

BLAISE COMMUNITY GARDEN

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE

The guidance is for Members and Volunteers while working in the Garden. It outlines their responsibilities in ensuring that any task is done as safely as possible.

The focus should always be on activities and tasks taking place in the Garden. Most of this is common sense but take a moment to consider the implications of what may go wrong in any activity or task.



Example

Working at Heights (e.g. up ladders)

- Assess the hazard (falling) before going up the ladder.
- 'Could I make it safer?' – By tying the ladder in position, or getting help?

Responsibilities

Final responsibility for Health and Safety in the Garden rests with the Trustees. All members and volunteers, however, must take active responsibility for safely carrying out their activities. We must, also, ensure that the whole Garden is a safe environment for both volunteers and visitors.

Members/volunteers:

1. Please assess any activity before starting it and ensure the location, the equipment and the people involved will be as safe as possible.
2. Please be alert to potential hazards and report any concerns to a trustee or the H&S officer.
3. Ensure that all accidents or injuries (or even close calls) are reported as above and that it is recorded in the Accident Book (held in the cabin).
4. Make clear to visitors with children, that they must be responsible for them in the Garden.

The Accident Book will be checked regularly by the H&S officer and action taken as necessary. They will notify the trustees of any matter requiring their action.

A First Aid box (also held in the cabin) will be checked regularly and replenished as necessary by the H&S officer.

The Garden Environment

Any assessment of Garden safety should take into account the recent history of the garden. It has been used as a dumping ground, a car park and a bonfire site, for example. The risk of finding rusty metal, rubble and broken greenhouse glass, for example, is high.

Years of neglect means that many of the buildings on the site are dilapidated and contain many hazards.

General Guidance for manual work and use of tools

- Gloves should be worn wherever possible – non-slip gloves are advised for some tools.
- Be aware of who is nearby when using dangerous tools/equipment (e.g. scythes, strimmers, etc.)
- Do not carry heavy loads for any distance. Seek help or use wheelbarrows/ trolleys where possible.
- Take regular breaks when doing heavy or repetitive work for long periods.
- Any health problems that may be affected by manual work (e.g. high blood pressure or back problems) should be disclosed on volunteer induction forms and to others working alongside.
- All volunteers are given a safety talk when given a job using unfamiliar equipment. They should seek permission of a trustee or before using power tools.
- Protective equipment must be worn in hazardous conditions. Examples are hard hats in buildings being restored, and masks and/or goggles when sanding or strimming.
- Electrical equipment – Always check for damaged or loose connections prior to switch-on. If in any doubt, **do not use** and notify the H&S officer or a trustee.

Large Projects

Projects that involve a degree of planning and/or incorporate specific hazards will require risk assessments to be carried out. These need to be retained for future reference.

Examples of such projects include the restoration of whole buildings, major tree felling or large events, especially when open to the public.

Working at height

This is a major cause of serious accidents. Use of ladders requires assessment of the stability, the angle of elevation and the risk of slipping. Ladders should be checked before use and secured at top and/or bottom if possible. Otherwise, a second person may be needed to ensure stability.

- Power tools should never be used above head height when standing on a ladder.
- Always ask for help from the H&S officer if there are any doubts about ladder safety.

Fires (fire pits, bonfires, pizza oven)

Fires should only be lit under supervision of a responsible person and in accordance with policies agreed by the Trustees. A bucket of water should always be to hand when any fire is lit.

Trip hazards

Uneven ground, and objects protruding from the ground should be levelled where possible or otherwise clearly marked. Pathways should be left clear of obstructions. Be aware of the hazards of electrical cables and hosepipes when in use. Wind them up or clear to one side when they are not in use.

Working alone and locking up

Those working alone in the garden or with non-keyholders should always carry a mobile phone and hold the numbers of other keyholders in case of emergency. Those locking up must double check that there is no-one else left behind in the garden.

And finally.....

Just to recap, the most important messages are:

- Health and Safety is everyone's business, all of the time, and cannot be delegated.
- Always stay alert to potential hazards, both to yourself and to others. Report them when you find them.
- Common sense is useful, but still take a moment to consider what may go wrong and aim to reduce the likelihood of that happening.