



Volunteering at Myatt's Fields Park

Welcome

Thank you for volunteering at Myatt's Fields Park.

We work with our local community and collaborate with many fantastic local organisations for everyone's benefit. As a volunteer, your contribution will be lasting, positive and impactful.

This pack includes information about volunteering at Myatt's, along with guidelines, policies and forms which you will need to fill out.

We hope that you enjoy your time with us while learning some basic concepts of horticulture at Myatt's Fields Park.

Tony Danford

Horticultural Manager, Myatt's Fields Park

What are our key aims and objectives?

We believe that every person, regardless of their background, should be able to access the stress-reducing health benefits of contact with nature, and we seek to encourage this through providing a beautiful, varied and species-rich park landscape where people can relax, meet friends and play games. Many people find that practical gardening especially helps to promote calmer, more positive moods, and we hope to facilitate this health benefit through our park volunteer scheme.

Our wider work helps to combat the hardships of poverty and inequality in our diverse area through growing young vegetable and other edible plants in large quantities, which we give out to local community garden groups each year to grow-on and distribute to vulnerable community members.

Why volunteer with us?

We actively seek to encourage volunteering and give people the opportunity to:

- Experience working with- and in- nature with its health benefits
- Help make our park even more beautiful
- Increase our biodiversity and planting resilience and so help directly with mitigating the effects of climate change
- Meet new people, develop confidence and social skills
- Make a positive contribution to your community
- Learn gardening skills
- Exercise in a beautiful, natural environment
- Obtain a reference of employment if needed

What will you do?

You'll be expected to help with general horticulture throughout the park, including:

- Weeding and mulching beds
- Pruning and clearing
- Hedge trimming
- Planting
- Mowing and strimming
- Watering new planting

Tasks vary through the year: during the summer you'll typically be weeding and mulching flower borders and shrubberies and watering new plants.

As the seasons turn we might prepare areas for wildflower or annual seed sowing, planting, laying turf, or propagating plants.

During the winter we cut back, clear and prune, prepare ground for planting and carry out other essential winter maintenance.

Tony and Taye our gardeners will guide you through any gardening techniques required. Complete beginners are very welcome, but keen gardeners would also be much appreciated of course.

How will I keep safe from coronavirus?

We are very aware of Covid-19 risks at Myatt's Fields Park and we have been very carefully following government and WHO guidelines throughout.

We have also been monitoring park visitor behaviour – in terms of compliance with health guidance. We ask all volunteer park gardeners to abide by <https://www.myattsfieldspark.info/policies.html> to minimise the risk to themselves and others.

While gardening at the park, please make sure you:

- Do not attend if you or anyone in your circle has Covid or the symptoms of a respiratory illness - sneezes, sniffles, temperature, cough etc.
- Wear gardening gloves - we will provide these.
- Wear a face mask if required by government guidelines. Currently (Feb 2022) we do not require a facemask to be worn unless working in close contact with another person or you are unvaccinated.
- Keep at least 2 metres apart from all other park users. Avoid gardening in spaces where you can't achieve this.
- If you are unvaccinated you are welcome to volunteer but we will find work from you away from other volunteers.

Staff and Health & Safety

Volunteers will be gently supervised to help ensure you work safely and appropriately at all times.

All staff at Myatt's have been trained in Health and Safety procedures. Where appropriate, volunteers will be given a tour of the site, shown where the fire exits are, where the first aid boxes are situated and how to report accidents at work.

Training and Support

Volunteers will be supported by staff on site to ensure your safe wellbeing.

Our Horticultural Manager (Tony) and Gardener (Taye) will lead all park related activities. The Volunteer Manager (Rajia) will provide all other support.

How will volunteers be informed about service developments?

If requested by the volunteer, volunteers will have the opportunity to discuss their volunteer experience at an exit interview with the Volunteer Manager, with an opportunity to share their achievements at the end of the placement as well as shared on our webpage.

Through participation in the MFP Gardening Volunteers WhatsApp group, volunteers will be kept informed about relevant developments in the park.

Volunteers will also be invited to participate in our volunteer field trips, which provide a chance for our volunteers to visit other London parks and gardens. Previous trips have included Kew Gardens and Chelsea Flower Show. All expenses (entrance fee, travel & food) will be provided for.

During warmer weather, there are also free monthly volunteer lunches on a Friday lunchtime where you can meet up and chat with other volunteers and staff.

Volunteering on the day

- Volunteer sessions take place every Wednesday and Friday, throughout the year.
- On registering, volunteers are added to the MFP Park Volunteers WhatsApp group. Tony the Horticultural Manager sends an early text to the WhatsApp group every Wednesday and Friday morning, letting volunteers know what work is being done where that day so people can decide whether they'd like to attend or not. Volunteers wishing to attend respond via the WhatsApp group.
- Volunteers can arrive at any time between 9.30am and noon. The sessions are open and informal, so you can arrive and leave whenever you like and work for as little or long as you like - everyone's very welcome.
- We usually work until 1.00pm, sometimes later. We provide gloves and tools, and face masks if you need one and don't have one yourself.
- Everyone volunteering gets a free coffee or other drink of choice from the park cafe at 11.00am. Volunteers can also get 10% off any food they buy from the cafe, on the day of volunteering.

MFP Progression

Applicable to long term volunteers who express interest and require support into employment:

As part as our work with volunteers we will give you an evaluation of your time with us. The evaluation will include dates and times of your volunteering and what you achieved.

This evaluation which also has a signed statement can be used as a reference

Recruitment and equal opportunities of Volunteers

Myatt's Fields Park has an equal opportunities policy and we are keen to ensure that it is working effectively.

Local community groups as well as local organisations working within our catchment have been informed about the volunteer opportunities at Myatt's Fields Park.

If any volunteer sees volunteering at Myatt's as part of their ongoing career development, you can ask for a meeting with MFP staff to discuss next steps.

Grievances or complaints

Any grievances or complaints by the volunteer or about the volunteer will be addressed by the Horticultural Manager on the day or later by the Volunteer Manager.

Complaints will be addressed immediately and with strictest confidentiality. Discretion and action will be identified upon investigation of the complaint and dealt within a maximum 10-day period.

Volunteers will always be notified and kept updated.

Policy

This volunteer policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by management.

Contact information

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