

Volunteering in Parks Newsletter - December 2021

What a year it has been! Firstly, a massive Thank You to everyone for the time you've dedicated to Bristol's green spaces.

Despite much of the uncertainty from 2020 rolling into 2021, we've been continually impressed by the work of Parks Volunteers across the city. Please read on to find out about upcoming opportunities and good news.

Volunteer Celebration and Awards 29th January 2022

We've teamed up with YourPark to host a morning to celebrate you all, on 29/01/2022.

As part of this, we're asking you to nominate either your Group, project or maybe a long-standing volunteer who you think deserves a special mention. The project nominations will also be put to a "people's choice" vote to win £200 for their project!

[Get nominating](#) and [join us on 29th January!](#)



Health & Safety Training

This year, 73 new volunteers have completed the Parks Health & Safety Training for Group Leaders.

This means there are 73 more of you getting out there, organising and leading work parties or activities in your local parks. That's something to be celebrated! Thank you to everyone who has given their time to completing the course. We hope you're finding it easy to get your risk assessments and activity plans signed off. Please reach out if you need a refresher or have any questions on Health & Safety processes.

We're taking a little break from running the course in-person over the next couple of months, but a course is scheduled on [Friday 4th February](#). Please book if you would like to become a group leader.

You can also [request the online version](#) of the course at any time. This is finalised and signed off by a short, in-person site visit at your green space.



Volunteer Database

Thank you to everyone recording hours of your Friends of Group, or attendance of staff-led groups.



Bristol Parks



Over 50 Friends of Groups have now created a profile, which is helping build a picture of the scale of work carried out by people like you! If you've got a backlog of hours, [please input them before the end of the year](#) so we can demonstrate your impact to Parks Managers and the wider Council. You don't need to record each individual session if you're pressed for time, a monthly roundup is fine – and please remember to input the total number of hours for the group you're recording.

i.e., A single 10am – 12pm session with 8 people would be 16 hours (the system can't yet multiply the hours by the number of volunteers!).

Love Your Park Grantees

You'll have likely heard about the projects awarded funding through the Love Your Park grants. If not, take a look at some of the positive stories on the [YourPark website](#). Working with YourPark has allowed Bristol Parks to support this type of opportunity for the first time. We're looking forward to building on this in 2022 and making it easier for people to do great things in their Parks.

Staff-led sessions returning in 2022

Many of you have attended our staff-led sessions – thank you. We hope you've enjoyed them! These will be returning in January, bookable at the [Volunteer Database](#).

We ran a group at **Victoria Park** over the summer but struggled with grounds staff capacity to make it a success. The good news is we have learned from this. We will resume the sessions in mid-January with a dedicated staff member and lovely volunteer, Ellie (whom some of you might have heard from after emailing the "ParkVolunteers" inbox – thank you Ellie for all your hard work!).

Ashton Court has been a hive of volunteer activity. We've seen the Gardening and Ranger-led groups become increasingly popular, giving the Estate a massive boost. The gardens look better than ever (Thank You!), and the Estate is benefitting from restoration works which wouldn't be possible without you!

At **Blaise Estate**, the Rangers have been working with Friends of Blaise and GroundWork to run a fortnightly group. It's been great to see more young people getting involved in the Estate through the partnership. A good reminder that it's often worth linking up with others to widen participation.

At **Stoke Park**, our Ranger-led sessions have been building as Ash settles into their role. We've seen incredible dedication from people who have worked alongside them every week (and often more frequently – massive thank you to Simon!). This has given us the chance to start planning for better management and habitat improvement on site which we previously couldn't get done.



ParkWork and Green Social Prescribing

We were successful in our funding bid for ParkWork to partner with YourPark to deliver Green Social Prescribing (GSP) activities in 2022. Details coming soon!

We're one of 14 local projects to have received funding. We hope this will help bring a better understanding of how time in green spaces is crucial to wellbeing. Keep an eye on [ParkWork](#) project updates and updates from me about how we are working with the rest of Bristol's GSP projects to support people to get outdoors for their health.

The funding will also include a second round of the Green Social Prescribing introduction course we ran with the [North Bristol nature Recovery Ranger](#), Phoebe, this Autumn for Friends of Groups.

There will be another round of [GSP funding opening in February 2022](#) – keep your eyes peeled if this is something you are interested in.



Bristol Parks Forum meeting 26th February 2022

We're hoping that this meeting will be happening in person. It will be such a pleasure to meet with you all if it's safe to do so. Sign up at [the BPF website](#).

Massive thanks to the Bristol Parks Forum team for keeping us all connected though the past couple of years with online versions of the Bristol Parks Forum. Here's to 2022!

New Friends of Groups

A final mention to all the new Friends of Groups who have come together over the last year or so. You have all been so patient and passionate.

We are truly thankful for the time you dedicate to your local parks and hope we can continue building the relationships we have begun to grow. Personally, I have found it lovely to see our staff finally able to get back out there in the park with you, which we all know works best when talking about green spaces.

