seller – Volunteers sell merchandise/ice creams to the audience before and after the performance, and during the interval.

Artist Bar – Saffron Hall occasionally provides a paid snack bar to visiting artists, usually manned by volunteers. The hours for this role vary, and often involve being on site for the artist's rehearsals prior to their performance.

Cloakroom Attendant – Checking in and out patrons' coats and small bags

Parking Attendant – Directing traffic in and out of the main carparks

Bar Volunteer – Volunteers help the bar staff with collecting glasses, polishing glasses, setting out interval drinks, assisting with VIP receptions

The following policies apply to events at Saffron Hall and volunteers should be pro-active in implementing them:

- No food or drink in the auditorium, with the exception of bottled water (for some events this policy is relaxed – this will be highlighted in the volunteer briefing).
- No photography in the auditorium (again for some events this policy is relaxed).
- Mobile phones and electronic devices must be switched OFF in the auditorium.
- Large bags are not allowed into the auditorium. The cloakroom can accept coats and handbags/small rucksacks.
- Saffron Hall is a non-smoking site – this applies to staff, volunteers and members of the public.
- Latecomers will be admitted to the auditorium at a suitable point, determined by the concert staff. Latecomers are usually admitted through the top back doors of the auditorium and the volunteer staffing the door will assist the latecomer in making their way to the allocated latecomers seats.
- Backstage access – as a rule, the public are not allowed to enter the backstage area. The concert staff will provide a list of names to the Duty Manager if they are expecting any guests who will need to access to the back stage areas from Front of House.

Any queries or concerns about audience safety should be directed to the Duty Manager. Similarly if a volunteer finds themselves in a situation involving an audience member where they feel uncomfortable or unable to resolve the situation themselves, the Duty Manager should be called upon for assistance.

Off site events

Occasionally, events (often Learning and Participation events) are scheduled to take place at venues other than Saffron Hall, and volunteers are often asked to help out with these events. The type of

roles that volunteers will be asked to do may vary, but could include duties such as assisting Saffron Hall staff with setting up for the event, welcoming and signing in participants, serving tea and coffee to participants, assisting with tidying up at the end of the event.

Any requirements specific to the external event will be communicated when volunteers' availability is requested. For these events we expect volunteers to adhere to the same policies as if it were a regular Saffron Hall event and conduct themselves accordingly.

General Volunteer information

Uniform – Volunteers will be given a black, branded shirt which should be worn whilst on shift, and should be kept and cared for by the volunteer. Smart black trousers/skirts and smart black shoes should also be worn. Name badges will be provided by Saffron Hall. Saffron Hall also provides branded gilets for volunteers to wear at the hall in cold weather.

Volunteer shift packs At the start of each shift, volunteers will be given a pack with a torch, a high viz jacket (for evacuations), and a slip detailing their duties for that shift, which will also include fire evacuation instructions. The packs must be returned at the end of each shift.

Parking – There is free parking at Saffron Hall. Volunteers should park in the 'Gold' parking zone. Blue badge holders may park in the designated spaces at the front of the hall.

Contact information – Saffron Hall must hold an emergency contact telephone number for all volunteers. All contact information will be kept confidential. This information can be updated via the Go Assemble website.

Expenses - Volunteers who incur expenses whilst working on off-site events will be reimbursed by Saffron Hall, on receipt of a completed expenses form. (These can be requested from the FOH coordinator).

Volunteer Performance (VP) 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 these tickets must be for the volunteer.

- September to January is a season and February to August is a separate season, i.e. there are two seasons across the period from the start of September to the end of following August.
- We cannot guarantee that we can give Volunteer Performance (VP) tickets for the concert or event of a hirer. Note that Britten Sinfonia are a hirer. 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.
- To order VP tickets, email the FoH Coordinator who will ask Marketing to hold 2 tickets as long as the volunteer has not already had their allocation for that season. Where in the auditorium the seats will be depends on sales and where Saffron Hall are holding seats. The FoH Coordinator 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. Normally we will have a maximum of 4 VP tickets available for each event.
- New volunteers must have been on duty for at least 6 events before they can request VP tickets and VP tickets are not available to volunteers during their probationary period.
- Volunteers must be active to be awarded VP tickets, Saffron Hall reserves the right to decline a request for VP tickets to a volunteer who has not been on duty at sufficient events in the 3-6 months before the request is made.

