



EDINBURGH FESTIVAL VOLUNTARY GUIDES ASSOCIATION

Hints for Co-ordinators – 2023

Arriving at the City Chambers/setup

On the day of your co-ordination slot, plan to arrive at the City Chambers at least 20 minutes before the relevant start time. Dress as you think appropriate and be sure to wear your EFVGA badge and your name badge. Be sure to make the receptionist on the desk aware of who you are when you arrive.

If you are co-ordinating in the morning slot, our banner should be in the store room beside Reception. The **first** thing you need to do is to attach it to one of the pillars beside the Main Entrance, usually on the left hand side, but there may be occasions when it is better on the other side, it does not really matter, as long as it is visible from the entrance to the Quadrangle. Putting it up is easier with two people but it can be done on one's own. In the morning, leave the banner up when you are finished, in the afternoon, the banner should be taken down and put back in the store room. Occasionally there are weddings in the City Chambers with photos taken outside and you may be asked to move the banner, and this is a perfectly reasonable request.

The EFVGA has a golf bag which is kept in the storeroom during the period of the Fringe and everything you need in terms of leaflets, cards, umbrellas etc should be in the golf bag, or beside it.

Your daily sheet will have a list of the guides you are expecting, the normal practice is to number them as they arrive and assign tours to them in that same order.

Directing guests to the meeting-point

Due to the crowded nature of the environment outside the City Chambers Quadrangle, it is necessary to ask guides to stand outside to direct people in towards the meeting-point. We do not actually require pre-booking and there are still guests who are not pre-booked, even if fewer than in previous years. It is important to utilise the guides to facilitate guests finding the meeting-point, whether pre-booked or not.

Collecting Information

Since the recent introduction of the booking system for EFVGA tours by the Fringe Office, the majority of our guests are pre-booked, and Frances McDevitt will normally have texted you the numbers booked for the slot at some point on the previous evening. You should therefore have some idea how busy it is going to be, although the numbers turning up may not match the numbers booked, for a number of reasons. Most of these guests will be holding their ticket either in paper or electronic form and will probably show it to you, although we do not require them to do so. We do not have any facility to scan or do anything other than look at these tickets. The only information we require is the total numbers, whether they are booked or not, their normal place of residence, and how they learned about our tours.

There are daily sheets for the recording of this information and it is important that these are filled up as completely as you can. Recently coordinators have also been in the habit of

sending Committee members the numbers by text or email after the shift. That is useful, but not essential, but must not be done instead of putting the information on the printed sheets provided.

Assigning to Guides

Clearly guests will arrive at different times for the tours and you need to use your judgement as to when to assign them to guides and send them off. If a significant number of people arrive together early, then it may well be better to send off one or even two tours before the designated time rather than keeping people hanging about, however there are always some who arrive at the last minute or even after the time and you must be careful that you do not leave the final guide with far more in their party than the others had. If the circumstances seem to demand it, be prepared, if you are able, to lead a tour yourself for 'stragglers'. Some people have difficulty in locating the correct spot and it can be very crowded outside.

Co-ordinator Briefing - Safety and Donations

Before the start of each tour, give a short safety briefing. Warn the groups about uneven surfaces, narrow steps, low doorways, etc. Mention that although parts of the route are traffic-free, other parts are not, so they should take care when stepping off the kerb. And remind them that where there are crowds there are thieves, so they should keep an eye on their valuables. The guide may well duplicate this briefing but better that than not give it.

Also please make sure that you tell the groups that the EFVGA is entirely voluntary and we neither solicit nor accept tips for the guides who provide these free tours. However we are happy to accept donations to the Association's funds. It is now possible to transfer funds directly to the EFVGA bank account. The bank details are as follows, also printed on the back of your ID badge:

- Sort Code: 83-19-10;
- Account number: 00283754
- Name: Edinburgh Festival Voluntary Guides Association (in full).

If you receive cash, as soon as possible you should either deposit the equivalent amount from your own bank to the EFVGA and keep the cash, or give it to the Treasurer (who will do exactly the same). If you do it yourself please enter your own name as the reference.

Tripadvisor Reviews

These days online reviews are how very many things are judged, and Tripadvisor is the main source of these for the EFVGA, so please encourage people to leave a review for the EFVGA on Tripadvisor, there are cards available for this purpose. In practice it is the guide who will be the trigger for this rather than the co-ordinator, but it should be mentioned here.

Conclusion

Once all the tours have been sent off, you should replace the umbrellas in the bag and replace any leaflets that you may have taken from the store-room. It is important when putting the umbrellas back in the bag that you put them in handle first, as removing them if they are the other way round is very difficult and has led to damage. If you are in the afternoon slot, you should take down and replace the banner. That does not take very long, it is easier than putting it up. As long as you have not decided to lead a tour yourself, you should be free to go about 20 minutes after the start time.