LONDON BOROUGH OF BEXLEY

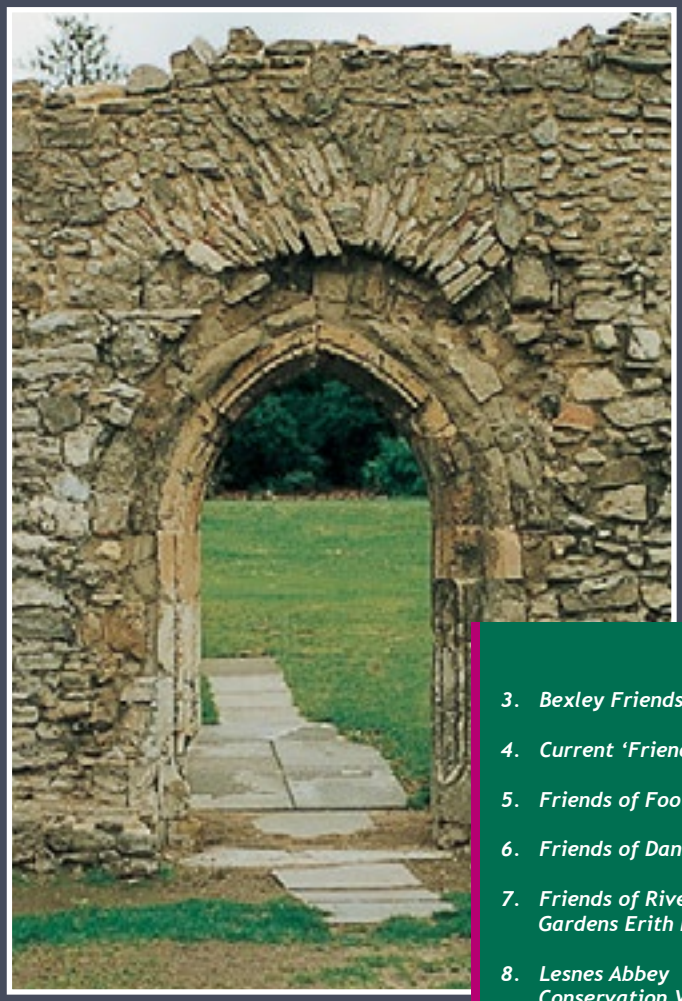
www.bexley.gov.uk



Parks Friends Group

Information Pack

Parks and Open Spaces Department



Lesnes Abbey

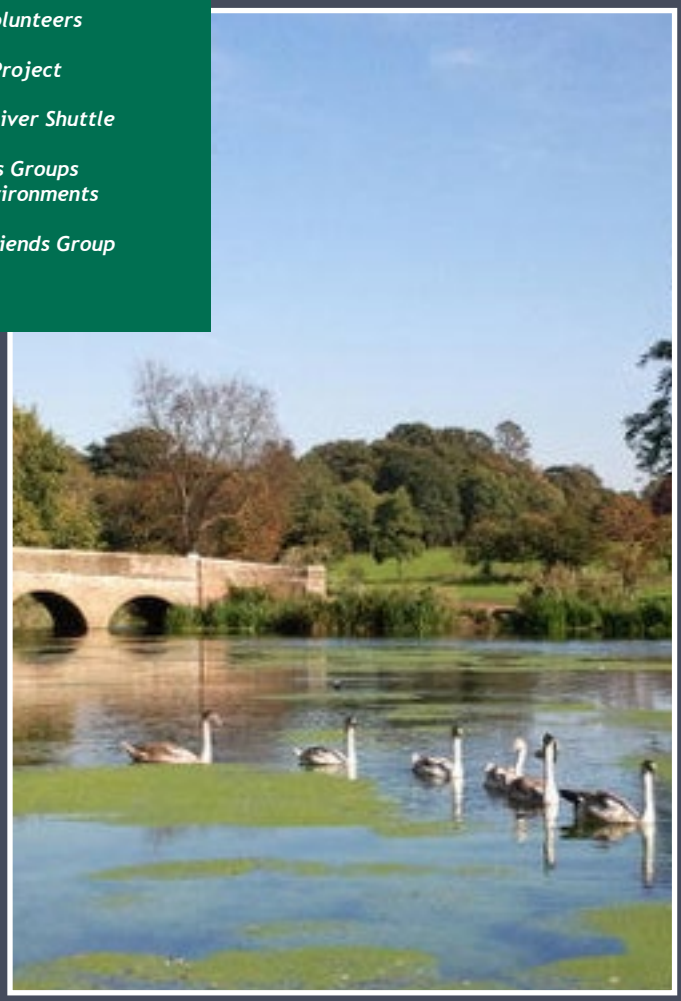


Danson House

3. Bexley Friends Group
4. Current 'Friends Groups' in Bexley
5. Friends of Foots Cray Meadows
6. Friends of Danson Park
7. Friends of Riverside Gardens Erith FORGE
8. Lesnes Abbey Conservation Volunteers
9. East Wickham Conservation Volunteers
10. Sidcup Garden Project
11. Friends of the River Shuttle
12. How can Friends Groups improve the environments
13. Starting up a Friends Group

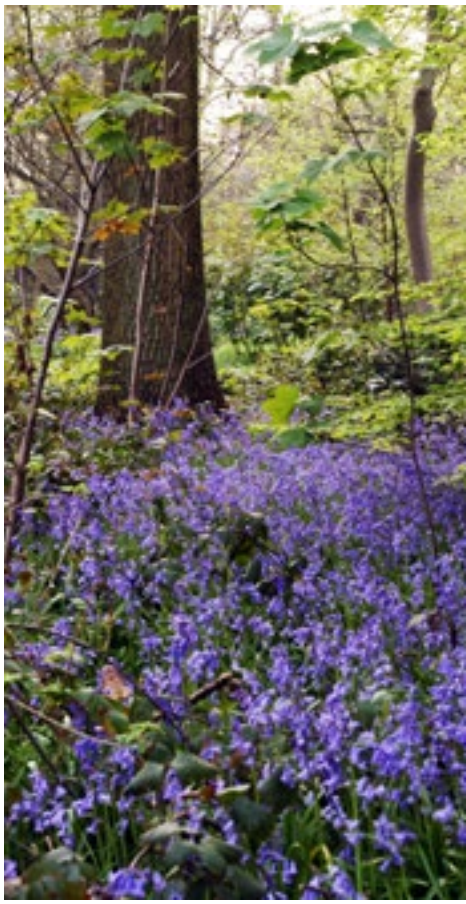


Hall Place



Foots Cray Meadows

Bexley's Friends Groups



Bexley prides itself on the marvellous volunteers who have for many years supported numerous organisations, clubs and groups throughout the whole of the borough. Bexley's parks and open spaces have for many years received tremendous support from such volunteers who are members of a number of Friends Groups that work closely with Bexley's Parks Team to create clean, well maintained parks and open spaces that have in the past won awards and are greatly enjoyed by one and all.

