

Yr Ardd

Tyfu Cymuned Trwy Dyfu
Growing Community Through Growing

Volunteer Handbook

Version 1

October 2024



Yr Ardd Community Interest Company (CIC)

Morris Terrace

Pont Tyweli

Llandysul, SA44

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Croeso – Welcome!

Hello there! You are amazing... because if you are reading this you are interested in Yr Ardd - possibly thinking of volunteering, just started volunteering or already volunteering with us. At Yr Ardd we cherish and value our volunteers because without people like you the garden would not exist. It is a splendid network of volunteers who help the organisation make a real difference for the community.

This handbook is designed to tell you more about Yr Ardd and the work we do, and let you know how volunteering contributes to the flourishing of the garden, and how this benefits everybody in the community.

It also provides information on practical things like claiming expenses and what to do if you have any concerns. We want you to have an enjoyable, engaging experience with Yr Ardd. So, thank you for your support and interest. We hope it will be a positive growing relationship and encourage you to get involved.

Contact Information

Site:

Yr Ardd
Morris Terrace
Pont Tyweli
Llandysul
SA44
What3Words: ///rolled.stump.mailing

Access:

The site is always open to the local community to enjoy. Our paths and drive provide access for disabled people. There is drinking water available throughout the site.

Point of Contact:

Elizabeth Riches, Project Manager
Phone, text and WhatsApp: 07579 849805
Email: elizabeth@yrradd.org

Usual working hours: Monday – Friday 09:00-16:30

Director Responsible for Safeguarding:
Email: diogelu@yrradd.org

Director Responsible for Volunteering:
Email: gwirfoddoli@yrradd.org

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About Yr Ardd

We are a social enterprise registered with Companies House as a Community Interest Company. Being a social enterprise means that any profits made by the business are retained within the organisation for the benefit of the community. Sometimes this is described as a “not for profit” organisation. The garden is situated on a site in Pont Tyweli and accessed from Morris Terrace. The land is owned by Carmarthenshire County Council, and we rent the site from the Council on a long-term lease, for a nominal rent.

What is our purpose and our values

Established in 2021, the purpose of Yr Ardd is to bring all members of the community together to grow nourishing vegetables and fruit. The organisation seeks to provide volunteer opportunities and learning experiences in how to grow vegetable and fruit and identify plants and animals. We are passionate about increasing the use of the Welsh language, especially around words for growing and names for all plants.

We care deeply about the people in our community and the natural world. We believe that everybody should be able to access high quality vegetables and fruit, produced within walking distance, and the production does not harm the land, plants or animals. It is our hope that more people will be inspired to grow vegetables at home for their families and neighbours and save seeds to be shared with others in the community.

We know that more and more people are feeling alone, isolated and may not have family members near-by. Some people also feel they have nowhere to go to be outside. From our own experiences we know that growing food and flowers can bring people together and we believe that spending time outside, at Yr Ardd, can create new friendships, support and community. It is important to us that everyone feels welcomed, included, valued and we acknowledge how amazing each and every one is, who is spends time at the garden.

We follow no-dig principles and choose not to apply artificial pesticides, herbicides or fertilisers. We choose to plant open pollinated seeds, which means we can save our seed at the end of the growing year.

The facilities we offer at Yr Ardd include:

- ★ Community garden with raised beds
- ★ Wildlife areas
- ★ Polytunnel and greenhouse for growing
- ★ Wildlife Pond
- ★ Outdoor meeting space
- ★ Wood-fired Pizza Oven
- ★ Picnic areas
- ★ Inside meeting area
- ★ On-site parking
- ★ Access for disabled people
- ★ Toilet facilities for disabled people

The Team

Yr Ardd is primarily made up of volunteers such as yourself. Volunteers are assisted by our fulltime Project Manager, whose role has been made possible through National Lottery funding. The directors are all volunteers and bring a range of skills to the managerial running of the project. Having directors is a requirement of being constituted as a community interest company.

The Project Manager is responsible for making sure the project is a success, from putting our policies and procedures in place and followed, to welcoming volunteers, running the day-to-day activities on the site, arranging courses, publicising the project, evaluating the things that we do and developing our relationships with other organisations.

We offer a range of volunteering opportunities There are volunteers on site looking after and developing what we can offer, growing, distributing our produce, caring and recording what is happening in our wilder areas, talking and engaging with people in Welsh, and making people feel welcome and supported. We have volunteers who work from home supporting our social media presence and increasing the visibility of the organisation. There are also volunteers who represent Yr Ardd with other organisations and support us in making grant applications.

