

Volunteer Guidance

Gardening

1.0 Introduction

The Bushey Rose Garden is an historic Grade II listed public garden situated in the heart of Bushey. The garden was restored in 2010 with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery and Hertsmere Borough Council. The garden is managed by the council with support from the Friends of the Rose Garden.

The majority of the garden's maintenance is undertaken by a paid on-site gardener. However, volunteers play an important role in supporting the gardener in promoting the garden, providing information on the garden and its history, assisting at public events and helping with day-to-day gardening tasks such as dead heading and planting.

Volunteering is a great way to help others, it's a way to have fun, meet new people and to can gain some valuable new skills and experience. Volunteers play an integral role in adding value to the communities' enjoyment of the Bushey Rose Garden. As such they are a valued part of the operation and management of the Bushey Rose Garden. People volunteer for many different reasons and volunteers can come from all sections of the community.

Each volunteer will receive a copy of this document for reference. A copy will be kept on-site at the Bushey Rose Garden.

2.0 Contact

If you have any concerns or queries contact the gardener in the Bushey Rose Garden or call the Parks and Amenities Section on Freephone 0800 731 1810. Or email: parks@hertsmere.gov.uk.

3.0 Responsibilities

Hertsmere Borough Council will not use volunteers to undertake, or replace, the work of existing paid employees.

Our responsibilities:

Hertsmere Borough Council will:

- Provide clearly defined achievable tasks which will benefit the Rose Garden.
- Provide a key contact to support you in your volunteer tasks.
- Reimburse reasonable out of pocket volunteering expenses.
- Ensure volunteers comply with obligations and responsibilities under Hertsmere Borough Council's policies and procedures.
- Provide volunteers with safe working practices to follow.
- Keep you informed of changes and developments which affect you.
- Encourage, support and value your volunteering efforts.
- Offer training relevant to the task you are undertaking

And Yours:

As a volunteer we ask that you:

- Work with us to achieve the aims and objectives of the Rose Garden.
- Are committed and reliable.
- Air problems and issues as soon as they arise.
- Complete timesheets.
- Attend relevant training.
- Are an ambassador for the Rose Garden at all times.
- Provide all the relevant information to obtain a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure (if required).
- You may stop volunteering whenever you wish. However, it would be appreciated if you could notify us of your intention to stop volunteering with us, as this would enable us to prepare for your leaving the organisation.
- Work in accordance with Hertsmere Borough Council's obligations and responsibilities.

4.0 Recruitment

We hope to engage committed and enthusiastic volunteers to help staff deliver the aims and objectives for the Bushey Rose Garden.

Interested people can apply to be a registered volunteer by using the Volunteer Application Form available on the website, or on request by post or email. The on-site gardener will also take details of people interested in volunteering if they enquire in the garden.

On receipt of a completed application form, the on-site gardener will contact you to meet in the garden and discuss the role in more detail.

5.0 Outline of volunteer gardener role

The volunteer gardener role includes assisting the on-site gardener with gardening tasks such as rose pruning, deadheading, tying in climbers, staking perennials, planting annual plants, sweeping and weeding. Estimate of 2-3 hours per week (summer) / fortnight (winter).

Tasks are not limited or restricted to those listed and new ideas will be considered if discussed in advance with the on-site gardener and Hertsmere Borough Council.

Other volunteer roles include helping with education visits and events. If you are interested in either of these roles please contact us.

6.0 Equal Opportunities and Diversity

The management and operation of the Bushey Rose Garden will follow Hertsmere Borough Council's Equal Opportunities Policy (available on request). You will be treated in accordance with the policy and will be expected to abide by it. We are committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued, and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute.

7.0 Induction

All new volunteer gardeners will have a compulsory induction session with the on-site gardener. This will include the role of volunteering, health and safety, training needs and working with the public. If a volunteer has any issues or concerns they should discuss them with the on-site gardener.

8.0 Training

Volunteer gardeners will receive specific on-the-job training to provide them with the information, skills and safe working practices necessary for them to perform their volunteer assignment. Training will be provided by the on-site gardener, by Hertsmere Borough Council or a recognised external training agency. If volunteers feel they need more specific training for any task they should speak with the gardener or member of council staff concerned.

9.0 Equipment

All tools will be provided by Hertsmere Borough Council and must be returned at the end of the task. Where applicable, specialised safety equipment (e.g. high visibility jackets) will be provided. Volunteers are not permitted to use their own tools or equipment without prior consent from the council.

10.0 Supervision, support and feedback

Volunteers are supported and supervised by the gardener. Further support is offered by the Parks & Amenities team. Any problems or issues that arise should be discussed direct with the gardener. The gardener will contact volunteers to discuss progress on tasks and in turn will be relying on feedback from volunteers to improve aspects of the garden. Please let us know if you need assistance. Volunteers will not be asked to work alone in the garden.

11.0 Recording progress – timesheets

To receive funding from the Heritage Lottery and Big Lottery Fund the council must produce documentary evidence of donated volunteer time. Therefore, it is crucial that any time donated by volunteers must be recorded on a timesheet. Timesheets are available from the on-site gardener and must be completed at the end of each volunteer day.

12.0 Travel and transport

Hertsmere Borough Council is committed to reducing emissions of Greenhouse gases and protecting the environment. Therefore, wherever possible, please use public transport, car share, walk or cycle.

