



# WELCOME TO THE RISING SUN ARTS CENTRE



## GUIDE TO VOLUNTEERING

You will have been given this pack as a result of showing interest in volunteering with the Rising Sun Arts Centre. It is our hope that the following pages will provide you with lots more information about volunteering with us and answer any questions you may have!

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*Please do get in touch if you still have any questions or would like to go to the next step and start volunteering with us!*

## WELCOME LETTER

Hi,

**Thank you** for showing an interest in volunteering at the Rising Sun Arts Centre! We just wanted to give you a brief idea of how valuable volunteers are to the Centre and what we hope you will gain from volunteering with us.

All the events that happen here at the Centre would be impossible without the work and dedication of our team of volunteers. They make everything happen – from the initial ideas, through to the planning process and delivery of events and projects. The Rising Sun Arts Centre simply would not exist how it does without volunteers and that is why we are always looking for new people to join us!

The Centre is run by teams of people of all ages and abilities and from all cultural backgrounds. We recognise that our success is due in part to the different viewpoints and experience brought to the Centre by those involved. We strive to make the most of our volunteers' various skills and knowledge in all that we do.

We are incredibly grateful for the time and commitment that our volunteers give, and we understand that they should receive something in return. As a volunteer with us, we hope that you will gain a lot of new skills, knowledge and experience. We offer training where needed as well as opportunities for shadowing. One of the best things about volunteering with us is that you get access to some of the most interesting arts events in Reading. Our new volunteers get to be a part of something bigger than the Centre – they are welcomed into a community of existing volunteers with shared interests and ideas who support one another to make the most of the arts.

We hope that the following pages will only serve to increase your interest in volunteering with us. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any questions and we will do our best to answer them.

**Happy Volunteering!**

## OUR HISTORY

The Rising Sun Arts Centre is a small, award winning, independent arts centre, which for 28 years has been staffed and run by volunteers. The Rising Sun started as a squat, created by a group of intrepid artists who saw a need for ground-level arts development, for and by, the people of Reading. The centre gained charity status in the mid-90s and has been at the heart of Reading's cultural life ever since.

The Rising Sun creates a space where creativity flourishes and people come together to make things happen. Our programme includes a varied line up of high quality events and activities, wonderful music, ground breaking, participatory projects and the best band nights in town to name a few, all managed by volunteers without the benefit of core funding or full-time staff.

### How We Run

The Rising Sun is a registered charity governed by a board of Trustees and managed by two part-time paid workers. All the core work of the Centre is done by volunteers and the Centre survives on the basis of earned income with occasional funding for specific projects.

### The Building

The Rising Sun was built in 1877 as a Temperance House by the Architect Alfred Waterhouse, who also designed the slightly grander Natural History Museum. Silver Street at that time was situated in one of Reading's most notorious districts. The building first became an Arts Centre in 1990 when a group of artists rescued it from a semi derelict state. Their actions created a community based arts venue. The centre has been through lots of changes but throughout it has been a venue where huge numbers of people have been able to enjoy the arts and have been inspired to engage with and take part in creative activities. The building is now a grade two listed building and although we have broken with its original intentions (and installed a licensed bar!) the aim is still to bring something positive to the town and provide people with opportunity and inspiration.



## OUR VALUES

### Creativity

- Creativity lies at the heart of everything we do. It is what brings us together.
- Collectively we strive for the right and the opportunity to be creative. As individuals, we recognise and celebrate the creativity of others and seek to find ways to ensure that everyone has access to creative experiences and expression.
- Our creativity motivates us to make things happen, to nurture, enable and collaborate.
- Our creativity provides us with passion and energy, it drives our commitment to being open to new ideas, inspires our learning and informs where we position ourselves within our communities and cultures.

### Participation

- The Rising Sun has a long term interest in participation and in understanding how it works. For us participation is about people from different backgrounds working together creatively, supporting and inspiring each other.
- The Centre is run by teams of people of all ages and abilities and from all cultural backgrounds. We recognise that our success is due in part to the different viewpoints and experience brought to the centre by those involved.
- We believe that participation involves inspiring people to take meaningful control. In our work it means devolving decision making outwards to the teams who are responsible for the centre's core work and giving them the support they need to manage projects and processes.