The site, including parking, directions and community transport

Yr Ardd is next to the Pencader Road and is accessible via a pedestrian underpass from Morris Terrace. The site is about ¾ acres of flat land along with sloping edges planted up with trees. For much of the 20th century the site was a farm field and the pedestrian underpass enabled access for working horses. The site was used for plant vehicles when the newest bypass was built, and then turned into allotments once the road was completed. These allotments were not taken up and the site subsequently fell into disuse. Llinos Hallgarth (co-founder of Yr Ardd) identified the site and worked with the other founding members Steve Parkin, Suzanee Hughs-Owen and Andrea Sanders on obtaining a lease and creating the community garden.

There is some parking along our access track. Alternatively, parking is available at the Paddlers Canoe Centre or the access road between Paddlers and the Fire Station. It is a 5-minute walk from Paddlers.

From the Pencader Road, take Morris Terrace, travel past Highway Garage and continue up the hill. The road bears left and just before the left turn, Yr Ardd is on the right. Our blue/green sign is on the farmgate, which will be open on volunteer days.

Yr Ardd is accessible by bus, although the frequency is limited. The nearest bus stop is outside CK's supermarket (listed as Pont tyweli CKs on the timetable). For more information please check the Carmarthenshire Council Bws Bach y Wlad website. The bus to and from Pencader does then link to the regular Carmarthen service.

<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-services/highways-travel-parking/bws-bach-y-wlad/timetable/bws-bach-y-wlad-bb1-bb2-bb3/>

General Information about Volunteering

What is a Volunteer?

The term volunteer means slightly different things to different people, different cultures and different organisations. At Yr Ardd we define a volunteer as a person who freely chooses to carry out a task or role which contributes to the aims and objectives of the organisation and for which they do not receive financial or material gain (aside from out-of-pocket expenses).

Your role as a volunteer is an integral part of the overall ethos and work at Yr Ardd. The organisation operates a volunteering programme that is open to all, promoting community involvement and skills development within a sociable and supportive environment. If you have specific support needs, please talk to the Project Manager, who will endeavour to provide you with what you need. Please refer to our equality, diversity and inclusion policy for more information on this.

Some of our volunteers stay for years whilst others volunteer remain for a set period of time; there is no minimum or maximum time commitment.

What can you gain from Volunteering with us?

Volunteering has many benefits for both you as a volunteer and for us as an organisation. We believe you will find it educational, inspirational and fun to be part of Yr Ardd.

The benefits of volunteering at Yr Ardd are three-fold:

- ★ **Making new friends and supporting one another**
- ★ **Learning new skills and completing tasks**
- ★ **Making a difference for others in the community**

The different types of Volunteering experiences –

Lead Volunteer, Regular Volunteer, Ad-hoc Volunteer, Supported Volunteer

As we are a volunteer led organisation, we provide a range of volunteering experiences, with different levels of responsibility and accountability. Volunteers may choose to take on different roles at different stages within their lives. Please talk to the Project Manager if you wish to vary your time commitment or responsibility.

Lead Volunteer

This role is typically assigned to an individual who wishes to take a management responsibility within the organisation or lead other volunteers who are visiting the site. Generally, a Lead Volunteer will be accountable to other Lead Volunteers. The company directors are Lead Volunteers along with volunteers running sessions at Yr Ardd, on behalf of the organisation. If a Lead Volunteer is working in close contact with Supported Volunteers, it is expected that they will complete an Enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check, facilitated and paid for by Yr Ardd.

Regular Volunteer

A regular volunteer agrees to make an ongoing commitment to Yr Ardd, typically of an agreed number of hours a week. The volunteer will be provided with direction from either a Lead Volunteer or the Project Manager, but we also welcome ideas, feedback and creativity. A person within this role will be making a regular commitment to attend the site and be involved in activities such as gardening, infrastructure development, keeping the site tidy, welcoming other people to the garden or surveying for wildlife. Alternatively, they may commit to providing off site support such as providing content for our social media channels, administrative tasks, writing grant applications and representing Yr Ardd at events.

Ad-hoc Volunteer

This role is for people who want to be involved but are unable to make a regular time commitment. They may occasionally attend workdays, volunteer sessions or requests to complete certain tasks. On and off site they are likely to be involved in tasks similar to those outlined for a Regular Volunteer but without the ongoing commitment.

Supported Volunteer

A Supported Volunteer is someone who attends the garden or is contributing through off site activities. However, to be involved in activities, they need specific support structures to be in place. These structures will be discussed and agreed in advance with the Project Manager, to make sure that volunteering is enjoyable and inclusive. It is anticipated that, in collaboration with the individual and their support team, a Supported Volunteer will undertake roles similar to those outlined for Regular and Ad-Hoc Volunteers.

