

FRIENDS OF ABBEY GARDENS

JOB DESCRIPTION: ABBAY GARDENS GARDEN CLUB LEADER

This is an exciting opportunity to play a pivotal education, development and maintenance role in a unique public harvest garden.

Hours: Up to 15 hours per week (funding dependent) at three fixed sessions
Duration: 8 month contract for the 2016 growing season
Rate of pay: £15 per hour

Closing date: 6pm on Friday 6th of November 2015
Interview date: Saturday 14th of November 2015

Responsible to: Friends of Abbey Gardens Trustees.

BACKGROUND:

Friends of Abbey Gardens (FOAG) is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (No. 1158147) which maintains Abbey Gardens as an innovative public community garden, where anyone is welcome to participate in the shared growing of flowers, fruit and vegetables. Unlike the traditional allotment system, no one has their own patch and everyone gardens together at the regular gardening sessions led by the Garden Club Leader. FOAG teaches food growing and gardening skills, provides locally grown produce shared communally and promotes health and wellbeing.

The Abbey Gardens site is one of only two Scheduled Ancient Monuments in Newham and contains the remains of a 12th-century Cistercian abbey where monks once ran a kitchen garden. In 2006 a group of local residents formed Friends of Abbey Gardens, initially with the aim of rescuing the derelict site from vandalism and neglect. With the commissioning of an arts project by Somewhere.org.uk called “What Will The Harvest Be?”, the plan was made to turn Abbey Gardens into an open-access park and harvest garden. The soil was found to be contaminated, but with time and effort this setback was overcome and a beautiful artist-designed shared ‘harvest garden’ was created in 30 long raised beds over the 80 by 20M site.

The group now ensures that Abbey Gardens continues to be used and managed by local people as an open-access site and harvest garden which improves the local environment, helps to build a stronger community, gives people an understanding of locally grown food and serves as a venue for cultural events. The group holds regular free events, including a Summer Fair and a Harvest Festival.

For more information see:

<http://www.abbeygardens.org>

<http://www.whatwilltheharvestbe.com>

JOB BACKGROUND:

Abbey Gardens is seeking to recruit a Garden Club Leader whose role will be to oversee the maintenance and development of the garden, largely through the delivery of 3 public sessions each week working with volunteer gardeners.

Applicants must be able to clearly demonstrate both horticultural and community engagement skills. The Garden Club Leader will be self-employed and contracted initially for one growing season, which may be extended, subject to funding.

The work will be carried out at Abbey Gardens, which is located on Bakers Row, in Stratford, E15 3NF. The Garden Club Leader will report to the Trustees of Abbey Gardens, liaise closely with the project coordinator (Vicki Lewis) and will be supported by volunteers.

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES:

Abbey Gardens Garden Club Leader's main areas of responsibility include:

- Planning, resourcing and leading the weekly garden club sessions.
- Planning and implementing the garden planting scheme for each year based on past records and the design of the established harvest garden.
- Providing both individual and group hands-on tuition and encouragement to members of the public who want to use the garden.
- Encouraging and recruiting new members of the group and maintaining volunteer interest.
- Working with a diverse cross section of people.
- Allocating gardening tasks in a way which allows for both novice and experienced gardeners to participate and learn.
- Ensuring the use of safe working practices at the site, and the safety of the visiting public.
- Signing in new members and making them aware of how the site is run and kept safe.
- Conducting regular routine maintenance of the garden (e.g. watering, hoeing, dead-heading) with the aim of sustaining the established 'thriving' RHS standard.
- Ensure that site building/s and tools are well-maintained and secured as necessary.
- Recording garden activity (such as user numbers) accurately and distributing / collating supplied project evaluation materials as required.
- Helping to facilitate and develop links between the garden and the community
- Working with FOAG to best allocate available resources and funding appropriately throughout the season
- Ensuring that the project meets its stipulated aims, objectives and deliverables, as outlined in Abbey Garden's constitution, its agreements with Newham Council, and any grant or other funding requirements.
- Working with the Board of Trustees, the Project Coordinator and volunteers.
- Assisting the Project Coordinator in the administration of garden.

- Identifying opportunities for cost efficiencies and greater impact of the garden's key objectives
- Promoting the garden and its aims to the wider community.
- Assisting in the development and co-ordination of garden activities, events, education opportunities, outreach and community engagement - with help from volunteers and the garden's events group.
- Undertaking any other related responsibilities commensurate with the evolving objectives of the post and the evolution of the garden, as may reasonably be requested by the Managing Committee and Board of Trustees.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

We are seeking an enthusiastic and self-motivated person with a passion for getting people (of all ages and abilities) gardening and enjoying plants. They must also have an interest in and empathy with the innovative vision for the garden. The successful candidate will be a local advocate for the project and must be a self-organiser as they will work largely independently at the site. They should be prepared to work flexibly: They may perhaps structure themed activities for certain days or otherwise redefine the Club's sessions to meet the demands of the site users and the ambitions of the project.

They must be available throughout the growing season at the agreed Club opening times (cover is available for up to 2 weeks absence by prior arrangement).

Garden Club Sessions

March to end of October:

Saturdays 10.00am - 4.00pm

Tuesdays 1.00pm - 3.00pm

Thursdays 4.00pm - 7.00pm

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Excellent horticultural knowledge relevant to a 'harvest garden'.
- Proven experience with the practical maintenance of a medium - large-scale garden, preferably one that is publicly-accessible.
- Experience of gardening with community groups.
- Volunteer recruitment skills for facilitating and developing links between a garden and local community.
- Ability to best allocate available resources and funding appropriately throughout the season.
- Ability to work to agreed policies and procedures.
- Self motivating and flexible approach.
- Willingness to work evenings and weekends.

DESIRABLE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Knowledge of relevant statutory requirements and best practice guidance in regards to gardening and food growing.
- Knowledge of Newham and Stratford area.
- Experience in programme promotion and publicity.
- Knowledge of other comparable community and public gardens.
- Experience of arts events and programming within gardens.
- First Aid, Manual handling and health and safety at work certificates.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Hours: This is a Freelance temporary contract to work an average 13 hours per week with 11 hours contact time (at the listed Garden Club times) with flexible variation in terms of time needed for preparation. The post is paid at £15 per hour (inclusive of Value Added Tax if applicable) and any expenses originating in the normal duties of the post. FOAG are aiming to fundraise for an additional 2 session each week in the garden which would take the role to 15 hrs. per week.

Contract: This is a 8 month initial contract, to start in March 2016 - end of October 2016 with possible extension, subject to funding. The successful candidate will need to supply two references.

RECRUITMENT SCHEDULE:

Please note that the closing date for applications is 6pm on November 6th 2015. Interviews will take place on November 14th 2016. We will inform successful applicants within a few days and expect the post to begin in March 2016. If you would like to visit the garden before applying please email Vicki Lewis (admin@abbeygardens.org) and arrange to visit during one of the garden sessions.

TO APPLY:

Email your CV (Including two referees) plus a one A4 page letter stating your reasons for applying to admin@abbeygardens.org Please do not send any other materials with your application although you are welcome to include URLs in your letter / CV.

If you do not meet all the skills and experience listed in the personal specification, but still feel that you are the right person for this role, you are still encouraged to apply.

*** NB** The Post will involve mainly weekend and evening work. The successful candidate will be required to hold their own public liability insurance and to have a Disclosure and Barring Service check for the post.