The work of the Friends Groups varies from practical tasks such as tree whip and bulb planting, litter clearing, maintenance of herbaceous borders, clearance of heathland, maintenance and litter clearance along Bexley's rivers are just a few of the works carried out, together with fund raising and external funding applications. So if you like rolling up your sleeves and getting your hands dirty and wish to contribute towards the wonderful achievements which are taking place in the Boroughs green spaces we have the opportunities to help you achieve your aspirations, which are greatly valued and which significantly benefit residents and visitors to Bexley whilst at the same time promotes health and wellbeing to one and all.

Bexley's Parks Team would like to thank and congratulate all members of Bexley's current Friends Groups and would very much like to encourage new volunteers who would like to join existing Friends Groups or may wish to form themselves into a new Friends Group in a park or open space in their area of Bexley.

It is a fact that parks and open spaces have played a big part in peoples growing up and the benefits of which are very much as important today as they were in the past.

Bexley currently has 106 parks and open spaces covering a total area of 623 hectares which equates to 10% of the total area of the borough of Bexley. Bexley's parks vary greatly in size from Foots Cray Meadows at 100 hectares, Lesnes Abbey at 88 hectares, Danson Park at 75 hectares to small parks like Parkhurst Gardens at 0.2 of a hectare and West Heath Recreation Ground at just over one hectare.

The Parks team are very keen to involve prospective interested residents or local groups who are keen to get involved in their local park or open space in their area. This information pack has been developed to assist aspiring people to set up their own 'Friends Group' in their area by providing advice and assistance.

Current 'Friends Groups' in Bexley







Bexley works in partnership with a number of Parks Friends Groups in Bexley. Each of the groups have developed into a thriving community which are improving their local park or open space for the betterment of one and all.

It is hoped that these Friends Groups will inspire new communities to want to improve their own local park. The Parks Team wishes to work with groups and assist where required to their needs and aspirations so that new groups can develop into an energised forward thinking cohesive group with ideas on how they can improve their environment. As a constituted Friends Group they will be in a position to apply for grants from external funders to complement the Council's resources.

To assist potential new groups, Bexley has produced this guide; which will provide advice on how to set up a constituted group, group insurance, risk and method statements and developing ideas on how the group can improve their adopted park.

Bexley is looking forward to working with groups who want to improve their environment, as they are best suited to know what their issues are and how they would like to see their parks maintained into the future. By working together it will be possible to share experiences and skills to develop ideas for the future improvement and up keep of the parks for everyone's benefit.

Friends of Foots Cray Meadows

Celebrating 10 years in 2016, the Friends of Foots Cray Meadows are a support group for the Meadows and Five Arches. They work with the Council and the river charity, Thames21, on various projects, hold history walks and open the information centre.

www.footscraymeadows.org







Friends of Danson Park

The Friends of Danson Park were established in the 2002 and since then have accomplished a wide range of environmental and cultural activities that have enhanced the park. From helping to lay paths, planting hedges and trees, provided seeds for the wild flower meadow and financed the rebuilding of a plinth in the gardens.

We have also contributed to the buying of a historic painting of Danson House when it came up for sale in Sweden.

FriendsofDansonPark@gmail.com

Twitter: @F_O_D_P







Friends of Riverside Gardens Erith FORGE



Friends of Riverside Gardens Erith(FORGE) provide year round colourful planting beneath the flagpole. Together with Thames 21 and other supporters, FORGE also organise regular one-day clean-ups of the Erith Thames foreshore, as well as litter picking footpaths and gardens.

Joan McCarthy (Secretary)
jandtmac3as@googlemail.com

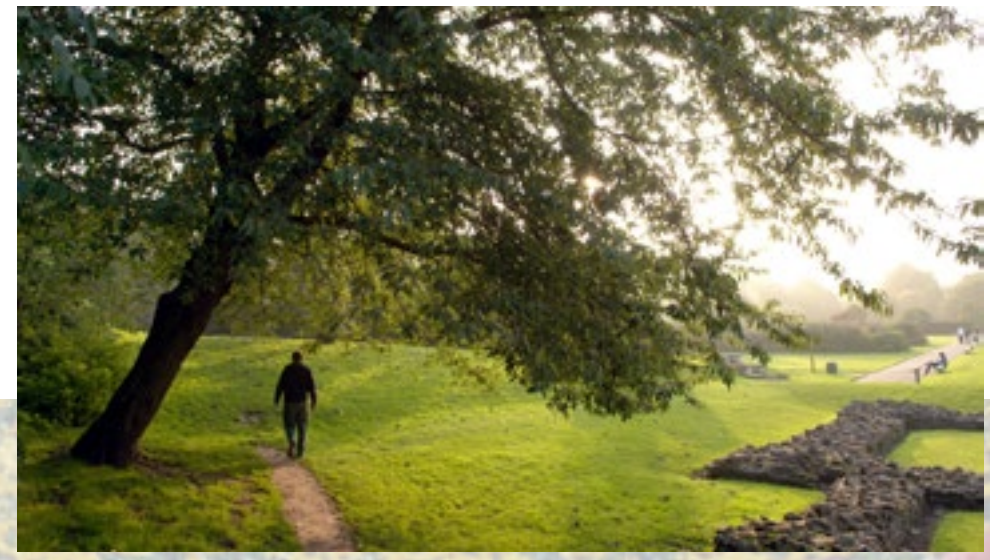




Lesnes Abbey Conservation Volunteers

Lesnes Abbey Woods Conservation Volunteers (LACV) are a small, friendly group meeting on fortnightly Sundays between midday and 3 pm to carry out work which will protect and encourage wildlife on site. The group also helps maintain the meadow and heathland during spring and summer and gives free guided walks. They can be contacted through their website at ***https://www.lesnesabbeywoods.org/get-involved/***







East Wickham Conservation Volunteers

The East Wickham Conservation Volunteers are currently involved in pond restoration. This grant-aided project supported by the volunteers, and managed by Froglife and the Council, began in December and the site is now ready for replanting during the spring.

www.eastwickham.org.uk

www.facebook.com/eastwickham conservationvolunteers





Sidcup Garden Project

The Sidcup Community Garden Project was set up by Cllr Rob Leitch in June 2015 to restore the walled garden at Sidcup Place to its former glory. Local businesses have sponsored different beds in the garden, allowing for a dedicated team of volunteers to replant and maintain Sidcup's very own secret garden. To find out more or get involved, e-mail ***sidcupgardenproject@gmail.com***





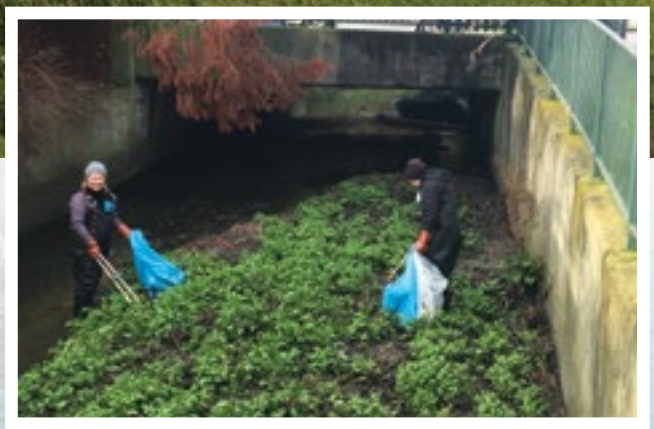


Friends of the River Shuttle

Volunteers from local group, Friends of the Shuttle, meet every Thursday morning from 10am until 1pm to carry out basic gardening tasks (weeding, pruning, mulching) of the 18 beds in the Old English Garden in Danson Park. If you are interested in joining this friendly, active group, please contact them by email on ***friends.of.the.shuttle@gmail.com***









How can Friends Groups improve their environments

Not only do Friends Groups benefit from getting out doors in the fresh air keeping fit by gardening etc they meet new likeminded people, learn new skills and tasks all of which is beneficial to everyone who enjoys going to their local parks or open spaces. Opportunities for Groups to apply for external funding become available to constituted groups who whilst working with their council can apply for grants that can be used to rejuvenate their parks.





