

# Environmental Volunteering

Victoria Hudson, July 2017



# Leicester's natural environment?

- Parks & Open Spaces Services is responsible for the management and maintenance of over 3088 acres (1,638 hectares) of parkland and open space across the city approximately 22 per cent of the city's area.
- Including:
  - 12 Major parks
  - 17 National Green Flag Award winning sites
  - 3200 Allotment sites
  - 4 Cemeteries and 1 Crematorium
  - 223 Equipped play areas
  - 8 Outdoor gyms
  - Over 149,000 trees
  - Sport facilities
  - Community based events and activities on parks
  - 8million users per year



# Why are we investing in volunteering

- Labour's Manifesto recognises that volunteers make a huge contribution to the life of the city and supports their development.
- Supports the Love Leicester community action plans.
- Reducing revenue budgets pressures.
- Increase strategic partnership with external stakeholders, EA, Trent Rivers Trust, Canals & Rivers Trust etc
- Raises the profile of parks and green spaces
- Increases community engagement, ownership and empowerment.
- Potential to increase resource and practical capacity through income generation/external funding bids.
- Service /environmental improvements.
- Increased maintenance on non contract areas, Impact on ASB.
- Increased community cohesion.

# Benefits to volunteering in parks

- Improved mental and physical wellbeing
  - Reduced stress and anxiety.
  - Improved mood and better sleep patterns.
  - Improved social and learnt skills, motivation and confidence.
  - Greater mental resilience, improved attention and control.
  - Improved physical fitness
  - Weight Loss
- Green gym experience.
- Provides valuable work experience
- Sense of pride
- Increases social skills, meet new people
- Community cohesion
- Increased environmental awareness/education
- New skills and skills transference.

# Current LEV volunteering opportunities

- Green Life Boat.
- Puddle Ducks
- Shared Waters Project
- Island Castaways
- Park Force
- Cemetery Champions
- Flood Warden Scheme
- Conservation Champions
- Friends/User Groups/Sessions
- TCV
- Its Your Neighbourhood/Bloom
- Gardening Clubs
- Job Centre Plus/Work Experience Placements
- Schools/Education Sessions
- Corporate bookings/Supermarkets/Forest Schools
- Leicestershire Cares/Outdoor Pursuits Centre



# Current external partners

- Environment Agency.
- Trent Rivers Trust
- Canals Rivers Trust
- TCV
- Leicester College
- Job Centre Plus
- Leicestershire Cares
- Royal Horticultural Society
- Outdoor Pursuits Centre
- Voluntary Action Leicester



# Drugs den to garden haven

Work has started to transform an overgrown garden from a drugs den into a green haven for families.

Prebend Gardens in High Dabbs, Leicestershire was regularly used by drug addicts and prostitutes because the dense shrubs and plants acted as perfect camouflage.

Now, more than £20,000 is being spent to tidy up the patch of greenery and give the gardens back to residents to enjoy.

City council senior parks officer Vicky Hudson is leading the project.

She said: "We started up a community group to get residents involved in the decision making about what could be done to improve the park."

"Many people wanted to get rid of the lily pads and stop prostitution and drug dealers using the garden."

"Work has now started and we are hoping to make the area a lot more open and attractive."

Thick hedges and undergrowth will be cleared and benches put in place. The park, which is full of trees, is going to be cleaned and a safety rail put around it. Trees and shrubs will be planted. Frickly foliage such as lily pads will be put around the edges to stop people sleeping rough in the garden.

It is hoped one part will be turned into a sensory garden. The cash for the project has come from the city council housing department and parks services.

High Dabbs resident Sandra Lattin said: "I'm sure it will be a lovely place to go when the planting is done."

Residents hope the new garden, once it is fully grown, will be a haven for wildlife.

Councillor Patrick Kitterick, who represents the area, said: "It's really good that all this work is being done. We want more people to come down and enjoy the garden."

TO FIND OUT MORE, GO TO: [leicestermercury.co.uk/AriseBuilders](http://leicestermercury.co.uk/AriseBuilders)



CLEAN-UP: Senior park officer Vicky Hudson in Prebend Gardens, which is being transformed



# Tigers help with clean-up

YOUNG rugby players helped fish more than 50 bin bags of rubbish from the River Soar. Up to 50 teenagers from Leicester Tigers' Academy teamed up with city council riverside rangers to clean up a section of the river.

The event, yesterday, was organised by Leicester City Council as part of its Shared Water project.

Adrian Lane, senior riverside officer, said: "The project's aim is to get people involved, bringing them together to look after our rivers. The lads were from the Tigers' summer youth

academy, at the Manor Road training ground, in Cadby. "There was all sorts of flotsam and jetsam but, with the recent weather being so warm, a lot of it was drink cans, bottles of pop and plastic bags."