### Knowledge

- The Rising Sun is committed to improving our understanding of participation. We believe participation is an effective way of working and is a vital part of making the Centre viable.
- Participatory projects which happen at the centre and the centre itself are modelled on what we have established through experience and tested in real world environments. We are committed to constantly improving our knowledge and the centre's work is an ongoing learning project dedicated to better understanding of participatory processes.

## ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

The following pages contain role descriptions for different areas of volunteering within the Rising Sun. These represent a selection of opportunities and there are further options for volunteering with us including DIY and building maintenance, organising volunteer socials and work on specific projects. If you would like to find out more about opportunities not listed then please ask!

### **Bar Volunteer**

Our bar volunteers support the running of our bar, our biggest source of earned income. They use customer service skills to serve audience members when events are running. Bar volunteers are representatives for the Rising Sun and answer customer questions about the centre.

#### **Ideal commitment level**

- 1 evening per month (4 – 5 hours)
- Friday – Sunday nights

#### **Main tasks**

- Serving customers
- Setting up the bar (stocking the fridge, setting up the card reader)
- Handling money
- Using the till
- Following the processes for cashing up
- Cleaning at the end of a shift
- Working as part of the team delivering the event

#### **Key skills**

- Excellent customer service skills
- Access to own computer
- Understanding of the Rising Sun's work and ethos or willingness to learn
- Good communication
- Friendly and welcoming
- Willing to learn how to use the till and card reader

## **Programming Volunteer**

Our programming volunteers plan the events that happen at the Rising Sun. This includes band nights, music events, art exhibitions, dance events, arts fairs and more. Through regular meetings, these volunteers decide what events we put on based on the values of the Rising Sun. The team work together to put together a varied programme of arts for the local community. Volunteers get the choice to take the lead of events which they are interested in which involves liaising with artists and promoters.

### **Ideal commitment level**

- 3 hours per month (planning)
- Events which you are the lead organising volunteer

### **Main tasks**

- Attending monthly meetings
- Contributing to decisions about what events should happen
- Emailing about event proposals
- Finalising details of events
- Monitoring the calendar
- House managing for some events
- Following procedures for programming

### **Key skills**

- Able to use e-mail, Word and Excel
- Access to own computer
- Understanding of the Rising Sun's work and ethos or willingness to learn
- Understanding of the arts and culture scene in Reading
- Organisation skills
- Good communication
- Interest in areas including dance, comedy, theatre, jazz, classical, world music

## **Graphic Design Volunteer**

Our graphic design volunteers are part of our marketing team. They use their skills to create leaflets and posters for print and online to promote our events and activities. The role involves using creative ideas and responding to suggestions for changes.

### **Ideal commitment level**

- 3 - 6 hours per month
- 1 hour for monthly meeting

### **Main tasks**

- Attending monthly meetings
- Responding to briefs and creating posters and leaflets for promotion of events
- Giving feedback on other design work created
- Working to timeframes and deadlines to suit the marketing needs of the centre

### **Key skills**

- Access to own design software
- Graphic design skills
- Access to own computer
- Understanding of the Rising Sun's work and ethos or willingness to learn
- Understanding of the arts and culture scene in Reading
- Organisation skills
- Good communication

## **Sound Volunteer**

Our sound volunteers work with our PA system to ensure that music nights sound as good as possible at the Rising Sun. From collecting tech specifications to sound checking and maintaining equipment, the sound team work together to ensure that musicians sound their best when performing.

### **Ideal commitment level**

- 2 nights per month (usually Fridays and/or Saturdays, 5pm – midnight)

### **Main tasks**

- Setting up equipment
- Monitoring sound levels throughout an event
- Carrying out sound checks
- Clearing away and storing equipment

### **Key skills**

- Interest in music
- Understanding of the Rising Sun's work and ethos or willingness to learn
- Understanding of sound and technology (training provided for equipment)
- Good communication

## **Social Media Volunteer**

The social media volunteers are part of our marketing team. These volunteers each contribute to content across our social platforms (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook). Through following guidelines, social media volunteers will schedule relevant content and spend time evaluating the success of our platforms.