Starting up a Friends Group

Development of a group of likeminded local people who wish to get involved in the up keep of their local park is important. This can be achieved by canvasing other park and other open space users by speaking to park users on site, leafleting, use of posters or use of local media. Once views of local people have been obtained and there is a collective number of people with a desire to get involved in improving their environment by working with Bexley is the first step.

Decision making by a constituted group led by a committee helps to make the group an effective unit with agreed objectives and aspirations which are discussed with the council who will work in partnership with the group to develop ideas and set targets which are achievable and sustainable. The consulted park user's views will assist the group to develop their future action plans for the park or open space. Its recommended that there needs to be a minimum of three people if the group is to become formalised and adopt a constitution.

Getting your group established

It is important for all members of a Friends Group to be clear about who will be responsible for running the group. This would probably be an elected committee of a small number of people, who will represent the group and make decisions. The committee is responsible for running the group and making sure it achieves their goals and aspirations. It is a good idea when you form your committee to have people who have skills in different areas - like finance, administration, publicity, previous experience on committees, and so on.

So that everyone is clear about your group's aims, it is important to have a constitution, or set of rules. Also, if your Friends Group is planning to apply for grants, funders will ask for a copy of your constitution. We have included a model constitution in this pack as a guide.

Your constitution will cover the way that your Friends Group will work, ie. who is eligible to join the group, how the committee is elected, how decisions are made, opening a bank account etc.



Further information on setting up a voluntary or community group

To become a Friends Group you will need to consider a number of things.

Setting up a committee:

The committee helps to run the group. There are certain roles such as Chair, Secretary and Treasurer that will need to be decided and it is the Chair who usually leads the group and acts as the public voice.

Developing a constitution:

This sets out exactly how your group will be managed, your aims and objectives and how meetings will be run. Please find enclosed within this information pack an example of a constitution for your information.

Annual General Meeting (AGM):

Groups will need to hold an AGM in the first instance to adopt its constitution and elect committee members. AGMs should be held each year after as a way of re-electing committee members, and to present an annual report and reporting of accounts to other members of the group.

Setting up a bank account:

Once your Group is formally established it should set up a bank account so that membership subs and other funds raised can be managed appropriately. The account should be in the name of the group and will need at least two people (usually committee members) to act as signatories each time a transaction is made.

Insurance and Health & Safety:

Every time a public activity - such as a community clear-up, tree planting or fun day - is organised, public liability insurance is needed to cover accidents on a public site. There are a number of organisations that offer Public Liability insurance, some suggested organisations are listed below. See Guide Sheets attached for guidance.

Risk Assesment and Method Statement

Are required for each activity organised by Friends Groups to identify potential risks associated with the activity and put in place any measures to reduce the risks or implement help if needed. See attached for example of risk assesment and method statement forms.

Funding

Your Friends of Parks group may require funding to support some of the activities you are planning to carry out. There are several ways you can raise funds, including: Fundraising events: Sponsorship from local businesses. Collecting donations. Approaching funding organisations.

www.grantsonline.org.uk

Contacting the Council

Bexley's Parks and Open Spaces Team are responsible for the management and development of the borough's parks, open spaces and cemeteries. If you would like to establish a Friends Group within any of these areas you can contact the Parks Service on 020 8303 7777 asking to speak to parks and open spaces or by emailing ***Parks&OpenSpaces@bexley.gov.uk*** who will be happy to discuss your requirements.

Choosing your Practical Work Tasks

When planning practical activities you would like to do, it's important to be realistic about what is achievable. You will need permission to carry out practical work from the land owner and be aware that there are certain tasks your group may not get initial permission for.

Here are some ideas of practical activities that friends groups are involved in: wedding, pruning, litter picking, stream or pond clearing, planting bulbs and flower plants, re-seeding, planting trees, footpath clearance, repainting benches/fences/playground equipment/ pavilions, removing graffiti, sweeping leaves. See Information Pack 2 within this pack for more information on choosing and planning practical work tasks.

Useful links

https://www.bexley.gov.uk
https://bvsc.co.uk/
https://www.rhs.org.uk/communities
http://www.hse.gov.uk/index.htm





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LONDON BOROUGH OF BEXLEY

www.bexley.gov.uk

Parks & Open Spaces Friends Groups



1. **Lesnes Abbey Conservation Volunteers**
   http://lacv.btck.co.uk
2. **Friends of Riverside Gardens Erith**
   jandtmac3as@googlemail.com
3. **East Wickham Conservation Volunteers**
   www.eastwickham.org.uk
   www.facebook.com/
   eastwickhamconservationvolunteers
4. **Friends of the Shuttle**
   friends.of.the.shuttle@gmail.com
5. **Friends of Danson Park**
   FriendsofDansonPark@gmail.com
   Twitter: @F_O_D_P
6. **Friends of Foots Cray Meadows**
   www.footscraymeadows.org
7. **Sidcup Community Garden Project**
   sidcupgardenproject@gmail.com.

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FRIENDS GROUP START UP CHECK LIST

TASK	COMPLETED	COMMENTS
Consultation of local residents etc on potential interest in setting up a new Friends Group in their local park or open space		
Set up a Friends Group committee		
Contact LBB to discuss and agree aspirations for setting up a new Friends Group in its parks & open spaces		
Development of a Friends Group constitution		
Arrange an Annual General Meeting		
Set up a Friends Group bank account		
Procure Friends Group Insurance cover		
Develop the groups Risk Assesments & Method Statements		
Develop and acquire agreement for work day activities for the coming year		
Marketing requirements identified & developed		
Training requirements identified and developed		

SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

CONSTITUTION OF [NAME OF FRIENDS GROUP]

1. Name

The name of the group shall be [Name] (Abbreviation).

2. Vision

To work in partnership with the London Borough of Bexley for the benefit of the public to protect and improve [name of park/area] as a heritage asset, place of ecological interest, and site of local natural beauty and recreational use, promoting conservation of its natural flora and fauna to ensure that all persons have the opportunity to benefit from the amenity of the [name of park/area].

3. Aims

a) Work in partnership with the London Borough of Bexley ("LBB") to encourage public interest in, and the conservation of [name of park/area].

b) To protect the wildlife and its habitat within [name of park/area].

c) To provide a focus for involvement by the public in the open space to volunteer and work with the LBB, in the conservation of [name of park/area] and its development as a public open space;

d) To advance the public's awareness of the open space by promoting [name of park/area], its plants, wildlife, landscape, sustainability and supporting appropriate recreational facilities for the benefit of community groups and the general public;

e) To develop and deliver information, interpretive material and educational opportunities for [name of park/area]; and

f) To raise funds for the purposes of achieving these aims.