Mr Lane said the team cleared a stretch of water around to the Grand Union Canal and Willow Brook, which runs through Evington.

"You don't have to throw litter directly into the river for it to end up there," he said. "It could just as easily be discarded in a field and flow in through a stream or brook."

LDM-EDI-52 LM03 FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2014



PITCHING IN: PcsO Sally Morgan, Barry Ingram, Louise Lavelle and Councillor Ted Cassidy

# Volunteers give green oasis a makeover

A PARK has been given a makeover by a group of volunteers. A group gathered at Fosse Recreation Ground off Bressa

said: "Fosse Recreation Ground is an important green oasis and a vital leisure resource."

Louise Lavelle, community safety development officer for the area, said: "I have been working closely with the parks

LDM-EDI-52 LMD MONDAY AUGUST 4, 2014

EXCITING: PRODUCTIVE AND ECOLOGICAL GREEN SPACE IN THE CITY

# Garden for the community

A community ecology garden is being set up in the heart of a city suburb.

Residents of Clarendon Park have signed a lease with the city council to take over the management of the site in Bulwer Road.

Nick Jukes, chairman of Clarendon Park Community Garden, said: "We felt the site was underused and wanted to create something the community could enjoy."

The garden, run by residents, will provide a productive green space for people and wildlife.

"This is an exciting grassroots project which is being driven by the enthusiasm of residents," Nick said.

"With our vision of ecological regeneration and with the skills and expertise already in the community, we intend to make a vibrant green space for the city."

Ideas for the site have been discussed at public meetings. Nick said the design would reflect local needs and help to ensure the site's environmental and economic sustainability.

The garden will feature water harvesting from roofs, raised beds for small-scale and accessible gardening, composting facilities, a pond and other wildlife-friendly features.

All work in the garden will follow organic principles.

by NATHALIE CRAIG  
"We want to be able to see people coming in and using the place, sitting, reading, playing and helping out," said Nick.

Volunteers have been preparing the site and have already added four tonnes of soil and compost to improve the land.

Jenny Ford, secretary of the group, said: "Leicester City Council should be congratulated for taking this positive step of releasing the land for the community to manage."

"We are encouraged by the number of volunteers who have helped already and by the resources being donated."

SPECIAL PLACE  
"The garden will be a small but very special place."

The organisers are making a seasonal Dig in work days at which people are invited to join in and help prepare the garden. The next will be on Sunday, August 17.

So far, volunteers have removed some of the unproductive shrubs from the area. Anyone is welcome to become a member of the garden. There is a £5 annual membership fee, £10 for families and groups and a £25 10y deposit.

News and future events will be posted at the garden and online at the group's facebook page. For more details, e-mail: [CPG@leicesters.gov.uk](mailto:CPG@leicesters.gov.uk)



GREEN-FINGERED: Nick Jukes, right, with Councillor Patrick Kitterick, Karen McKinnis, Councillor Lynn Senior, Lucy Michaels holding son Aaron, five months, and Eileen Collier

# Free fun for youths over school break

FREE summer activity sessions for young people are being held at youth centres and parks.

The activities are aimed at teenagers and will run throughout the holidays.

They include street dance, hockey, cheerleading, football, dogball and tennis.

Venues in the city include St Matthew's sports centre, Spinnery Hill ball court, Evington Park, New Parks Youth Centre and Braunstone Grove.

Councillor Vi Demester, assistant city mayor for children, young people and schools, said: "These are a great way for young people to take part in positive activities—and they're all free."

"They're also easy for young people to just turn up and join in, booking isn't required."

"I'm pleased we're able to offer these activities."

The sessions are being funded by Leicester City Council under a partnership project, All 4 Youth.

Partners include the Young People's Sports Network and the community sports initiative Bactive, the social enterprise Smart Sport Solutions and EIR Dawson, Sport 2015 PFM.

To find out more about activities on offer and All 4 Youth, visit the Young People's Sports Network Facebook page or follow them on Twitter.



# 2016/7 Stats

- Engaged 5930 volunteers .
- 58,289 volunteer hours.
- Based on £8.45 living wage
- Equates to a £492'542.05 boost for the environment





# Questions?

## Leicester Environmental **Volunteers** wanted



**Make a difference in Leicester and get involved!**

Many opportunities available from litter picking, reporting street scene issues, gardening, painting, cleaning, coppicing, ecology and water based projects.

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W: [leicester.gov.uk/parks-volunteering](http://leicester.gov.uk/parks-volunteering)

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