

Volunteering in Parks and Green Spaces during Covid-19 Restrictions 2020

Guidance for Land Managers and Protocol for Volunteers

Updated 1st June 2020

Introduction

These guidelines are in line with the revised government guidance on [accessing green space safely](#) and [volunteering](#), in place from 1st June 2020, we will update this document as restrictions are further eased.

It has been developed primarily for Councils [but may also be adopted by Friends of Parks Groups, where a formal agreement is in place with the landowner to manage, or part manage a site]. It is proposed that the guidelines be **modified** by each Council [or other organisation] to suit their requirements.

The first part of this document is intended to form the basis of a protocol for safe volunteering and can be adapted as needed; the second part is additional notes and information for land managers.

Part 1

Protocol for Volunteering in Parks and Green Spaces for [insert organisation name]

As some lockdown restrictions have been eased, you can now volunteer as an individual (alone) or in groups of up to six people from different households, but you must still follow social distancing guidelines.

You can volunteer [if you are aged 18 years or over] and [subject to A below], to undertake certain activities approved by [insert organisation name].

Please read the guidance below carefully:

A. You can volunteer if:

- you're well
- nobody in your household has coronavirus symptoms, i.e. a cough or high temperature
- you're under 70*
- you're not pregnant
- you do not have any [long-term health conditions that make you vulnerable to coronavirus](#)

*The above is taken from [government guidance on volunteering during the coronavirus pandemic](#), some councils have indicated they would not require volunteers to be under 70, if other conditions are satisfied.

- B. You can only undertake certain activities, that [insert organisation name] can provide insurance cover for, such as: litter picking or watering plants/trees [you may wish to list activities here that are suitable under the current conditions].

- C. Please get in touch if you wish to volunteer and we can let you know what activities you can do to support your local park or green space. Please note we may ask you to

complete a brief risk assessment form depending on the activity. Contact us at: [\[insert contact details\]](#).

IF YOU VOLUNTEER PLEASE FOLLOW THIS GUIDANCE WHILST UNDERTAKING YOUR ACTIVITY:

1. Ideally, do not volunteer for a site where you need to take public transport, stay local if possible.
2. Volunteer alone or in groups of no more than 6 people (who can be from different households) following social distancing guidelines. It is still advisable to try to limit the number of people you work with and to work side by side to reduce the risk of infection. For more details on social distancing please refer to government guidance [staying alert and safe \(social distancing\)](#).
3. It is advisable to volunteer at quieter times, such as early mornings to enable you to maintain a safe distance from others.
4. Numbers volunteering on a site or area may have to be restricted, at any given time to enable social distancing. You will be informed in advance of such restrictions.
5. Please do not promote the time and place you intend to undertake any activities to avoid the risk of large social gatherings.
6. Wash your hands before and after undertaking any activity with soap and hot water [or hand sanitiser].
7. You should have hand sanitiser with you and wash your hands frequently; ideally take a flask of hot water, soap and paper towels with you.
8. Do not wash your hands (or tools) in water tanks/butts.
9. Avoid touching your face while working, even if you are wearing gloves.
10. Wear gloves, to prevent infection, in case of cuts on hands.
11. Remember that gates, locks, benches etc. are used by everyone, use hand sanitiser after touching surfaces.
12. Do not share tools or equipment with others.
13. Disinfect tools (with a suitable solution) after you finish using them, especially main contact areas, such as handles.
14. Wash your hands when you get home.

Thank you for supporting your local park or green space.

Recommended PPE and equipment List

- Fully charged mobile phone in case of emergencies.
- One set of gardening gloves per person (wash after use)
- Hand sanitiser or a flask of hot water, soap and paper towels
- Anti-bac wipes maybe useful
- High viz jacket [\[add if required\]](#)

Part 2

Notes to Land Managers or Landowners

Under current coronavirus government guidance relating to volunteering, individuals that can leave the house can volunteer to undertake certain activities. Further, under current coronavirus regulations voluntary work is explicitly permitted for some activities: *“travel for the purposes of work or to provide voluntary or charitable services, where it is not reasonably possible for that person to work, or to provide those services, from the place where they are living;”*

Given that parks and green spaces remain open (whilst many places under coronavirus regulations must remain closed) coupled with the easing of restrictions relating to outdoor activities, land managers and land owners will be considering requests to volunteer in parks and green spaces.

Please see the points below:

- The issue for landowners to consider is whether volunteer work is necessary. Given that most landowners are carrying out horticulture, grounds maintenance and related work with their own employees and that larger than usual volumes of litter are being generated, it could be classified as ‘necessary’.
- Volunteers may be needed, due to staff shortages, to cover certain tasks such as watering new plant stock or litter picking, especially as the parks are becoming even busier with the easing of lockdown restrictions.
- Landowners need to ensure that the activities are treated as work, not as social gatherings, and are carried out safely and meet social distancing requirements [see link under 2 above].
- Land managers/landowner’s [or Friends of Parks Group - see below], should check which activities will be covered by their insurance under the current circumstances; [we know that some Councils in and beyond London are allowing activities such as litter picks and watering]. You may need to specify that volunteers are aged 18 years or over for insurance purposes.
- Consider first aid needs - such as access to first aid kits and assess if volunteers are able to self-administer basic first aid.
- Appropriate risk assessment forms, should be developed for completion by volunteers, where necessary, ahead of undertaking an activity. For examples and information about risk assessments please refer to:
 - [Bristol City Councils – procedures and forms for practical activities on Bristol’s parks and green spaces](#)
 - [Bexley Friends Group Information Pack](#) (pages 39 40)
- Where a formal agreement is in place with a landowner, that a site is managed or part managed and maintained by a Friend of Parks Group (or similar), any suitable activities must be covered by the Groups’ indemnity insurance and appropriate risk assessment forms in place. Where individuals are volunteering under a Friends of Park Group they should follow this guidance: **Protocol for Volunteering in Parks and Green Spaces**, or similar adapted version.

Other useful links

[Government Guidance and Support relating to Coronavirus](#)

[Arboricultural Association– Watering Young Trees in Dry Weather](#)

Acknowledgements and thanks:

We would like to thank the London Boroughs of Bexley and Barking and Dagenham for contributing to this document. We would like to acknowledge the work done by Bristol City Council and referred to in this document.