Our commitment to you

Yr Ardd has responsibilities to you, which are outlined in this handbook and will be discussed with you when you start.

Volunteers can expect:

- ★ To have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- ★ To receive adequate support and training relevant to role
- ★ To be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
- ★ To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- ★ To receive out of pocket expenses
- ★ To have opportunities for personal development
- ★ To be recognised and appreciated
- ★ To be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- ★ To know what to do if something goes wrong

Your commitment to Yr Ardd

Each role will entail different tasks, offer different benefits and carry different levels of responsibilities. These are outlined in the relevant volunteer experiences and role outline. The Project Manager will go through these with you when you start. However, we ask volunteers:

- ★ To be reliable and honest
- ★ To uphold the organisation's values and comply with organisational policies
- ★ To make the most of opportunities given, e.g. for training, mentoring etc.
- ★ To contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and be mindful of your status as representing the organisation within the community
- ★ To carry out tasks within agreed guidelines
- ★ To communicate any concerns you may have
- ★ To be friendly and supportive of others on site or involved in Yr Ardd

Overview of Volunteering Roles

These descriptions are to give you an idea of the opportunities to get involved at Yr Ardd. Have a chat with the Project Manager about any roles you are interested in.

Gardening

Typical sessions vary according to the season, but the ways you can get involved include:

Sowing seeds, planting, picking produce, weeding and hoeing, pruning, watering, preparing raised beds and maintaining the site. Activities can be adapted depending on your needs.

Site infrastructure

Improvements on site might include general carpentry, moving compost, making things, fencing, clearing the pond, painting, breaking down pallets, strimming, mowing and coppicing. Activities will require a general level of fitness and strength but can be modified as required.

Wildlife/Biodiversity

There are opportunities for volunteers to work on projects which makes the site nature friendly. These include sowing wildflowers, maintaining wildflower areas and margins, putting up bird boxes, making wood piles and other habitat improvement interventions. We are also keen to survey the site monthly for wildflowers, insects and animals.

Welsh language support

We want to increase the regular use of the Welsh language on site. This is because we want to:

- ensure that Welsh first language speakers feel welcome, included and always able to converse in the language of their choice,
- support volunteers and site visitors who are learning Welsh to practice
- enable Welsh speakers and non-Welsh speakers to talk to one another with someone willing to translate for them.

Volunteering for this role, is about getting involved in activities and encouraging others to speak Welsh and/or share some words or plant names for people to remember. It is about being enthusiastic, encouraging, inclusive, understanding and empathetic. Someone taking on this role are not expected to be a professional translator, rather someone who enjoys meeting people and helping people to talk to one another.

Socialising and befriending

Arriving on site for the first time can feel intimidating. This role is about welcoming volunteers to a session and making sure they feel included. Tasks involve showing new volunteers around the site, making hot drinks and arranging breaks, providing support if someone would like a confidential chat, taking photographs of the session and posting on our social media channels.

Marketing

Letting people know about Yr Ardd and what is happening is critical to attract more members of the community to visit and volunteer. The role will seek to increase visibility of Yr Ardd through regular Social Media engagement, writing articles for media outlets, creating posters, leaflets and other materials, engaging with the public sector e.g. County Councils and Health Board to signpost people to Yr Ardd. Also to develop relationships with reporters and producers across TV and radio media.

Creative

From time to time, we have opportunities for some ad- hoc work. Volunteers are typically needed for photography, filming, illustration, design work or content writing.

Qualities for the role include a creative mind-set and keen eye for detail. You will also need to be able to provide your own specialist equipment such as cameras and lenses and be savvy with social media.

Grant Writing

Yr Ardd is predominantly a grant-maintained organisation. From time to time we need to apply for additional funding so we can continue the activities we provide and maintain our infrastructure. This role requires experience of successfully applying for grants, including report writing.

How to get involved

The registration process

If you would like to register, please make sure you:

Sign the Volunteering Agreement

And have an awareness of the:

Volunteer Health and Safety Document

Site Risk Assessment

Safe Space promise

We prefer all volunteers to register with **Volunteering Wales**. This national initiative means we can safely store your information according to our obligations under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), keep a record of your volunteering hours (which we need to demonstrate value to our grant awarding bodies) and you can keep a record of all the volunteering activities you undertake across the country.

Please visit Volunteering Wales on: <https://volunteering-wales.net/register>

On the site you will be able to apply for the volunteering opportunity that interests you. If you need help in completing your application, please contact the Project Manager.

Depending on the role, we may need to ask for references. Again, please talk to the Project Manager about the specific volunteering role.