If a volunteer has a particular wish to see a specific event then they are advised to buy a ticket via the Box Office in the normal way, as we cannot guarantee that all volunteers will be able to work the

shifts they put themselves forward for nor that there will be Volunteer Performance Tickets available for all who request them.

What we expect from our volunteers

Saffron Hall asks volunteers to:

- Embrace Saffron Hall's visions and aims
- To comply with Saffron Hall's policies and procedures, especially relating to health and safety at work, emergency procedures and safeguarding
- To conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times
- To be respectful and courteous to all visitors to Saffron Hall, other volunteers, and Saffron Hall staff
- To be proactive in their approach to customer service
- To arrive on time. Lateness or non-attendance without good reason may result in being dropped from further rotas
- To undertake the tasks assigned to them
- To wear the suggested uniform
- To respect Saffron Walden County High School buildings and premises
- To be available for at least 2 shifts per month on average.

We would hope that we can build a long term relationship with all of our volunteers, however we recognise that circumstances change and that an individual may wish to stop volunteering. Should this situation arise, we ask that

- The volunteer informs us of their intention to stand down so that we can offer a place to someone else.

What our volunteers can expect from us

Saffron Hall volunteers can be expected to be treated with respect at all times. Saffron Hall will provide working conditions that enable volunteers, so far as is reasonably practicable, to work in a safe and hazard-free environment, without risks to health. This relates to the physical environment, tools and working equipment (including safety equipment) and hours of work.

Line management

The Front of House Manager, who reports to the Technical Director, is responsible for Front of House and volunteer management. While on shift, volunteers are managed and supported by the Duty Manager and the Deputy Duty Manager, and it is they who should be the first point of contact for any queries whilst on shift.

Health and Safety and First Aid

Saffron Hall Trusts takes the health and safety of our volunteers very seriously. Prior to or during their first shift they will be given a copy of our health and safety policy, and the procedure for emergencies and first aid will be explained. Regular training sessions will be offered to volunteers, some of which will be mandatory. Regular risk assessments are carried out to ensure that we are maintaining a safe place of work. A nominated first aider will be present for all Saffron Hall events.

Safeguarding

Saffron Hall Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Volunteers who wish to be involved with some of our Learning and Participation events may be asked to complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

Insurance

All our volunteers are covered under Saffron Hall's employer's liability insurance.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Saffron Hall Trust is committed to equality and diversity and wants to achieve a diverse involvement from the local community. We therefore welcome people from different backgrounds, ages, cultures and genders to bring fresh ideas and approaches.

Annual Reflection Process

Once per year each volunteer will be asked to provide feedback on how they are enjoying the volunteer role, how the Front of House Team and Duty Managers could support them more, what isn't going so well for them and why. As part of this process, a volunteer can request feedback on what they have written, including requesting a meeting to discuss their thoughts. It is anticipated that a request for feedback, especially for a meeting, will be the exception rather than the rule, e.g. if a volunteer has identified some personal concerns that they would like to discuss.

Dealing with Issues

Occasionally it is necessary to deal with issues which might arise, both from the volunteer and the organisation. We hope to deal with these issues in an informal manner, however, if this cannot be the case the following procedures will apply.

Misconduct Procedure

In all cases warnings will be issued for misconduct, irrespective of the precise matters concerned, and all opportunities to avoid dismissal from the volunteer program will be taken, for example mediation or additional training.

Grievance Procedure

If you feel aggrieved at any matter relating to your voluntary work, which cannot be resolved informally, you should first raise the matter with the Technical and Operations Director, explaining fully the nature and extent of your grievance. You will then be invited to a meeting at a reasonable time and location at which your grievance will be investigated fully. You must take all reasonable steps to attend this meeting. You will be notified of the decision, in writing, normally within ten working days of the meeting, including your right of appeal.

Data Privacy Policy

Saffron Hall is committed to ensuring that personal information is protected. Every volunteer will be provided with a copy of the Privacy Policy for Volunteers during the recruitment process.