

VOLUNTEERING IN KNOWSLEY'S PARKS AND GREEN SPACES





Welcome

People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some it offers the chance to give something back to the community or make a difference to the people around them. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge, and improve their health and sense of wellbeing. There are many types of green space volunteering in Knowsley. They include dedicated 'Friends of Parks' groups, various sporting groups, environmental conservation groups, allotment committees and historical networks, to name a few.

We recognise the significant and valuable contribution that these volunteers provide, however we also recognise the need to support and attract new volunteers from all sections of the community.

This handbook is designed to provide information about the exciting volunteering opportunities at green spaces across Knowsley. Volunteers play an invaluable role in supporting the council to improve Knowsley's green environment and we hope you will join us.



What's involved?

Volunteers can support the council in a variety of environmental tasks including practical conservation work, wildlife surveying and help with guided walks. If you are considering volunteering ask yourself what you want to get out of volunteer work, and what type of tasks or activities appeal to you. Do you have a special skill, area of expertise or a passion for something? Let us know and we will try to incorporate this into your role where possible. We are here to provide support and train new and existing volunteers, so please don't be put off trying something that is new or different. Whatever your role, be assured that we value every contribution each volunteer makes to support our services and make a difference to their community.

Why volunteer?

Volunteering is a great way of making a difference to the green spaces you love. It provides an opportunity to say 'I did that' and make Knowsley's green and open spaces better for the people who visit and the wildlife that live there. There are lots of reasons to volunteer in our green spaces. You will be giving something back to your community, developing new skills, building on existing experience and knowledge, as well as meeting like-minded people and improving your health.

Volunteer registration

We ask all prospective volunteers to complete an application form to register their interest. Our volunteer application form can be found on the Knowsley Council website or by contacting any member of our team. We will then contact you to organise an informal chat to explain the role of a volunteer and give us both an opportunity to determine whether the role is right for you. We will ask questions about your interests, your skills and how much time you wish to commit to your volunteering role.

We will also ask you to provide health information to ensure you are able to carry out your tasks safely. All personal volunteer information is treated confidentially under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which replaces the Data Protection Act (DPA) 1998.

After the informal chat we will contact you to confirm whether or not you have been successful in your application and arrange a start date and induction.



Once you become a registered volunteer you will be:

- covered by the council's Public Liability Insurance whilst undertaking agreed activities;
- placed on our email circulation list for project newsletters and volunteering updates;
- invited to volunteer events and activities.



Induction and training

Experienced staff will organise an induction for all new volunteers, to help them adjust to their role and learn about what is involved.

The induction will include:

- an introduction to the staff and volunteer team;
- a brief outline of our policies and procedures;
- agreeing the days and times you wish to volunteer and agreed meeting points; and
- discussing any further questions you may have about your role.

We will offer basic training on how to use the appropriate tools and equipment relevant to the green space in which you will be working. Extra training sessions, for example guided health walk leadership, first aid, habitat surveying and habitat management or use of relevant equipment will be held periodically for volunteers to attend.





What to bring

We will provide all the tools and equipment needed for each task. However, we ask that you bring:

- waterproof clothing;
- stout footwear (either boots or wellingtons);
- lunch; and
- your personal medical essentials, if required.



If you are unable to source suitable clothing or footwear, please have a chat with us. Lack of clothing or footwear should not be a barrier to volunteering with us.

Lunch and breaks

If your volunteering session runs over a full day, we ask that you bring your own lunch and plenty to drink. Toilet facilities are available at some of our sites.

Health and safety

All volunteers must adhere to Knowsley Council's Health and Safety procedures. Staff will give detailed Health and Safety information relevant to each task. They will identify your First Aider and the location of the first aid kit. If you don't feel comfortable undertaking any task, please make us aware of this so that we can make appropriate adjustments.

Relationship with Knowsley Council

When you are volunteering you are representing Knowsley Council. We ask that you represent our organisation positively and professionally while undertaking your role and engaging with the public. Volunteering is the

gift of giving your time and is not a legally binding contract. There is no enforceable obligation for volunteers to attend or undertake set tasks and likewise Knowsley Council does not have to provide regular work or payment. Our arrangements are bound by honour, trust and mutual understanding and are not intended to be legally binding.

If you have a concern, please discuss it with one of our team as soon as possible. We have an open door policy and are committed to resolve any issues in a professional and unbiased manner.

If you are claiming any work-based benefits then please talk to your local Job Centre Plus to inform them of your volunteering role, particularly how many hours you are undertaking each week.

Code of Conduct

Knowsley Council will:

- ensure that you are trained and supported by experienced members of staff, who will provide continued support throughout your time with us;
- provide appropriate training and give clear instructions and ensure safe work systems of work for all volunteer roles and tasks;
- not discriminate against any person on the grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- listen to volunteers' grievances or feedback, endeavouring to address them where possible;
- treat all volunteers with respect and courtesy;
- regularly communicate with volunteers through verbal and written channels; and
- provide references for volunteers after a period of three months and up to two years after the volunteer has left the role.



Volunteers will:

- disclose any health condition which may affect their ability to carry out their volunteer role;
- follow all Health and Safety advice given by our staff. This includes wearing the correct Personal Protective Equipment and following instructions for safe working;
- provide notice if they are unable to attend a session or shift they are scheduled to attend;
- not discriminate against any person on the grounds of race, gender, disability or sexual orientation;
- highlight any issues, grievances or feedback with our staff as a first point of contact;
- treat other volunteers, council staff and members of the public with respect and courtesy;
- not use alcohol or illegal drugs before or during their volunteering session; and
- not smoke in council buildings and vehicles.

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read this handbook. Hopefully it answers a lot of the questions you may have about volunteering in general and green space volunteering for Knowsley Council. Please contact a member of our team if you have a question that has not been answered in this handbook. Finally, thank you for being willing to give your time and energy to work in partnership with the council to make Knowsley a better place to live and work.





Knowsley Council

For more information contact **0151 443 2819**,
email greenspacevolunteers@knowsley.gov.uk
or visit www.knowsley.gov.uk and search 'green space volunteering.'
Follow us on Knowsley Parks on Facebook and Twitter **@KnowsleyParks**

