

Bristol Parks Volunteer Programme Guidelines

Caring for parks and wildlife in your own time



Supporting parks in your own time:

We know that many people wish to support parks in their own time, rather than in a group. This might be occasionally or regularly, but at a time that suits the individual and at their own risk. Bristol Parks support this type of volunteering as an active citizen and provide the guidance below for safety and wellbeing.

This guidance supports individuals or pairs to undertake lower risk park maintenance and improvement activities in their own time, without supervision:

- Lower risk activities include litter picking, weeding, mulching, light pruning and species monitoring and recording.
- Anyone caring for a park or green space must ensure actions compliment site management plans, Friends of Group plans and adhere to [park byelaws](#).
- Any planting proposals need to be discussed on a site-by-site basis. There are various considerations including management plans, maintenance and trusted plant suppliers.
- ✘ We don't authorise untrained residents to do higher risk, unsupervised volunteering in parks. This includes activities
 - using sharp hand tools (for example, axes or saws)
 - using power tools (for example, a strimmer)
 - in higher risk locations (for example, on steep slopes, or within 0.5 metres of a pond)

We are grateful to those who dedicate their time to looking after parks and green spaces. If you are planning to do so in your own time, on your own or in pairs we advise:

- **Use [Bristol Parks Risk Assessments](#)**. Consider all risks associated with your activity.
- **Don't promote the time and place** you intend to undertake independent activities. This will avoid an unplanned group session without a trained leader in place.
- **Let someone know** where you are going and when to expect you to return. Let them know when you get home.
- **Wash your hands with soap and warm water** before and after undertaking any activity in a park or green space. Use hand sanitiser if you take a break or remove gloves.
- **Tools and equipment:** Use lower risk tools you know how to use safely. Low risk tools include spades, forks, trowels, shears, pruners, loppers, hoe and rake. Check tools and kit for damage before and after.

Recommended kit list

- Fully charged mobile phone
- Gardening gloves
- Hand sanitiser
- First Aid Kit

Insurance:

Individuals supporting parks in their own time following these guidelines will be covered by Bristol City Council's public liability insurance. Individuals or pairs of active citizens will not have personal accident insurance cover unless they have additional training.

Bristol Parks Health and Safety **trained volunteers** are covered under BCC public liability insurance as well as personal accident insurance when

1. leading groups
2. carrying out agreed, scheduled, individual volunteering

Find out about the training here:

[Apply to be a Parks and Green Space Lead Volunteer](#)

Contact us:

Questions or concerns about supporting parks as a volunteer or active citizen? get in touch with Bristol Parks Volunteer Team, Parks Green Spaces:
parkvolunteers@bristol.gov.uk