### **Ideal commitment level**

- 3 hours per month

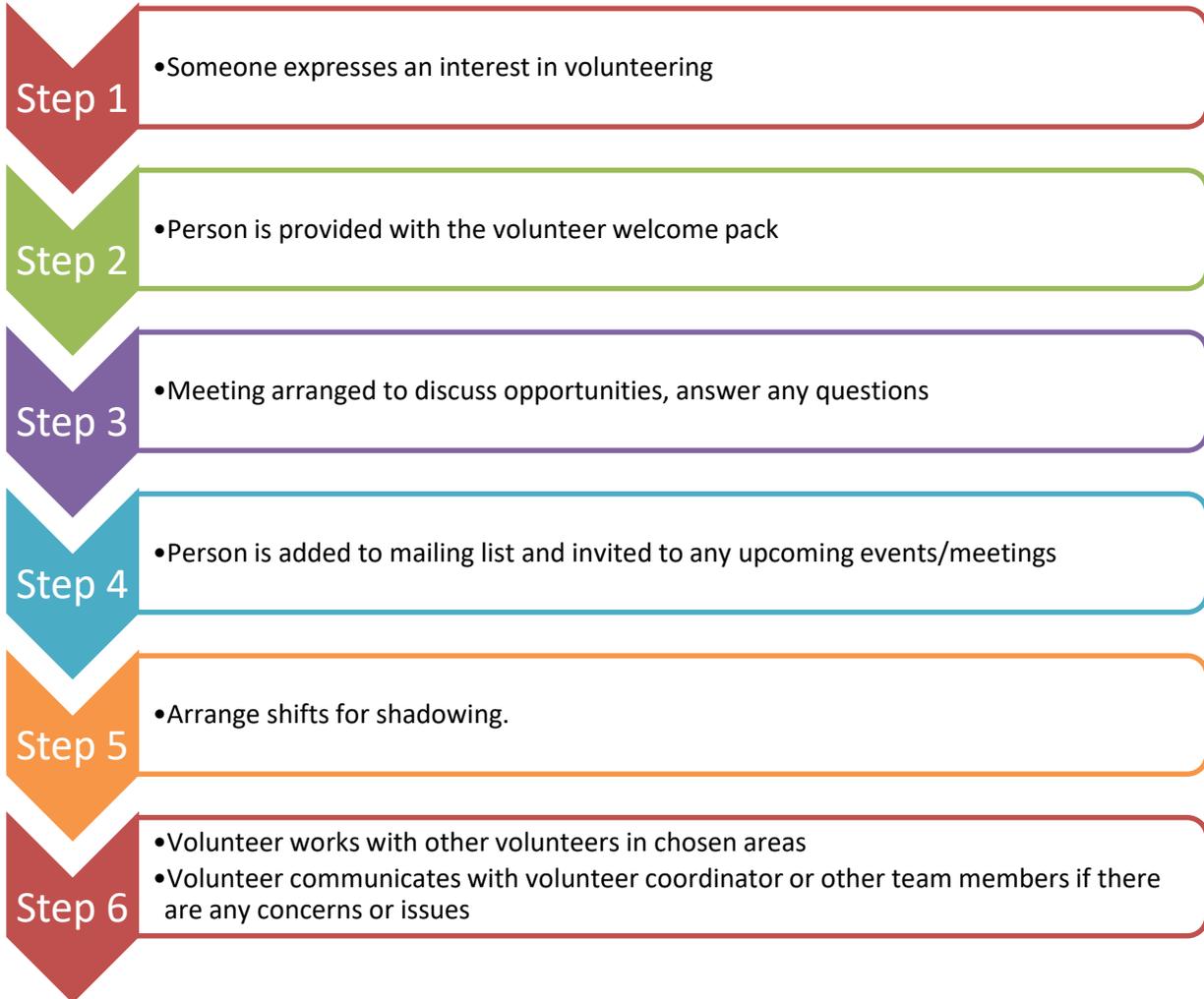
### **Main tasks**

- Attending monthly meetings
- Contributing to decisions about what content should be posted
- Ongoing engagement with Twitter replies and mentions
- Depending on the platform, creating content (photos for Instagram, short posts on Twitter, events on Facebook)
- Reflecting on analytics and how we can improve engagement
- Working to timeframes and deadlines to suit the marketing needs of the centre

### **Key skills**

- Access to own computer
- Understanding of the Rising Sun's work and ethos or willingness to learn
- Understanding of the arts and culture scene in Reading
- Organisation skills
- Good communication
- Knowledge of social media
- Able to write engaging copy for social media

## WHAT TO EXPECT FROM INDUCTION



# VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

The Rising Sun Arts Centre is run largely by volunteers with the support of three part time members of staff. As such volunteers are an important and valued part of the organisation. We hope that you enjoy volunteering at the Rising Sun and feel part of its community.

