



Volunteer - Community Agreement

Who we are

We are a small community in the market town of Stroud near Gloucester. We are part of St. Luke's Trust, which supports a homoeopathic medical practice with a range of associated therapies, a Waldorf Kindergarten and the Gannicox Camphill Community. On our grounds there is also a home for the elderly and the church of the local Christian Community congregation. A medicinal herb garden, small lake and wooded area are in the grounds surrounding us.

Two extended families currently form our community at Gannicox. One consists of a family with three teenage children and five residents with support needs. The second household comprises three residents with support needs and a family including young twin girls. There are a couple of local helpers that come in on a part-time basis, including an art therapy student; they add colour and creativity to our life. There is a lot of interaction between different initiatives in Stroud. Most of us take an active part in forming this wider network.

Our residents like the town environment and have their individual work schedules. Some go to a local pottery, bakery or a food-processing workshop nearby, all help with domestic tasks and some take courses at Stroud Further Education College. Some may in the future seek voluntary or paid employment in the Stroud area. The large garden with lake is one of our own work facilities that also occasionally offers an opportunity for work therapy for patients of the Medical Practice. Some young students from a nearby Camphill training college join our gardening activities.

Your core tasks

You will be involved in some of the outdoor gardening and estate work together with an experienced gardener and some of our residents. You will help to establish and maintain work routines for the residents, take on some cooking, housework, minor maintenance, crafts activities and occasional child minding. An important strand of our life and work in which you will get involved is the support and fostering of life skills, of individual social relationships, and of the cultural-spiritual needs and interests of our friends with support needs.

Conduct & Responsibilities

In our community you will be living and working alongside people who are often vulnerable, insecure and easily exploited, and we therefore expect that your conduct will at all times be suited to the demands of life with those we support, which includes sensitivity, tact, punctuality and attention to detail. We expect you to show a responsible attitude towards alcohol, and no forms of illegal substances are acceptable on the community's premises. We ask you not to smoke inside our houses and to use your radio, tape/CD player in your own room at a volume that does not disturb others. Following your initial induction training you are expected to adhere to the various areas of community policy, including fire, health and safety and adult protection procedures.

Participation in shaping the community

Life sharing is great when everyone works co-operatively in answer to the needs of the Community and its individuals. Although co-workers with more experience will initially guide you into the tasks and rhythms of everyday life, we hope you will bring your own strength and initiative to the work and social fabric and share in the responsibility. You will be participating in a number of organisational and other meetings, both with the whole community as well as with the co-worker group here at Gannicox. We welcome any artistic gifts, e.g. musical, poetic, dramatic etc. and would encourage you to take your musical instrument along if possible.

In harmony with the Camphill ethos, the religious life of the community is based on Christian principles, with the celebration of the Christian festivals central to this. The end of the week is often marked by a special gathering which usually includes a reading from the Bible or another text that reflects the deeper spirituality of humanity. You are encouraged to participate in these. At the same time we respect the spiritual and religious orientation of each individual that joins our community.

Training Opportunities

Throughout your stay you will be provided with training to ensure you are able to carry out your role effectively and to assist your own personal development. Much of this training will be in the field of social care work. You will be provided with induction training in health and safety, protection of vulnerable adults, and a number of other statutory policy areas. If possible we encourage you to participate in short courses in first aid and food hygiene. We ask you to join the on-going Foundation course that is run at William Morris Camphill Community nearby (a further education college for adolescents and young adults with learning difficulties). This will give you the opportunity to meet with other co-workers, many of whom come from abroad. The course provides a platform for sharing experiences as well as gaining some understanding of Camphill and its underlying philosophy. Sessions include introductions to human development, curative education, artistic activities and anthroposophy. If appropriate and possible you may wish to enrol in an English language or other course that enhances your work with us at the local Further Education College.

Mentoring and support

The nature of our work makes considerable demands upon the time and energy of all co-workers, but this is compensated by the richness and value of experience to be gained while living in our community, which strives to serve social, economic and spiritual ideals. During your time here you will have a 'Mentor'. She or he will be an experienced co-worker who will be available to you for on-going conversation and support. We also hold a review with anyone joining us after a three-month period in order to ascertain that the continued living and working together is experienced as mutually fruitful. We will provide you with a written testimonial (reference) at the end of your stay.

Accommodation and Internet

You will have your own furnished room with shared bathroom facilities in one of the Community's houses. All of our meals and basic living necessities are provided for by the Community. You will have free access to computer facilities, including email and internet for personal and vocational use.

Expenses, travel, visas

Co-workers and volunteers freely give their work in answer to the needs of the Community and hence are not paid any wages or salary. At the discretion of the community you may receive a financial allowance of up to £30 per week to cover your reasonable expenses while you live and work with us. Any financial obligations, in the form of loans, debts, dependants etc will remain your own responsibility. We are also unable to make contributions to any national Social Security fund, old age provision, accident or life insurance to which you may be contributing at home. You are responsible for your travel costs to and from the community as well as for any visa applications and associated costs.

Working time, days off and holidays

You will generally have about two days off each week, often one day during the week the other at weekends. This is arranged by mutual agreement in the house community. You will also have most evenings free. A typical working day will be from about 7.30am to 7pm with about an hour off after lunch. On some days there will be evening commitments. Because all Gannicox volunteers and co-workers are likely to exceed the EU Working Time Regulations (1998) of no more than 48 hours per week averaged over a 17 week period, you will be asked to sign a form which states that you do not wish to be limited in your working hours in this way.

Volunteers who stay for up to 6 months will not usually have holidays, but will at intervals be able to take some additional days or a long weekend off in consultation with the community. If you are staying for more than 6 months you may, in addition to the occasional long weekend off, take holidays at the rate of about a week for every 3 months. At the discretion of the community you may receive a financial allowance for these periods.

Medical and insurance

You will be able to register with our local medical practice and, if you are a citizen of an EEA country, receive free treatment under the National Health Service, including emergency hospital treatment. In this case you need to bring the European Health Insurance Card along. Other services, such as dental and optician's treatment are not free of charge in the UK and can be expensive. Any such charges incurred will remain your own responsibility. We therefore advise you to consider your needs prior to your arrival in the UK. Gannicox is insured for liability in case of any act of negligence. We also insure your personal belongings in case of fire or theft, but please note that jewellery, contact lenses and money are not covered by our insurance. You should make your own provision for insurance when travelling.

Language proficiency

It is essential for our work that you have reasonable proficiency in spoken English. If you are uncertain about your level of spoken English, please take lessons before you come, or, you can take an IELTS test (International English Language Testing System: www.ielts.org) and work towards grade 6 or 7.

This document is intended to clarify our mutual and reasonable expectations during your stay. Any arrangements between you and the Gannicox Community are such that there is no intention of creating any legal relations, any contract of service or employment – neither express nor implied.

The Gannicox Community

Please sign below to confirm that you have read and understood the content of this agreement, and have provided us with all relevant information prior to your stay. Please bring this document along with you when you join us.

I confirm that I have read and understood the above agreement and that I have provided all relevant information prior to my stay.

Signature

Date

Name (print)