4. Objectives

The main objectives of [Abbreviation of the name of group] are to:

a) Promote the activities of [Abbreviation of the name of group] as a focus for involvement by residents, and visitors to the open space, in the improvement and maintenance of [name of park/area] and its development as a public open space that supports the community.

b) Represent the aims of the [Abbreviation of the name of group] when communicating with the LBB, other interest groups and societies to achieve the [Abbreviation of the name of group] vision for [Name of Park/area].

c) Carry out and promote environmental and recreational improvements and practical conservation measures.

d) Educate, encourage and support residents and site visitors in environmental initiatives by working with statutory and other agencies to enhance the amenity of the [Name of park/area].

e) Promote health and well-being of residents and visitors through encouragement of the use of [Name of park/area] as an amenity and recreational area.

f) Work to safeguard residents and visitors in connection with the use of the park and prevent anti-social behaviour within it by working with the London Borough of Bexley, Metropolitan Police, schools, youth groups and other relevant authorities.

g) Promote communications between the LBB, residents and visitors to support the use and enhancement of the Park.

5. Powers

a) Organise meetings, training courses and events, including work parties.

b) Raise funds and submit funding bids, invite and receive contributions, subscriptions, covenants,

donations, gifts and otherwise from the public or persons whatsoever in order to finance work in support of the [Abbreviation of the name of group]'s aims.

c) Donate to the LBB such funds as are deemed appropriate for maintenance and improvement projects within [Name of Park/ area] as the Management Committee may determine to be in accordance with the [Abbreviation of the name of group]'s aims.

d) Buy, hire, or legitimately borrow any equipment, tools, services, or other property required, for use in support of the [Abbreviation of the name of group]'s aims subject to health and safety requirements being adhered to for all users.

e) Communicate through and make representations to appropriate authorities on any matters relating to the Group's aims.

f) Publicise the [Abbreviation of the name of group] activities through the media and other contact with residents and visitors.

g) Work with comparable groups and exchange information, advice and expertise with them.

h) Carry out any other lawful activity which will, in the judgement of the Management Committee, further the aims and objectives of [Abbreviation of the name of group].

6. Membership

a) The [Abbreviation of the name of group] shall be voluntary and totally self-supporting.

b) Membership shall be open to anyone interested in taking part in the organisation and furthering its aims and is willing to abide by the rules of the [Abbreviation of the name of group] and pay the annual subscription set by the Management Committee.

A membership register will be kept and a copy sent to the LBB within one calendar month of the [Abbreviation of the name of group] Annual General Meeting.

c) The Management Committee shall have the power to refuse, or withdraw, membership to, or from, any person found to be acting against the interests of [Abbreviation of the name of group] and the aims of the [Abbreviation of the name of group]. Provided that the individual member or representative of the member organisation (as the case may be) shall have the right to make representation to the Management Committee before the final decision is made.

d) The [Abbreviation of the name of group] will be non-political.

e) All [Abbreviation of the name of group] Members shall be bound by this constitution.

f) Organisations, incorporated or not, that support the aims of the [Abbreviation of the name of group] may be admitted to membership and will be entitled to nominate one of its members for election to the Committee.

g) A membership application can be made online, or by emailing or posting the application form.

h) Every member shall have one vote at general meetings except where otherwise stated in this constitution.

i) An annual subscription shall be paid by all members. The rate of the annual subscription for members and date due will be determined by the Management Committee. The Management Committee will have the authority to determine an alternative rate of annual subscription for individuals where deemed appropriate. Membership will terminate if the annual

subscription fee is not paid within two (2) months of the due date.

j) Any member of the association may resign his/her membership by giving to the Secretary of the [Abbreviation of the name of group] written notice to that effect.

k) The Management Committee may, by resolution passed at a meeting thereof, terminate or suspend the membership of any member, if in its opinion his/her conduct is prejudicial to the aims of the [Abbreviation of the name of group], PROVIDED THAT the individual member or representative of the member organisation (as the case may be) shall have the right to make representation to the Management Committee before the final decision is made.

7. Management

a) The affairs, funds and assets of the [Abbreviation of the name of group] shall be managed and controlled by a Management Committee. Such officers on the Management Committee shall be appointed from the membership to conduct the administration of the organisation. These shall be a chairperson, treasurer and secretary and their deputies. These officers will be in charge and responsible for the day to day running of the organisation, but shall be answerable at meetings to members. Persons can be appointed to any other additional posts deemed necessary in accordance with the achievement of the aims.

b) The Management Committee shall be accountable to all members at all times.

c) Minutes will be kept of all meetings of the organisation and the secretary or nominated person shall enter a record of all proceedings and resolutions. A Copy of these minutes will be supplied to the LBB within 2 months.

d) The officers and other general members of the Management Committee shall comprise of not less than three members at any one time, and shall be elected annually at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The Management Committee shall have the power to co-opt up to three further [Abbreviation of the name of group] members from time to time.

e) Three elected members of the Management Committee shall constitute a quorum for meetings of the Management Committee.

f) The Management Committee shall hold regular meetings (at least two times per calendar year, to include one AGM) at which any matters concerning its policy and administration can be discussed. All members and a nominated LBB Officer shall be entitled to attend. These meetings will be fully publicised to all members of the [Abbreviation of the name of group] and to the LBB.

g) All Management Committee members and the LBB shall be given at least fourteen (14) days' notice of any meeting, except in the event of an emergency meeting being required as agreed by all Officers.

h) Voting at Management Committee meetings shall be by simple majority. Chair holds casting vote if required.

i) Representatives from other organisations may be invited to the Committee meetings by the joint agreement of the Officers.

j) Invited representatives may participate in the business of the meeting at the discretion of the Chairperson, but will not have the right to vote.

k) Tasks and events should be appropriate to the aims of the [Abbreviation of the name of group] and in accordance with LBB byelaws with no exclusion to any part of the community.

l) Where appropriate to the [Abbreviation of the name of group]'s aims, [Abbreviation of the name of group] may undertake, or support, related activities outside of [Name of Park/ area].

m) The [Abbreviation of the name of group] shall work in close consultation with the LBB. It shall receive assistance from the LBB in the form of guidance and advice from LBB officers.

n) As the officially endorsed Friends Group at [Name of Park/area] working in partnership with LBB to achieve its aims, neither the [Abbreviation of the name of group] or LBB shall impugn nor denigrate either's reputation or status, nor represent or speak on behalf of the other group or authority.

o) The LBB has a statutory responsibility to all local residents as landlord for designated parks and open spaces. Therefore all publicity material, events and work of the [Abbreviation of the name of group], which concerns LBB land or property, must be agreed with the relevant LBB Officer on behalf of the LBB in advance.

p) The election of [Abbreviation of the name of group] Management Committee officers shall be for a period of 24 months initially and shall take place at the first Annual General Meeting, and thereafter at 12 month intervals.

q) Elections will be by majority vote at the Annual General Meeting. The Secretary will give notice of an election in writing, at least 14 days before the date of the meeting. Nominations may be submitted before or at the Annual General Meeting. Nominees are required to be at the Annual General Meeting unless written apologies received.

r) The Management Committee may from time to time appoint sub-committees from amongst its members for any special purpose.

s) Should an elected office bearer resign, or cease to be able to attend meetings for a period in excess of three calendar months, the vacancy may be filled at the next Management Committee meeting. That interim arrangement being valid until the next AGM when approval for such appointment must be sought by election.