This agreement sets out some of you what you can expect from us, and what we hope to get from you.

## **What you can expect from us:**

- To be inducted into how the organisation works and your role within it
- To be provided with adequate training for the role or tasks that you will undertake
- To be given adequate support and information for you to be able to perform the tasks you have undertaken and support to work in the area of your choice
- To provide you with opportunities to contribute to decision making processes.
- To provide a safe workplace, compliant with equal opportunities, health and safety legislation etc.
- To follow our values of Creativity, Participation and Knowledge – leading to an inclusive and open atmosphere
- A procedure for you to raise issues and if necessary make a complaint (Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure)

## **What we hope to get from you:**

- To communicate effectively with those around you wherever a need arises.
- To follow the centre's operational procedures (e.g. regarding health and safety, equal opportunities and confidentiality etc.) and to adhere as far as possible to the centre's values and vision.
- To offer support and respect to others.
- To keep yourself informed and up to date with events and developments at the centre.
- To be clear about your role and what you can and cannot do. Not to over extend yourself, and to be transparent with your fellow volunteers if you're unable to complete tasks for whatever reason so that the workload can be shared.
- To value and help to ensure the continued existence of Readings only independent community arts space
- To address any concerns in an open and honest way

This agreement is a guideline to effective volunteering only and is not intended to be a legally binding contract of employment.

# VOLUNTEER POLICY

## 1. Values

- a. The Rising Sun Arts Centre is a small, independent arts centre, which for 27 years has been staffed and run by volunteers.
- b. The Rising Sun is a registered charity governed by a board of Trustees with three part-time paid workers. All the core work of the centre is done by volunteers and the centre survives on the basis of earned income with occasional funding for specific projects.
- c. The centre's core values are creativity, knowledge and participation. Creativity is a key motivating force for our volunteers in all the work they do at the centre. The Rising Sun encourages participation from all areas of the local community to promote inclusion and collaboration in the arts.
- d. Insofar as The Rising Sun benefits from the skills, experience and enthusiasm of volunteers, we believe that volunteers should be able to gain personal benefits from the experience too. We are committed to managing volunteers in a way that ensures that the needs of both parties are met.

## 2. Why volunteers are involved

- a. All of the events that happen at the centre are managed by volunteers without the benefit of core funding or full-time staff. Volunteers shape the programme, promote the centre, make decisions relating to the centre and much more.
- b. The Rising Sun values the involvement of volunteers in our work because they help reflect the interests, needs and resources of the local community and bring a unique perspective to all our work.
- c. The Rising Sun recognises the core role that volunteers fulfil at every level of the organisation. It endeavours to communicate with volunteers in appropriate ways, including regular e-mails. It also recognises the importance of seeking volunteers' ideas and opinions. Feedback from volunteers is always welcome and any volunteer may make suggestions in meetings.

## 3. The role of staff in delivering volunteering

- a. There are three part-time paid members of staff at the centre, working a total of 60 hours per week. Paid staff are here to facilitate the work of volunteers. Staff give volunteers all the support they need to be able to manage various projects and processes.
- b. The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for the overall management of volunteer involvement, including overseeing the implementation of this policy and dealing with any complaint or grievance relating to volunteers. All staff required to undertake such duties have been provided with training in the management, supervision, support and training of volunteers.

## 4. Volunteer roles

- a. Our volunteers are able to take part in a variety of different roles. These include, but are not limited to, the following:
  - i. Programming
  - ii. Marketing

- iii. Work on specific projects
- iv. Bar staff
- v. House managers
- vi. Door staff
- vii. Building maintenance
- viii. Cleaning
- ix. Supporting other volunteers
- x. Sound

**5. Equality, diversity and inclusion.**

- a. The Rising Sun strives to create a diverse and inclusive organisation within a diverse and inclusive community. Therefore, we are committed to ensuring equality of access to high quality volunteer opportunities and equality of treatment for our volunteers in all our policies and practices.
- b. The Rising Sun is committed to serving and representing all the people of Reading and wishes to see all sections of the community represented among our volunteers. Furthermore, The Rising Sun aims to regularly review the make-up of the volunteer team to identify and target any under-represented group(s).

**6. Induction and training.**

- a. Volunteers are provided with a written guide to volunteering, which outlines the expectations and responsibilities of both the volunteer and The Rising Sun.
- b. All volunteers will be able to shadow other volunteers working in areas they are interested in.
- c. Volunteers will be given the opportunity to attend induction training which provides further information about the organisation.
- d. Volunteers are encouraged to discuss additional training needs with the Volunteer Coordinator.

