

Samhuinn 2026 Group Organiser Application Guidance:

Please read this before filling in your GO application form, even if you've GOed many times before!

Before you complete your application form, you will need to have read the following documents - we advise that you do this together with your co-GOs.

- GO Agreement and Role description ([available here](#))
- The BFS Code of Conduct ([available here](#))
- And this guidance document.

If you have any questions arising from any of the documents, please contact goapplications@beltane.org or blues@beltane.org.

The deadline for applications is 11:59pm on 14 August 2026.

What is Samhuinn?

Samhuinn is when we celebrate and acknowledge the transition of Summer into Winter. Our festival is a modern reimagining of an ancient Celtic celebration of the turning seasons. The goddess in her Crone form (the Cailleach) will reveal herself and tip the balance into the dark half of the year, enabling Winter to advance, while protecting the dying spirit of Summer so that it may be born anew. The story is portrayed a little differently each year, and is built around the ideas that come from our community, so there is lots of room for your interpretation, creativity and fire!

Our Venue:

This year we are, once again, returning to Calton Hill.

Closed Groups and Projects:

If you are considering running a closed group (ie: a group with no open auditions for members), please drop us a line to goapplications@beltane.org *before* the application deadline, telling us why the group needs to be closed.

If you have an idea that is more limited in scope than a traditional group, you may want to submit it as a Project rather than a Group: the distinction is a little vague, but in principle projects are low-commitment activities that volunteers can sign up to even if they're part of another group. We've seen art installations, walking meetups, and body doubling presented as projects.

Group Scope:

(This isn't directly relevant to the application form, but we wanted to include this and the section below on burnout here where potential GOs can see it.)

Our festivals have had groups with a whole range of levels of complexity and commitment, but a group absolutely does not have to be complicated or high commitment to be dazzling. Some of the most memorable and enjoyable groups - to participate in and to witness - have been based around doing one simple thing, and doing it well. Consider what your group's key intent is, and how your intent might influence your group's scope. Some things you might find useful to think about could include:

- How often will your group need to meet up to do what you want to do?
- Or, if your key intent is simply "to meet up twice a week, spin some fire and have a nice time", how can you best do that?
- How have people run groups like yours before? What resources might they be able to give you? (E.g. can you reuse props, repurpose costumes, ask to use an exercise you really liked, and save yourself some work?)
- How much are you asking of yourself and your group members outside of practices, and how can you communicate that clearly up front? How much does that extra work matter to your group's intent (i.e. what's optional and what's necessary)?
- If you find that the amount of work you and your group are doing is becoming too much, what are the things you could cut down on?
- And, conversely, what things would you like to do (safely!) if you find that your group is hungry for more?

If you'd like to chat about managing the scope of your group, please always feel free to ask a Blue or a Board member - we want to burn out fire toys, not volunteers.

GO Burnout:

We're all here because we want to see a wonderful festival happen. GOing a group can be extremely rewarding and tremendous fun, but does come with a lot of commitment.

If you want to GO a group but are worried about workload or about burning out, you are always welcome to come and talk to the Board or Blues about ways we can help you manage things like scope, scale, paperwork, and figuring out logistics. Take some time at this stage to consider who your support system is, and how you'll make sure that you yourself are looked after through the run up. Talk to your potential co-GOs about establishing your boundaries, especially regarding workload and time commitment.

Tied up with all of this is making sure that you're GOing for the right reasons - which are generally along the lines of **"I'm excited about this and I want to run this group"**. Are you and your potential co-GOs all enthusiastically consenting to putting in an application? Please be aware that we use the term "co-GO" to refer to the other GO(s) in your group. They are not deputies: all names on the GO application have equal responsibility for the group, unless you have discussed this and come to a separate arrangement.

Having said that, we recommend that once your group is closed, you consider taking a potential future GO under your wing. This could involve some shadowing or delegating of tasks to them. Responsibility ultimately lies with the GO though.

If you are feeling pressure, whether from yourself or others, to run a group when you don't want to, remember that it is okay for a group to not run in any given festival. And especially remember that you, personally, do not need to organise a group - *even if* nobody else is available to run it. We are, first and foremost, volunteers, and your wellbeing is by far the most important thing.

Leading and Attending Rehearsals:

It's important that all Group Organisers are able to both lead and attend their group's practices and rehearsals - Group Organisers are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their group members during rehearsals, which is why it's so important that we have a careful and considered GO selection process. If you have a regular commitment that means you aren't available to attend rehearsals, and you expect to leave this to others or your co-GO, we won't be able to accept your proposal.

But remember - proposals don't have to be big or complicated, so if you're in a position like this, think about how you can scale your proposal down so that you can attend every rehearsal.