8. Annual General Meeting

a) The [Abbreviation of the name of group] shall hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) to agree its policies and administration. This will be held no later than 6 weeks after the date of the end financial year. All Members shall be entitled to attend and the meeting shall be publicised at least 14 days in advance. A record of the AGM shall be sent to all Members and LBB.

b) A third of members shall constitute a quorum at the AGM.

c) All motions shall be circulated to members not less than 14 days before the meeting.

d) All voting at the meeting shall be by simple majority, with the Chair holding a casting vote if required.

d) The normal business of the AGM shall be:

i) to receive reports from the Chairman and accounts from the Treasurer;

ii) to approve annual accounts;

iii) to acknowledge Management Committee members standing down after period of service;

iv) to elect Management Committee members subject to being proposed and seconded at the meeting;

v) to agree the annual subscription rates (if any);

vi) to consider proposals for amendments to the constitution; and

vii) to consider any motions arising.

e) The [Abbreviation of the name of group] Secretary at the written request of no less than half of the members shall convene an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM).

Agenda and motions shall be submitted to all members and LBB not less than 14 days before the meeting, and the meeting shall take place within 30 days of the request.

f) The [Abbreviation of the name of group] may be dissolved by a vote of the members at the AGM or an EGM.

g) Any matter not covered in the Constitution shall be dealt with by the Management Committee and reported to the next AGM or an EGM.

9. Finance

a) Accounts shall be kept by the treasurer, submitted to an annual audit and approved at a members' meeting. Any Bank account in which any parts of the [Abbreviation of the name of group]'s funds are deposited shall be operated by the Management Committee and shall be held in the name of the [Abbreviation of the name of group]. All cheques and orders for the payment of money from such account shall be signed by at least two officers of the Management Committee, or their deputies.

b) Any money obtained by the [Abbreviation of the name of group] shall be used only by the [Abbreviation of the name of group] in accordance with its aims.

c) Accounts shall be audited and reported to the [Abbreviation of the name of group] and the LBB at the AGM. The financial year shall be end of March each year.

d) There may be an annual subscription levied to help pay necessary expenses, to be fixed at a members' meeting at an appropriate rate. Any levy may be waived by agreement of the Management Committee. Subscription (if any) shall be renewable annually on at set date.

e) The Management Committee shall ensure that expenditure of the [Abbreviation of the name of group] stays within the budget. The [Abbreviation of the name of group] shall not go into debt. The management Committee are liable for all debts.

10. Alteration of the Constitution

a) Proposals for amendments to this constitution or dissolution (must be delivered to the Secretary in writing. The Secretary in conjunction with all other officers shall then decide on the date of a general meeting to discuss such proposals, giving at least four weeks (28 days) clear notice or postpone such discussion until the next AGM.

b) Any changes to this constitution must be agreed by at least two thirds of those members present and voting at any general meeting and subsequently approved by LBB.

11. Dissolution

a) The [Abbreviation of the name of group] may be wound up at any time if agreed by two thirds of those members present and voting at any general meeting or AGM Subject to the provisions of clause 10. Any assets shall be returned to their providers, if they require it, or shall be passed to another group or authority associated with [Name of Park/area] with similar aims.

12. Health and Safety

a) The [Abbreviation of the name of group] shall be responsible for meeting its "Duty of Care" obligation to meet all relevant Health and Safety Law current at the time of any activity. The [Abbreviation of the name of group] shall

undertake health and safety risk assessments of all its activities before engaging in any activity. All participants shall be made aware of the necessary safeguards, training and measures necessary to carry out any activity in compliance with their "Duty of Care" to keep themselves and others safe. Members of [Abbreviation of the name of group] shall ensure none of their activities create a potential hazard to those visiting [Name of Park/area].

13. Liability for claims

a) The [Abbreviation of the name of group] shall hold public liability insurance to protect the [Abbreviation of the name of group] from any third party claims against the organisation or any of its members to a minimum amount of £5 million. Such cover will also be required to satisfy any indemnity the [Abbreviation of the name of group] may give to the LBB. Evidence of the existence of such insurance and subsequent annual renewals shall be provided to LBB as confirmation of compliance with the indemnity terms.

14. Licence to carry out activities and works within [Name of Park/Area]

a) The [Abbreviation of the name of group] shall enter into a Licence Agreement ("The Licence") with LBB to confirm their right to carry out activities and works within [Name of Park/Area]. All provisions of the "The Licence" shall apply to the [Abbreviation of the name of group] and all its members. No activities or works shall be sanctioned by LBB in [Name of Park/Area] except in accordance with the "The Licence".

15. Adoption of the Constitution

This constitution was adopted by the members present at the AGM held on:

.....

Signed:

.....(Chairperson)

.....(Secretary)

.....(Treasurer)

.....(Member)

.....(Member)

How to Organise a Practical Work Day

Guide Sheet 1 - Choosing your Practical work tasks

When planning practical activities you would like to do, it's important to be realistic about what is achievable. You will need permission to carry out practical work from the land owner and be aware that there are certain tasks your group may not get initial permission for.

Here are some ideas of practical activities that friends groups are involved in: weeding, pruning, litter picking, stream or pond clearing, planting bulbs and flowering plants, re-seeding, planting trees, footpath clearance, repainting benches/fences/playground equipment/pavilions, removing graffiti, sweeping leaves.

Groups who are more experienced and have received appropriate training are also involved in: grass cutting, hedge cutting, shrub clearance, building structures such as raised beds, wildlife and ecological surveys, habitat creation or maintenance.

Our practical task 'wish list' is…

Once you have your 'wish list' of tasks start action planning by looking at each task in turn and asking the following:

1 Is the proposed practical task appropriate for the site?

Practical tasks in a Bexley park and open space will need approval from Bexley's Parks and Open Spaces Team. When considering approval for tasks we will look at the following:

A. Does the task fit with the maintenance or management plan for the site?

B. Is the proposed task a priority for the site?

C. Is it an appropriate time of year for the task?

D. Are there any particular maintenance issues/ implications?

E. Are there any safety concerns or implications.

The green space may already have maintenance or management plans and a list of priority tasks determined through a Bexley site plan. If the open space has not been assessed yet, this is a process your group may be able to assist with.

Who will contact the relevant Council team?

2 Can we get approval to carry out the practical task?

Getting approval for any practical work activities from LBB is absolutely essential. As well as looking at the appropriateness of the tasks (see above) we will look at your group's ability to carry out the tasks. Before we will approve an activity we will require your group to have:

- A commitment to only carry out the tasks for which you have our prior agreement.
- The skills to carry out the tasks to an acceptable standard.
- The appropriate training (see Guide sheet 5).
- Enough volunteers to carry out the tasks (see Guide sheet 3).
- A fully documented risk assessment (see Guide sheet 4).
- A good understanding of health and safety issues and an ability to carry out tasks safely (see Guide sheet 3).