**7. Health & Safety and Insurance.**

- a. Volunteers are covered by the centre's health & safety policy and insurance.

**8. Expenses.**

- a. Volunteers will be reimbursed out of pocket expenses that have been agreed with the centre's manager, receipts must be provided.

**9. Confidentiality.**

- a. A volunteer database is kept with names, roles and contact information provided by volunteers. This information will not be shared with anyone outside of the organisation.

**10. Review.**

- a. This policy is to be reviewed in October 2019.

## SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERS

At the Rising Sun, we are dedicated to ensuring that all of our volunteers feel supported throughout their time with us. Here are some ideas of what you can expect as support to help you have the best experience possible volunteering with us:

- **Induction**
  - All new volunteers will go through an induction process. This is designed to ensure that you settle in as quickly as possible and are able to find a role that suits you best.
  - Induction includes meeting the Volunteer Coordinator, meeting volunteers and being given the chance to shadow volunteers whose roles you are interested in.
- **Contact**
  - You will receive regular contact from the centre via e-mail. This will include reminders of events and meetings, opportunities to help out as well as newsletters and any updates on the running of the centre.
  - If you do not have access to e-mail, just let us know and we can provide this information via post or a quick telephone call – whichever option you prefer!
- **Socials**
  - An important reason why many people volunteer is to make friends. Our sense of community is vital in the running of the centre. Socials are arranged for volunteers on a regular basis.
  - These socials are a chance to catch up with other volunteers on an informal basis and get to know those who you may not see very often.
- **Training**
  - During your time with us, it might occur to you that there are some gaps in your knowledge/skills which you feel would be filled by training.
  - We are keen to try and supply training in these cases where we think it will benefit your role at the centre.
  - Please keep us informed of any training needs which you have.



**Please let us know if you have any additional support needs.**

## USEFUL CONTACTS

To find out more about what we do, check out our website and social media or get in touch!

Website: <http://www.risingsunartscentre.org>

Email address: [info@risingsunartscentre.org](mailto:info@risingsunartscentre.org)

Telephone: 0118 986 6788



[www.facebook.com/TheRisingSunArtsCentre](http://www.facebook.com/TheRisingSunArtsCentre)

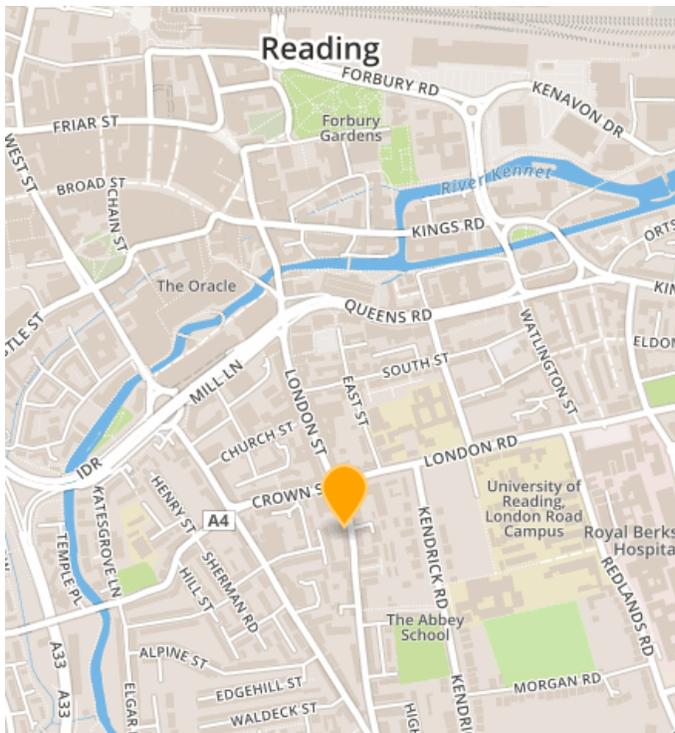


[www.twitter.com/RisingSunArts](http://www.twitter.com/RisingSunArts)



[www.instagram.com/risingsunartscentre](http://www.instagram.com/risingsunartscentre)

Plus, you can always pop into the centre and see if anyone is around to answer your questions. You can find us here:



**30 Silver Street**

**Reading**

**Berkshire**

**RG1 2ST**