Contingency Planning:

Sometimes, things happen that are out of our control and can't be predicted. In the form, we'll ask you about what you'll do if one or more of your proposed GOs has to drop out. Consider what kind of contingency plans you can put in place to make sure that your group can either continue safely, or that your group members are looked after if your group can't continue. For example - how are you and your co-GOs going to plan practices? Would each GO know how to lead a practice if the other GOs are ill? We can never plan for everything, but is there planning that you can do in advance (e.g. block booking practice spaces, writing up a timetable for your practice goals, getting your getting ready space booked as soon as possible), so if a GO has to drop out, the remaining GOs can keep going while they recruit a replacement?

Do not assume that a Blue can step in to lead a group if something goes wrong. The Blues are a performance group in themselves, while working closely with the Board, Event Coordinator, Court and GOs to make sure the event happens. They are not, in any circumstance, replacement GOs.

Volunteer Accessibility:

Consider what reasonable accommodations you're able to provide in order to meet the access needs of volunteers who try out for your group. This could include things like having your practices somewhere near a bathroom, giving space for people to check in with you about their physical or mental needs at the start of each practice, or chatting about people's communication styles and needs. If your group involves something physically demanding, like acrobatics, dance, or building structures - how will you support your members in cases of injury?

Also consider what information prospective group members might need to make an informed decision whether to apply. There is a section in the application form where we ask you to describe the level and nature of commitment you intend for your group.

Budgeting:

We'll ask you about your estimated budget in the application form - this is both so we know you've had a think about what your group will reasonably cost, and to give you a chance to put some figures together and work out what you'll need to ask from your group members. We don't expect you to have any accurate figures at this stage, and we certainly don't expect you to have booked things like rehearsal spaces yet! Just make your best reasonable guess for what you're likely to spend - and feel free to ask the board, or perhaps friends who have GOed recently, for advice on this if you get stuck.

Disclosure Scotland Certificate:

In response to safeguarding concerns that BFS have been made aware of, the Board have changed the application form and some of the processes around selection.

After selection, successful GOs will be given instructions and a deadline to submit a current Level 1 Disclosure Certificate. A basic (Level 1) disclosure is a criminal background check that shows if you have any "unspent" criminal convictions. Getting a disclosure certificate involves filling in an online form with [Disclosure Scotland](#).

The board will be able to provide you with advice and support with this, and can take you through it step by step - you will be given a contact detail once you have been selected. A Basic Disclosure Certificate costs £25, which BFS will reimburse you for. (If paying the £25 fee upfront is not financially accessible to you, please just let us know and we'll arrange accommodations.) It's valid for three years, and can be very useful to have for job applications and other voluntary work.

Making sure that people in positions of authority have gone through disclosure is an important part of ensuring the safety of our members. BFS will remove a GO if, having not declared it, they are found to have been convicted or cautioned for any crime of a sexual or

violent nature, or if they have unspent cautions or unspent convictions for dishonesty or theft.

If you have something to declare, you must email safeguarding@beltane.org, where we will give you the opportunity to put any offence into context, explain circumstances, and give us a chance to effectively assess and consider the risks in advance of your application. We expect you to be fully transparent with your co-GOs. By submitting the application without having taken this opportunity, we consider that you have no criminal convictions or cautions to declare.

If a GO is asked to submit a certificate, they will need to submit it by the deadline given, or they will not be permitted to continue in post.

This measure only applies for individuals who are new to GOing, and GOs who have not submitted a disclosure within the past three (3) calendar years - **so if you submitted a disclosure check to us for any festival since Samhuinn 2024, you won't have to do it again this festival.**

We also require disclosure checks from all members of BFS in a position of authority - the Board, the Blues, and the Court, as well as GOs.

If you have any questions about disclosure, please contact safeguarding@beltane.org

Ready to apply?

We can't wait to hear about your ideas!

Submit your application by 11:59pm on 14 August 2026.

[GO Application Form](#)

[Project Application Form](#)

If you need an extension, please email goapplications@beltane.org before the deadline. Please note that extensions may not be possible if volunteer capacity means that we cannot fairly consider applications after the selection panel meets.

What happens after you apply?

After the deadline, the Board and Blues will consider all applications, and together they will make a decision on all applications. The Samhuinn 2026 selection panel will be held on 15/16 August 2026. If we receive more than one application to run the same group, we evaluate each individually, then consider the needs of the festival to see if both can be viable. **Some applicants may be invited in for a chat** to talk about their application to help us reach a decision.

We'll then notify every applicant of our decision (including if further chats are needed) – aiming to notify everyone by email, by the end of the next day if possible. Above all, we want the process to be open and transparent, as we value all our volunteers in every capacity, and want everyone to feel supported throughout the process.

Congratulations, you made it to the end of the GO application guidance! We're very much looking forward to hearing all your ideas for the stories you'd like to tell this festival!