13.0 Expenses

Our organisation values our volunteers and is actively making sure that barriers do not prevent volunteer involvement. Volunteers will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses such as travel where reasonable. The mileage rate for cars is 50p/mile and for bicycles 20p/mile (these figures may be subject to change). Costs can only be reimbursed if the volunteer expenses form and timesheets are completed. Expense forms are available from the on-site gardener.

Original receipts and/or tickets must be produced with expense forms. We aim to reimburse expenses within 14 days of receiving expenses forms and timesheets.

14.0 Insurance

Registered volunteers are covered by the Hertsmere Borough Council's combined liability insurance. Timesheets must be completed as an insurance requirement.

However, insurance does not extend to volunteers vehicles or personal possessions. Please ensure that you are covered by your own car insurance when driving for your volunteer work.

15.0 Health and safety

Hertsmere Borough Council aims to anticipate risks and remove potential hazards where practical.

Volunteers will be made aware of health and safety issues at their induction. Volunteers are also responsible for health and safety and must use their own judgement, in addition to advice from the on-site gardener, when carrying out tasks. Each volunteer has a responsibility to report any incident or any breach of health and safety, including accidents, dangerous occurrences and suspicious circumstances.

Any matters arising should be reported immediately to the on-site gardener.

An Incident Book is kept on-site and must be completed after every incident or near miss, involving a volunteer, member of the public or contractor in the garden.

A first aid kit is kept in the tool shed on site.

Volunteers should only carry out tasks in the garden under the direction of the gardener and should not work in the garden alone.

Tetanus

Soil borne disease transmitted through soil via cuts, abrasions and puncture wounds. Volunteers should ensure:

- They are vaccinated and that it is up to date - a "booster" is usually required every ten years.
- Wear gloves as much as possible, if practical and safe to do so.
- Avoid exposing cuts and grazes, keep covered.
- Remove thorns and splinters as soon as possible.

Toxicara canis

Micro organism in dog faeces which can cause blindness in children. The risk to adults is not considered to be great provided normal standards of hygiene are maintained.

As prevention, volunteers should wear gloves. If dog faeces come into contact with skin or clothes, wash thoroughly with soap and water without delay.

Bites and stings

While these rarely present major hazards, it is important to be aware that there is a risk of anaphylactic shock to some people. This is a serious allergic reaction which can be recognised by widespread blotchy skin, swelling of the face and neck and tongue, impaired breathing and a rapid pulse. It is caused by rapid dilation of the body's blood vessels and constriction of airways.

If someone reacts to a sting or bite as described, urgent medical assistance must be sought and the person taken to hospital immediately.

Personal hygiene

Always wash hands with soap/hand cleanser before handling food or treating an injury. The on-site gardener will provide clean water, soap and clean towels on site or antiseptic wipes for volunteers.

Always clean (using sterile solution) and cover cuts and scratches with a waterproof dressing. Avoid work that may contaminate the dressing, or wear gloves.

16.0 Clothing

Volunteer gardeners should ensure they are wearing suitable clothing for the job in hand, together with appropriate footwear. Clothing should be comfortable, hard wearing and suited to the weather conditions, which may change.

Volunteers should always wear stout footwear to protect their feet. Boots with a substantial tread are recommended and steel toecap protection is essential. Hertsmere Borough Council will provide each volunteer with one pair of safety boots. Volunteers will be expected to look after their boots and return them if they stop volunteering. You should avoid wearing trainers or shoes even during the summer months as these afford little in the way of protection or support.

The council will make available protective work gloves for volunteers for use on tasks as appropriate. Please be aware that no reimbursement can be made towards the cost of any work wear purchased by the volunteer, or towards the cost or replacement due to fair wear and tear or damage incurred during the work.

Volunteers will be provided with a name badge to identify them which should be worn at all times whilst carrying out volunteer tasks.

17.0 Risk Assessment

The on-site gardener/Hertsmere Borough Council completes a risk assessment prior to any tasks with volunteers and volunteers may ask to see a copy of it any time.

18.0 Conduct

We are open to participation by people with a diverse range of abilities and outlooks. However, we do expect our volunteers to follow reasonable instructions, and not do or say anything which compromises the safety of themselves, other volunteers, staff or members of the public, or which compromises the integrity or work of the council.

Where a volunteer does not meet/or comply with these minimum standards of behaviour, or turns out to be unsuitable for their chosen role, we will work with them to identify opportunities which are more suited to their skills, or to mutually overcome obstacles to their involvement.

In the rare case that obstacles cannot be overcome the volunteering will have to cease. Wherever possible the volunteer will be referred to another organisation that might be more suitable for them.

Possible grounds for dismissal may include, but are not limited to, the following: gross misconduct or insubordination, failure to comply with, for instance, Health and Safety or Equal Opportunities legislation, being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, theft of property or misuse of equipment or materials, abuse or mistreatment of park users or co-workers, failure to abide by policies and procedures, failure to meet physical or mental standards of performance, and failure to satisfactorily perform assigned duties.

19.0 Confidentiality

Volunteers must at all times work in a trustworthy manner to ensure and observe confidentiality of information, and security under data protection legislation.

Hertsmere Borough Council will treat all volunteer records and other information as confidential. Such records are only available to relevant staff for the effective management and development of volunteer services and are stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Only volunteer names, recorded hours and tasks will be forwarded on to the Lottery for monitoring purposes (see Section 14 – timesheets). Ethnicity and age is sent anonymously to the Lottery.

20.0 Revision of guidance

This policy will be reviewed by the on-site gardener on an annual basis with Hertsmere Borough Council to make sure that it complies with current local and national policies and good practice.