Getting Started

Induction

Once you have registered with Yr Ardd via the Volunteering Wales website, the Project Manager will contact you to discuss the volunteering role that interests you. Once you have completed your application process, we will arrange an induction meeting with you. This may, for example, be at the beginning of a regular Volunteering session on site.

During your induction, the Project Manager will introduce you to the organisation and show you around the site, introduce you to the other volunteers, connect you with another volunteer who will support you as you settle in, and take you through our policies and procedures. This is an informal process and there will be plenty of time for you to ask questions.

Support

Following your induction, the amount of ongoing support you are offered will vary depending upon your needs and the role. However, all volunteers can ask questions, raise concerns and discuss the activities they are involved with. This may entail a simple conversation during a tea-break, or a phone call or email may suffice. Others will find one-to one meetings with the Project Manager useful.

We aim to make all volunteering experiences positive and enjoyable, but we recognise that problems may arise from time to time. If you have a problem, you should first talk to the Project Manager or Director responsible for volunteering, and arrange a meeting of those involved, away from the immediate task. Most issues can be resolved in this way. If this proves unsuccessful or you consider the matter to be more serious, please refer to our complaints procedure.

Signing in/out

If you are volunteering on site, we ask you to always sign in when you arrive and out when you leave. We also ask you to provide an emergency contact name and number in case you have an accident. Signing in and out helps us keep a record of the number of people who are accessing the site and the time they spend with us. We need this anonymised data for the organisations that provide us with funding.

Logging Hours

To enable us to collate the number of volunteer hours, we ask that you log on to your Volunteering Wales account and input the hours you have spent on site or undertaking an Yr Ardd role on a regular basis. The Project Manager can log your hours on your behalf using the signing in records or your hours shared via email. However, this does take time, so if you can, it would be really helpful if you can log your own hours.

What to bring

If volunteering on site, please wear strong boots, shoes or wellingtons. We recommend wearing old clothes which you don't mind getting dirty. If you have them, please bring waterproofs. However, we do have poncho rain jackets and gloves which you can borrow or allocate you a task undercover. Whilst we do have a small indoor meeting space, this is unheated so please bring plenty of warm clothes in the winter. During the summer, the site is quite exposed to the sun so please bring a sunhat and suntan lotion.

We have mains water on site and do make hot drinks. We provide milk and a dairy-free alternative. During our volunteer sessions on site, we like to stop and eat cake. We will try and accommodate

volunteers' dietary requirements; however, this is not always possible. If you have food allergies, we recommend bringing your own snacks.

Expenses

Yr Ardd recognises that the cost of volunteering may be a barrier to people engaging in the project and does not expect anyone to be 'out of pocket' because of their volunteering contribution. If you find that you have had to undertake some expenditure as a part of your role, the organisation will reimburse you. To claim for these expenses our Project Manager must have agreed the expense beforehand. You will need to complete a simple form and/or provide receipts to reclaim any agreed expenses. The Project Manager will provide you with the expenses form.

Training & Development

For most roles you will receive relevant 'on-the-job' training from the Project Manager or an experienced fellow volunteer. Often someone will continue to be on hand to give you further support, advice, help or a refresher (some tasks are only done once or a few times per year). If you are unsure about what you are doing, please do ask.

For some roles, more formal training may be required, and this will be discussed during your induction. It may be arranged immediately, or you may be added to a waiting list pending the next session. This type of training may include health and safety or could relate specifically to your volunteer role. Once you've started volunteering, if you feel you need further training to fulfil your role, please speak with the Project Manager.

How we communicate

The Project Manager will send you regular emails which will have key dates for events and workshops, as well as what the plans are for the upcoming weeks. As a volunteer group, we chat and send photos to each other using "Whatsapp". You can contact the Project Manager over the phone, email, text, WhatsApp or Direct Message.

Volunteer and staff meetings

We have volunteer planning meetings every two months. This is your opportunity to have an input into the scheme of work on site, learn about the seasonal action plan, planned events and get a clearer picture of the growing strategy.

We also have monthly volunteer meetings with the Project Manager and one of the Directors. These are often framed more around day-to-day issues, but they are also a useful forum for us to get together and discuss and resolve issues and suggestions, as well as recognising shared achievements. These meetings will take place between 12-1pm on the first Thursday of each month.

Every first Tuesday of the month, 6:30-8:30pm, Y Pwerdy/The Powerhouse, Pont Tyweli, the Directors hold an Open meeting. At this meeting the running of Yr Ardd is discussed, along with planning for the future. All volunteers are very welcome to attend, and the organisation would really benefit from your involvement in decision making. Two volunteers regularly attend these meetings and have a standing item on the agenda. They have clear insight on the budget set aside for volunteers and are involved in deciding how it is spent. In addition they have equal say on ideas for the site, courses and income generating activities.

