

BPCG's 2026 – 2027 Volunteer Engagement Plan



This is Brockwell Park Community Greenhouses' Volunteer Engagement Plan, developed through three rounds of volunteer feedback and presented at the 2025 AGM. It will be reviewed annually around October each year.

1. Who are the BPCG volunteers?

Since we started recording the numbers in 2017, there have been around 900 amazing volunteers in our books: a diverse group of people of all ages, disabilities (visible or invisible), and backgrounds. Most are local to Brockwell Park, but many come from across London. We don't yet reflect the community that hosts us in our diversity (whether age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, gender, etc.), but that is something that is important to all of us, and that we are addressing in our Organisational Strategy for 2026-2030.

2. What do volunteers at BPCG do?

We have several volunteering opportunities and activities across our programmes and partnerships. Our activities include: gardens and food growing (including areas managed by groups and individual volunteers such as the wildflower meadow, sensory border, and plants for shade), plant nursery, kitchen and produce preparation, shopkeeping, DIY, composting, children and families, beekeeping, events, and governance. Some volunteers get involved in multiple activities.

3. Why do people volunteer at BPCG?

Volunteers spend time at BPCG for many different reasons. Some want to build their knowledge and skills, whether about gardening, working with children, or some other area. Some want to spend peaceful and quality time in and with nature; spotting a blue tit chick can make some people's day! Some want to make friends and feel part of a community. Some just want to contribute to their community.

Ultimately, we believe people volunteer because it gives them a certain sense of enjoyment and satisfaction. This is something we value and want to nurture.

4. How committed are the volunteers to BPCG?

In the last reporting year (April 2024-March 2025) we logged around 5,000 hours of volunteer support, which is probably an underestimate, but a testament of the community that has been built around this small haven in the centre of London.

Some volunteers have generously contributed hundreds if not thousands of hours over many years; and some who have only just started.

Some volunteers play a leading role or aspire to hold responsibility; others enjoy the freedom of helping without leading a group or activity.

Some volunteers attend regularly, others come as and when they are able to.

Regardless of a volunteer's type of contribution, **we want all to feel welcome and appreciated.**

5. Why a Volunteer Engagement Plan?

As volunteers, while we believe we've created and contributed to an amazing organisation, we believe we can do more and better. We want to:

- a. **Grow** our volunteer base to be more diverse and inclusive.
- b. Create more opportunities to **celebrate** our volunteers.
- c. Explore ways to create even more **nurturing** experiences for volunteers to learn, grow, and contribute.

These are our objectives: Grow. Celebrate. Nurture.

6. How do we achieve this?

- a. **Supercharge our outreach** through market stalls and leafleting in local areas like Brixton.
- b. **Collect regular feedback** to identify and remove barriers for underrepresented volunteers. We recognise that feedback forms are no substitute for real person-to-person dialogue and discussion.
- c. **Fast-track inductions** within one month of sign-up, our door is always open for sign-ups!
- d. **Increase the number of Lead Volunteers** to build our organisational resilience and by creating clear pathways to leadership with transparent expectations, training and a buddy system.
- e. **Develop a Volunteer Handbook** outlining mutual commitments and conduct expectations, updated regularly and with annual training available to all.
- f. **Make the process of joining a team** consistent, transparent, and welcoming across the organisation so it is easy for volunteers to join multiple activities if they choose to.
- g. **Enhance volunteer sessions** with clear tasks, learning components, and fun! We want to make these as accessible as possible too, by developing more sessions outside of typical work hours.
- h. **Celebrate volunteer contributions** through regular recognition and appreciation, but also helping us get the basics right, like always having tea and biscuits available!
- i. **Host festive celebrations drawing from the cultures of our local community**, in line with our activities and purposes, such as events celebrating regional food traditions or a beekeeping festival.
- j. **Improve the shop** into a welcoming information hub for all visitors and volunteers.
- k. **Offer deep learning opportunities** through workshops, partnerships, courses or more, on a variety of topics (horticulture, cooking, beekeeping, etc.)

7. How do we make sure we succeed?

We know that not everything can go as planned: What's important is that we treat this as a learning journey, and will keep trying by finding different ways to continuously ask volunteers for feedback (e.g., quarterly surveys, anonymous feedback box, and emailing us directly). The feedback would be used to try new things, update this plan next year, but also to inform and update our organisational strategy.

Realistically, we won't be able to address everyone's feedback, but we promise to keep an open mind, listen, and where necessary, have honest and kind conversations when we feel something cannot be done.

We will also set targets and collect data on key metrics to help guide our progress. But we are worried that too much focus on data can become intrusive, reductive and overly academic. We believe diversity flourishes naturally when people feel genuinely welcomed, not categorised. We want to work towards our goals but not let reaching targets distract us from remaining engaged with volunteers.

From our AGM in November 2025, and over the next financial year until March 2027, we aim to achieve the following:

Metric	Target
1. Prepare a volunteer handbook	1
2. Number of new volunteers inducted	100
3. Number of new Lead Volunteers recruited	5
4. Retention: % of new volunteers who have volunteered more than 10 times in the past year	30%
5. Number of partnerships established with underrepresented communities	2
6. Number of outreach events conducted in underrepresented communities	2
7. % of volunteers saying they are satisfied or very satisfied with their volunteer experience	>85%
8. Number of new festive celebrations hosted	2
9. Number of new deep learning opportunities	2