- Trained first aiders (if appropriate) (see Guide sheet 3).
- Access to appropriate tools and equipment (see Guide sheet 5).
- Any relevant documentation procedures for the task.
- Appropriate insurance cover (see Guide sheet 2).

Don't worry if you haven't got all of the above in place yet, as you can use the guide sheets in this pack to help you fill in the gaps.

What are our gaps from the above list?

3 Do we need to consult?

Where we give your group permission to carry out a larger practical project it may be a requirement for your group to consult with local residents. We will advise you if we think this is necessary.

Consultation (if required) will be done by…..

4 Have we got the ability and enough volunteers for the practical task?

We will look at your group's skills and abilities and whether you have enough volunteers as part of the approval process. The responsibility for ensuring that your group has the ability to carry out a particular task remains with your group so be realistic about your group's abilities.

Number of volunteers we will need are…..

Number of volunteers we have are…..

5 Do we need training?

We may be able to provide some training for your group, for example, in carrying out risk assessments or using hand tools, etc. For high risk activities, such as using power tools, we will insist that you have attended appropriate training, provided by LBB Officers or approved professional training organisations.

What training (if any) do we need?

6 What other resources might be needed?

For example, plants, protective clothing such as gloves, refreshments etc. This may give you an indication of how realistic your project is and will help you to consider if you need to fundraise or approach other organisations for support, etc.

What resources do we need?
Where will we get resources from?

7 What's the timeframe?

Think about how long it will take you to organise the activity (other guide sheets in this pack may help you with this) and also at what time of year it may be best to carry out the activity.

We will aim to hold our activity on…..

Next Steps

There is plenty of information in this tool kit to help you to think about all of the above and by working through the tool kit we will help you to action plan for a successful practical work day.

Organising Practical Work Days

Guide sheet 2 - Insurance

1 Why do we need insurance?

Appropriate insurance is needed for all your activities and is absolutely essential if you are carrying out practical work activities. If your group takes out Public Liability Insurance this should cover you for injury or damage of loss caused to any person as a result of your activities. It is important to remember that the liability is with the whole Management Committee and a claim can be made against the whole committee of individual committee members - so it is in your interests to make certain that you have appropriate insurance cover.

2 Can LBB provide insurance cover?

In most circumstances LBB cannot provide insurance to your group or offer recommendations on where you may acquire insurance. There are two exceptions where insurance cover can be provided by LBB and these are listed below. In all other cases you must have your own insurance.

1) As with health and safety, when the practical activity is organised, managed and directly supervised by LBB, Officers will have the responsibility for ensuring appropriate insurance.

2) If your group is only carrying out litter picks where we have both approved the activity and provided health and safety guidance and risk assessment information you will be covered by LBB insurance - this information is correct at the time of going to press but you must check this prior to commencing your activity. If you are unsure whether your activity is covered by LBB you should always assume that it is not or seek further advice from a Council Officer.

3 What insurance do we need?

Your group will need Public Liability Insurance with an indemnity level of at least £5 million. The indemnity level could even be more for some high risk activities, or if you are using high risk tools and you should seek advice on this. It is extremely important that the insurance covers all of your activities and that your insurer is aware of all that your group does - if you are at all unsure speak to your insurance company. You may also need to consider other types of insurance cover for example, for loss or damage to tools etc.

The types of insurance we require are…..

Who will check the appropriateness of our existing insurance cover?

Are our premiums up to date?

4 LBB requirements.

If your group wants to do any practical work based activities on a park or open space within Bexley we will require you to have Public Liability Insurance with an indemnity level of at least £5 million. This is for your group's own protection against possible claims. The documents required as evidence of your group's Public liability Insurance are listed below.

- A valid copy of your insurance certificate
- Evidence of indemnity level (if not contained in the above)
- Proof of premium payment

Who will provide the above evidence of our insurance cover to LBB?

From time to time, a LBB Officer may also decide to visit your activity to ensure that your documentation is appropriate to your activity. This may involve, for example, an Officer attending your activity to ensure health and safety procedures are documented and adhered to. This audit trail will demonstrate to both Health and Safety Executive and your insurance company, in terms of duties of care owed both criminally and civilly, that reasonable measures have been taken to mitigate and control perceived risks, both by your group and LBB.

5 Finding an insurance company

You can do an internet search for insurance companies or approach a broker. It is useful to approach companies who offer specialist insurance for community groups, such as The Conservation Volunteers (formally known as BTCV) or Zurich, and who are experienced in supporting organisations with similar structures and carrying out similar activates. When comparing insurance companies some of the things you need to consider are: the premium, the level and type of cover, the indemnity provided and also the amount of excess payable.

Which insurance companies will we approach for quotes?

Who will approach them?

Links:-
www.rhs.org.uk/communities
www.zurich.co.uk



Organising Practical Work Days

Guide Sheet 3 - Health and Safety

Staying safe on your practical work day

It is the responsibility of your Management Committee to ensure that your group is carrying out practical work safely, you are responsible for the actions of your group's members at all times during the activity and your group, and members of the public, remain safe.

Consider the health and safety aspects of your activity:

- **Before** the activity (e.g. at the planning stage).
- **During** the activity (e.g. adequate supervision).
- **After** the activity (e.g. leaving the site safe for others users and reviewing).

1 What do we do to address potential health and safety issues?

- Think about the location of your proposed activity, for example is it near a slippery bank, fast flowing water or heavy traffic? It may not be appropriate for volunteers to be working in some areas and weather conditions can impact on this (e.g. on a steep slope which may be slippery in rain). We can advise you on this when you contact us.
- Complete an appropriate risk assessment (see guide sheet 4).
- Allocate someone who is familiar with both health and safety and complete risk assessment to supervise your activity on the day.
- Share the tool safety checklist (see Guide sheet 5) with all the group and volunteers.
- Never allow any volunteers to use power tools unless you have our express agreement and the volunteer has had the appropriate training.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment such as safety boot and gloves (see below).
- Think about your group's ability to manage a task, don't over-reach yourselves!
- Ensure appropriate instruction of training has been provided to each volunteer.
- Have accident reporting procedures in place and make sure that all members of your group are aware of them.
- Consider the safety of children, vulnerable adults and other open space users before, during and after the activity.
- If you are asked to stop doing something on the basis of health and safety, stop immediately-make sure all volunteers are aware of this golden rule.

Remember - it is more important that your group stays safe than it is to achieve your task.

Our safety supervisor(s) will be…..

2 Responsibilities and the London Borough of Bexley's requirements

It is your responsibility to ensure the safety of your group, participants and anyone else who may be affected by your activities. We require your group to demonstrate a good understanding of health and safety issues and the ability to manage risk appropriately.
If the practical work activity is being organised, managed and directly supervised by Parks Officers (e.g. on a council work led work day) then the officer present will have responsibility for the health and safety and managing risk.

Before approving any practical work based activity LBB will ask your group for evidence that you have everything in the list provided in Guide sheet 1.

Required documentation will be provided to LBB by…..

