

Growing Sudley Community Interest Company Governance Policy

Last update December 2023 – due for review December 2024

Purpose of Governance Policy

This governance policy is designed to set out and maintain legal and policy responsibility, operational responsibility, accountability, transparency and relationships with key stakeholders and partners.

Introduction

Growing Sudley Community Interest Company is a community business whose vision is to bring back to life, develop and maintain the Walled Garden area at Sudley House Estate in Liverpool and to create a community resource for health, wellbeing and social cohesion. The CIC aims to improve and enable community physical and mental health and wellbeing, through a range of nature connection and therapy services.

The organisation achieves its aims through environmental, education, enterprise, social and therapeutic activities. Activities include gardening, growing, outdoor cooking, bushcraft, forest school, nature art, community herbalism and other nature-based, person-centred approaches to health and wellbeing. The project uses multi-disciplinary approaches to connect people with nature and outdoor experiences, and to enable benefits from the healing power of nature.

The organisation's values are intrinsically environmental as well as social, and care for the environment underpins everything we do.

We are run by members of the local community surrounding the Sudley House Estate, having started as a sub-group of the Friends of the greenspace. We work with a wide range of people from the local community, in targeted sessions and activities as well as open events and volunteer sessions. As our community business grows we are developing services, products and activities that serve all sections of the community who would benefit from the positive physical and mental health effects of connecting to nature. The business so far has developed responding to local need and has embraced a particular focus on children of all ages, elders, and people with long-term health conditions and disabilities, as these are highly represented within our community.

Organisation Aims

- To revitalise the historic walled garden at Sudley Estate and bring it back into meaningful use for the benefit of the community
- To develop a sustainable community resource for health, wellbeing and social inclusion by refurbishing and repurposing the Changing Rooms building and creating a sustainable community business supporting the project
- To provide a safe, accessible and therapeutic environment, within the walled garden and wider estate, for people to learn about and connect with nature
- To enable people to benefit from the intrinsic therapeutic, health and wellbeing effects of gardening, growing and outdoor activities.
- To equip urban people, and in particular children, with knowledge about nature, food production, healthy eating and ecologically sustainable processes.
- To create and enhance wildlife habitats and protect biodiversity.
- To promote sustainable lifestyles by encouraging and educating people about the benefits of permaculture, organic gardening, locally produced food and composting.
- To reduce isolation and increase community cohesion by bringing different groups and ages of people together.
- To enhance skills and employability by offering practical based training and volunteering opportunities.

Legal constitution

Growing Sudley CIC is a Community Interest Company, Number 11110406, limited by guarantee, incorporated on 13 December 2017. The organisation is governed under its constitution, its Memorandum and Articles of Association incorporated 13 December 2017 and its Community Interest Statement submitted to the office of the Community Interest Regulator.

Not For Profit

Although the organisation is an enterprise that may operate commercially, the constitution stipulates that the organisation is not established or conducted for private gain: any profits or assets are used principally for the benefit of the community.

Asset lock

The asset lock ensures that any assets the organisation obtains through any means can only be transferred to another asset-locked body that operates for the benefit of the community. This protects any assets amassed and ensures they remain in use for community benefit.

Conflicts of Interest

The constitution stipulates that any conflicts of interest shall be declared and a register of Directors' interests will be kept and submitted annually to the Community Interest Company Regulator, in accordance with regulations. Directors who are the subject of a conflict of interest will not have voting rights on matters concerning their interest.

Directors Remuneration

As per Community Interest Company law, Directors may be remunerated for services they undertake for the organisation. This will be declared as a potential conflict of interest and dealt with in accordance with the regulations. The CIC regulator must be satisfied that any remuneration given to Directors is fair and reasonable and this is subject to scrutiny on an annual basis.

Governance Structure



There is a legal requirement for a Community Interest Company to have a Board of Directors. The Board is an essential requirement of good governance and accountability and protects the interests of the community, stakeholders and aims of the enterprise.

The structures that Growing Sudley CIC have adopted in the interests of good governance are as follows:

Core Group/Management Team

Board Members

Community Membership

Stakeholders

Core Group/Management Team

The Core Group/Management Team will drive the organisation and ensure the day-to-day running and management of enterprise. They will manage the staffing and administrative functions of the enterprise. They will devise and be responsible for delivering the delivery programme and community benefit outcomes of the enterprise. They will develop and manage the financial direction of the enterprise. They will implement and manage the policies decided by the Board.

Current Management Team are:

Lucy Dossor – Project Director
Secretary & Designated Person for Data Protection

Su Stringfellow – Architect
Health & Safety Officer

Board Members

The Board Members are the governing body of the organisation. They are responsible for ensuring the enterprise complies with its legal and financial statutory obligations. They will oversee the work of the Core Group/Management Team and ensure integrity and due diligence. They will support the Core Group/Management Team in developing effective strategic and policy direction. They will ensure that the organisation remains true to its purpose and that its actions benefit the community. The Board Members will meet every 1-3 months and a minimum of 4 times per year.

Current Board Members are:

Wendi Bestman – Performance Improvement Consultant
Designated Person for Equality & Volunteering

Kate Collins – My Outdoor Classroom/Forest Skills Leader
Advisor on Forest School/Bushcraft

Lucy Dossor – Project Director
Secretary & Designated Person for Data Protection & Treasurer

Jennie Geddes – Counsellor, Supervisor and Trainer
Designated Person for HR and Staff Support

Dr Katy Lobley – Clinical Psychologist Merseycare and Lecturer Liverpool University
Designated Person for Safeguarding

Ryan Rossiter – Chartered Accountant, DSG
Treasurer

Policies and Procedures

Growing Sudley has a set of policies and procedures that form part of the tools we use to ensure due diligence, good governance and accountability in all areas. Below is a list of our policies, some of which are published on our website for community information:

Child Protection Policy
Complaints Procedure
Data Protection Policy
Environmental Policy
Equality Policy
Financial Controls Policy
Governance Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Privacy Policy
Volunteer Policy
Vulnerable Adults Policy

To see any of our policies that are not published on the website, or feedback any thoughts on our current policies or procedures, please contact growingsudley@gmail.com

Stakeholders

We work closely with the local community and stakeholders, recognising the varied interests that are affected by the activities in the walled garden area; to provide a clear communication tool for dialogue and collaboration between the various stakeholders and Growing Sudley CIC; to provide formal representation for the community within the structures of the organisation; to contribute to the good governance and accountability of the organisation by acting as an objective but informed body; to have an open and honest dialogue with our community.

The Key Stakeholders are:

Community Members of Growing Sudley CIC (AGMs; emails; newsletters; events)
The Friends of Sudley Estate (committee meetings and stakeholder meetings)
National Museums Liverpool (stakeholder meetings)
Local Residents and Park Users (mailing lists; signs; public information)
Liverpool City Council (stakeholder meetings)
Mossley Hill Athletics Club (direct communication)
Tenants of Sudley Estate (direct communication)

We communicate with stakeholders by various formal means, detailed in brackets above. We also love to have a chat when people are passing the garden, or invite anyone to get in touch with us by the various means available. We maintain open and accountable channels of communication by which stakeholders can have impact and dialogue around what we do.

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to make sure it continues to meet the needs of the Organisation and the Community. Any complaints or issues around our governance should be addressed via our Complaints Policy published on our website.