Sharing produce

At the end of a volunteering session, you are very welcome to take produce home with you and/or share with your neighbours and family.

Tell us about your experience

We like to hear stories about our volunteers. It might be a 'day in the life of...', a description of your role, a volunteer profile or a special achievement. These stories help us to paint a picture of volunteering for our newsletter, social media, press releases, and communications. We want to publish experiences on a regular basis, no less than once a month. Please get in touch if you would like to see your story in print. Email: tyfu@yrardd.org

Feedback

Your feedback is valuable to us. If at any time you feel that any aspect of your involvement with us as a volunteer could have been managed better or we are missing something, please let us know so we can make improvements. Equally, if there is something you are really enjoyed or care passionately about, please let us know too. Feedback can be provided anonymously via our feedback box, or shared as a voice note, video, picture, email, direct message, song, poem or any other way you can think of!

Keeping Volunteers and Visitors Safe

Health & Safety and Insurance

We will provide you with a safe working environment, suitable protective equipment and training where required. Please make sure you use tools and personal protective equipment as advised, listen to Health and Safety (H&S) advice and tell us when you are concerned about any potential problems.

We try to make sure that tasks on site are not too difficult or strenuous. Please work at a pace that suits you and take regular breaks. If you are unsure about how to do a task, or would like some tips, please ask. If you are finding a job too difficult, we can find you other things to do.

Please read through the additional H&S Information and Risk Assessment given to you at your induction. We have insurance in place which covers volunteers. More details of our insurance are available on request. Our H&S declaration and insurance certificate are displayed in the Kitchen. We need to make sure that all our volunteers have had the right information so that you can start volunteering safely and with confidence:

Please make sure you read the Volunteer H&S Guide and Site Risk Assessment.

Safe Space promise

Yr Ardd is a welcoming and inclusive place for people to spend time together. We appreciate that everyone is different and has different needs, and we want to celebrate this and act together in ways that make people feel welcome, valued and safe.

Our values include:

- ★ Trust
- ★ Kindness
- ★ Openness
- ★ Integrity
- ★ Inclusivity
- ★ Fairness

We ask that anyone who visits the site follow these ground rules:

- Treat everyone equally and with respect, without prejudice to race, physical and mental health, age, language, ethnic origins, gender, ability, religion, sexuality or cultural background
- Be accepting of people's different views and value their perspectives, even if they are different from your own- as long as these views are not in conflict with the values of Yr Ardd
- Use language and body language which is non-threatening
- Remember that people's personal circumstances are not always obvious, and be sensitive to people's different moods
- Communicate openly with people, ask for advice if you need it and be prepared to discuss and resolve any issues that arise
- Give everyone the opportunity to have a voice and express their opinion

- Be honest and truthful in your actions and endeavour to always uphold our values
- Help everyone get involved with activities, and adapt ways of working with people to try and meet their needs
- Honour commitments you have made, and fulfil these to the best of your ability
- Be aware of health and safety risks and don't act in a way that endangers the health or safety of anyone

With thanks to the volunteers and staff of The Community Farm, Denny Lane, Chew Magna for sharing their Safe Space Promise.

If you are concerned about health and safety issues or your own or someone else's welfare, please talk to the Project Manager or the Director responsible for Safeguarding.

Volunteer complaints and procedure if things go wrong

We want to make sure everyone is happy in their volunteering roles. In the unlikely event of a complaint by, or about, a volunteer we have procedures for dealing with the situation in a fair manner. If you have a complaint against a member of staff, director or another volunteer, speak to the Project Manager or Director responsible for volunteering (see page 2 of the Handbook). If the issue can't be resolved, we have a volunteer complaints procedure which can be referred to. This can be found in the main shed, or a copy can be requested either from the Project Manager or responsible Director. If someone (volunteer, staff member, or member of the public) has a complaint about a volunteer or their work, they should discuss it with the volunteer and Project Manager. This discussion might highlight training needs, extra support or supervision, or a change of role. If the problem can't be resolved, we have a procedure which can be referred to.

Moving on

If you decide to stop volunteering with us, please let us know by arranging and taking part in an exit interview with either the Project Manager or Director responsible for volunteering. It would be really helpful if you share with us why you have decided to leave, and if possible, give us some notice where your role is time-dependent, and we will need to look for a replacement. Equally, Yr Ardd may, from time to time, change the focus of its work and stop certain volunteering opportunities.