3 Ability and training

The level of ability and training of your volunteers is really important. It is your responsibility (as a Management Committee) to ensure any required training is given and that volunteers are supported in requesting this. Make sure that volunteers know what they will be doing and what is expected of them. Allow volunteers to stop tasks if they feel unable or unwilling to continue. Encourage volunteers to think about any health concerns they have and to seek appropriate advice from their GP before commencing any activities. For certain activities it will be a LBB requirement to have training before approval will be given – see Worksheet 5.

4 First Aid

At all activities, it is the activity organisers (your Management Committee) responsibility to ensure medical and first aid assistance is available as appropriate, for those involved. It is good practice to have someone who is first aid qualified present and, if you are carrying out regular practical activities, we strongly encourage this. The requirement for first aid assistance will be dependent on your risk assessment, for example, the level of risk your activity pose or the remoteness of the location, etc. You should therefore ensure that you have considered emergency procedures as part of your risk assessment and that volunteers are aware of these prior to the start of the activity.

Our first aid appointed person is…..

Our emergency procedures are…..

5 Child protection

Your group should have a child/vulnerable person protection policy statement, which outlines your group's child protection procedures and identifies a person within your group who can guide members. Children attending your activities should always be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

All groups should consider whether their volunteer roles require Criminal Records Disclosure and Barring Service Check – previously known as CRB Check. A check may be required when children or vulnerable adults are participating in group activities and are not accompanied by parents of guardians. You cannot simply ask to see a volunteer's criminal record history. This information is only provided by exception and when it is relevant to the activities that are being carried out. Eligibility criteria for a check includes regularly (at least twice in 30 days) teaching, training, instructing, caring for, supervising of being wholly in charge of children/ vulnerable adults.



Organising Practical Work Days

Guide sheet 4 - Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should limit the chances of someone being injured of becoming ill during, or as a result of, your activity. It is essential that your group carries out a risk assessment and that you take reasonable steps to minimise risk for each activity you do. An appropriate risk assessment is a requirement to getting permission for your group to carry out an activity. As activity organisers your Management Committee will have a responsibility and a duty of care to anyone affected by your activities.

1 Responsibility

It is your group's responsibility to carry out a full and appropriate risk assessment for your activity. Once the risk assessment is completed you must make sure that you:

- Take all reasonable actions outlined in the assessment to minimise or mitigate any serious or high and medium level risks and
- Supervise all activities on the day to ensure that others also act accordingly to minimise risk.

The only exception to this is during work days that are organised, managed and directly supervised by Council Officers, where the Officer present will have responsibility for risk assessment and managing risk.

2 How do we carry out a risk assessment

We have an example of a risk assessment form within this pack, which you can use as a template for your own risk assessment. You need to allocate one or two individuals to carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity and to implement any actions from the risk assessment. More than one person carrying out this task is often helpful as assessing risk can be very subjective.

A good risk assessment will identify:

- All the potential hazards involved in an activity.
- Who may be harmed by the activity i.e. volunteers, members of the public etc (see below).
- The level of risk posed by each hazard.
- Any actions needed to reduce (mitigate) the risk level to a more acceptable level.

Who will carry out our risk assessment?

Remember risk management should include:

- Preparing for the activity.
- During the activity.
- After the activity.

Who should be considered as part of the risk assessment?

It is important that you consider anyone who might be affected by your activities as part of your risk assessment, for example:

- Yourself and your group members.
- Other volunteers involved in your activity.
- Members of the public and passers-by.
- Children or other vulnerable groups.
- Employees of LBB or other organisations.

- Animals and wildlife.
- Groups involved in, or who could be affected by, our activities…..

Things to think about as part of the risk assessment.

As part of the risk assessment you need to think about all of your activities. As well as thinking about the actual tasks you should consider:

- Terrain
- Location
- Weather conditions
- Equipment or tools to be used
- Medical and health issues of participants
- Identifying named supervisor(s)
- Names of appropriately qualified first aiders where required
- Knowing your exact location in case of emergency
- Access for emergency services vehicles
- Location of nearest telephone of named person with a mobile telephone (you need to check for a strong signal)
- Access to a vehicle in case of emergency
- Details of nearest medical centre



Where can we get help with this?

In this pack we have included a risk assessment form which you can use to carry out your own risk assessment, If you need help, contact us and we will arrange training for your group.





Organising Practical Work Days

Guide sheet 5 - Tools and Equipment

1 What tools do we need?

You should know what tools you need from the list of resources in Guide sheet 1 but if you would like further help with this please contact us. In most cases it is your group's responsibility to ensure tools are available, safe and used correctly. The only exception to this is during work days that are organised by the Council when an officer is present they will have responsibility for any tools and their use.

2 Tool safety

All tools will pose a risk if you don't know how to use them properly. The following tips will help and we can provide specific guidance on using individual tools if requested:

- Nominate a person to be responsible for tools and tool safety on the day.
- Keep all tools clean, sharp and fit for use-check them before use.
- Only allow volunteers to use tools they are confident with.
- Make sure volunteers know how to use tools safely and effectively.
- Always know where your tools are and don't leave them lying around.
- Always use the right tool for the task.
- Do not allow use of power or 'high risk' tools (see LBB requirements below).
- Wear gloves, sturdy footwear and other appropriate personal protective clothing.
- Be aware of the environment, such as slopes or uneven ground.
- Don't over reach.
- Take frequent rests and breaks.
- Create an exclusion zone (if possible) and be aware you are in a public area.

The person responsible for tools and for tool safety on our work day will be…..

3 LBB requirements

The requirements for safe tool use in parks and open spaces will depend on the type of tools that you are using. We divide tools into two broad categories:

'Low Risk' Tool

This refers to hand tools such as, spades, forks, hoes, rakes, hand trowels, loppers pruners, shears etc. We do not require groups to have specialist training before using these tools, but all volunteers should be given instruction on their safe and correct use. If you would like training from us on using the above tools, it is available on request. We can also provide specific guidance for safe use of particular tools if required. It is expected that at least one person in your group will take responsibility for ensuring all participants know how to use tools safely and correctly on the day of your activity.

'High Risk' Tools

This category generally refers to power tools and machinery but can also include other tools such as saws (including pruning saws), billhooks, axes etc. We will only allow your group to use 'high risk' tools if you have attended approved professional

training in the use of the tools. Only members who have had training will be allowed to use the tools. Some tools used will also require a licence and others may have to meet additional criteria. You must not use 'high risk' tools in the parks and open spaces without our express permission and be aware that using some of the tools can also increase your insurance premium. We have the right to refuse to give permission for the use of any tools for any reason, or if we have safety concerns.

It you are unsure which of the above two categories your intended tools use falls into, contact us. When asking us to approve a practical work based activity it is your responsibility to tell us if you intend to use any tools that may fall into the 'high risk' category. Be aware that the additional criteria around 'high risk' tools is the protection of your group are well as the general public and wildlife.

Do we need permission for particular tool use?

Who will be responsible for getting this?

4 Training

If your group has not done any practical work based activities before or, if you need some additional support, we can arrange training for your group. Remember, if we agree to you using 'high risk' tools, all volunteers who will be using the tools must attend an appropriate training course.

Do we need any training.

Who will be responsible for requesting this?

5 Where to get tools from

Buying tools

If you wish to buy tools you need to think about: The type and quality of tools needed, where the tools will be stored, any additional insurance cover needed, who will transport them to and from site, where you will get funding for the tools and any additional costs (e.g. increased insurance premiums, storage costs, etc.).

Borrowing tools

You may be able to borrow tools from us of another organisation such as an environmental charity of other friends of the groups. When borrowing tools think about: Where can you borrow tools from? What if there none available? Will the quality be acceptable? Have they been maintained? Who is responsible for damage of loss and how will you get the tools to and from site?

Volunteers bring their own tools

The main issues to think about here are: What tools are available? Are they suitable for the tasks? What is the quality of the tools available? Have they been maintained? Are they in good working order? What if volunteers don't arrive or don't bring tools on the day? Who will be responsible if tools are lost or damaged on the day?

- We will get tools from…..
- Who will be responsible for acquiring appropriate tools?
- Who will check the safety of tools before use?
- Other things we need to consider are…..

Organising Practical Work Days

Guide sheet 6 - Organising your work day

1 Before the work day

Prior to your work day you should have already got in place all the items in the list below:

- Permission for your activity and all relevant tasks.
- A clear plan for all the day's activities (see below).
- A list of participants.
- Tools and other equipment (or an arrangement for them to arrive on the day).
- A risk assessment.
- Nominated supervisor(s).
- Contingency plans (in case of adverse weather of emergencies for example).
- Appropriate insurance cover.

2 Structuring the day

A suggested structure for the day is provided below:

- Notices - put up notices to let other know who you are and why you are there.
- Register - take a register of everyone who is attending on the day.
- Induction - let volunteers know what you are wanting to achieve, how the day will be structured, any appropriate health and safety information, how long they will be working, what they should do if they need a break etc. Inductions should be recorded including the key points discussed and who was present.
- Tool talk and inventory - ensure volunteers are familiar with their tools and their safe and correct use. Take an inventory of all tools before handing them out (and visually inspect them for safety so that you can ensure they are all returned at the end of the day.
- Introduce supervisors or task group leaders - so everyone knows who they are and who they need to approach if they have a question or problem. Consider having name stickers on ID badges.
- Allocate tasks - ensure there are adequate numbers of volunteers for each task. Be prepared to drop tasks if fewer volunteers have turned up than expected, rather than spreading volunteers thinly, making more tasks difficult to achieve.
- Regular breaks - make sure regular breaks are factored into the day and that volunteers are aware of these.
- Refreshments - if you provide refreshments make sure everybody knows they are available. Volunteers unable to do practical activities may welcome an opportunity to provide tea, coffee of water.
- Collect tools - at the end of the day check tools off against the inventory to ensure none are left lying around.
- Check site - ensure there will be no health and safety concerns after you have left, such as left over debris of mud on paths etc.
- Thank you - remember to thank all of your volunteers before they leave.

3 Who will co-ordinate on the day?

Nominate one person to co-ordinate all the tasks to ensure you achieve your activity as safely and as effectively as possible. This person must be familiar with all the tasks and what you want to achieve. They must also be familiar with risk assessment and health and safety. If you have several different tasks running at once, or you are

working with a large group you should have other supervisors to oversee each particular task. Again, they should be fully aware of what you are trying to achieve and be familiar with the completed risk assessment.

The person co-ordinating on the day will be…..

The person(s) supervising tasks will be…..

4 What facilities do we need?

Most parks and open spaces do not have toilets or access to clean water. You may need to think about how your group can get around this, e.g. are there facilities nearby (a local pub or café) or do you need to bring in facilities and what are the implications of this? It is important for volunteers to have access to clean water to wash their hands before eating.

Facilities we need are…..

We will get these from…..

5 Publicity

Prior to your work day put up notices in the open space to say who you are, what activity you are planning and when your activity will take place. You could also give people a telephone number to contact if they would like to join in. You must put a notice up on the actual day of the event to say who you are and what activity you are doing.

Publicity we will do…..

Publicity will be done by…..

6 Contingencies

Think about contingencies prior to the activity day – for example what would happen if:

- The weather is not appropriate – will you cancel the activity or is there an alternative activity that you can plan for and get approval for as a contingency?
- You have too few volunteers on the day – which tasks can be dropped without affecting the whole activity.
- You have too many volunteers on the day – will you turn people away or is there an alternative activity that can plan and get approval for as a contingency?

Our contingencies are…..

7 Evaluate

It is really important to evaluate your event in terms of its success and also in terms of health and safety. Are there things you could have done better? Did everyone get the most out of the day? Were your ambitions for the day realistic? etc.

The person(s) who will evaluate the event is…..



SAMPLE METHOD STATEMENT

METHOD STATEMENT

NAME OF ORGANISATION
Friends of…….
BACKGROUND
i.e. The activities undertaken are generally light gardening i.e. pruning, weeding, digging and planting.
DATE:
EVENT: Friends Group Voluntary Day
DECRIPTION OF WORKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY VOLUNTEERS
TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT

SAMPLE METHOD STATEMENT

METHOD STATEMENT

DECRIPTION OF WORKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY VOLUNTEERS.
1. i.e Weeding • Suitable tools i.e. forks and spades will be provided • Gloves should be worn • Gardeners will be reminded of the risks of working with tools and the need to take care of those working round them • Unused tools will be stored in a safe place, sharp edges downwards away from public paths • Weeds will be removed to composting area using wheel barrows provided • Paths will be left clear **2. Pruning** • Secateurs/ loppers will be provided • Gardeners will be reminded of the Health and safety policy/ risks of working with sharp tools and the need to take care of those working round them • Gloves should be worn and goggles when pruning branches at eye level **3. Digging** • Gardeners will be given a variety of tasks and not expected to dig for protracted periods • Suitable tools i.e. forks and spades will be provided. These will be checked at the start of every session to ensure they are in good condition • Gloves will be worn • Unused tools will be stored in a safe location, away from public paths • Gardeners will be reminded to exert care in respect of those working round them **4. Sweeping** • Consideration will be made for users of the garden and sweeping will stop when path need to be used by members of the public • Rubbish (normally mud grass and leaves) will be removed by wheel barrow to compost areas or the small amounts of bottles etc collected placed in the litter bins • Paths will be left clear **5. Planting** • See item 3 above • New plants will not be left on paths where they could present a tripping hazard • Large plants will be moved by wheel barrow
TOOLS AND EQUIPMENT
• i.e. Tools will be checked at the start of every session to ensure they are in good condition • All unused tools will be stored in a safe location and not left on paths to be a tripping hazard • Gloves are provided

SAMPLE RISK ASSESSMENT

Event:		People at Risk:		
Assessment carried out by:	Date:		Date of Review:	

Hazards (Potential to cause harm & consider how a person may be hurt)	Existing Controls	Risk rating	Further controls necessary	Target Date & By Whom	New Risk Rating
(i.e. Trips, slips & falls – tools left laying on the ground causing trips.	All volunteers are given an induction into safe use of tools etc.		i.e. ensure that staff are given regular training into safe use of tools during gardening duties.		