

Abbey Gardens



Garden Project Manager and Project Lead Job description

2 days a week paid position
E15, London

Some background on us:

Abbey Gardens is an open-access harvest garden in the East London borough of Newham where anyone is welcome to participate in the communal growing of flowers, fruit and vegetables.

Unlike the traditional allotment system, at present only half of the garden is made into dedicated plots, each managed by a member of our lovely community.

In the communal beds, the produce is shared among volunteers and is also available to the local community in return for donations from one of the garden's two Honesty Stalls.

Abbey Gardens has been operating for over 10 years, thanks to the tireless local support, effort and engagement that has enabled the initiative to endure beyond its planned 2 year lifespan.

The Garden continues to bring the local community together (outside of Covid-19 restrictions) through free gardening sessions, team building days for local organisations, health and wellbeing events, food & craft markets and an annual Harvest Festival.

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.

The Trustees of the Garden are incredibly passionate and dedicated, but busy - and need the support of a Garden Project Manager to assist and guide them through the next year (ending December 2021).

This is a really exciting time to join as we leave Covid-19 restrictions in the next few months.

You have the opportunity to be involved in the evolution and improvement of a rare green space in urban London, which has incredible potential for creative and exciting gardening and social initiatives.

What you'll be doing:

Key Responsibilities:

- Have lead responsibility in ensuring that Abbey Gardens secures additional income through grants and other sources of funding and

supervise the work of the Garden Activity Leader. Keep eyes peeled for funding we could easily apply for - there are lots of funding opportunities going around post Covid-19, we just don't have time to secure them all.

- Responsible for scoping, budgeting and managing contractors who come onto the site. Find out what work needs to be done in the garden, let the trustees know, then book and pay them (liaising with the Trustees about any spending)
- Manage the community whatsapp group and the plot holder system. As we said above, currently some beds are allocated plots, and some are communal. We need the project manager to update the garden map with who is actively using their plot and who isn't, and make sure this is always up to date. We can't have plots going to waste, as we always have people reaching out to us on our social media to get a plot. There is an active community whatsapp of plot holders and general people in the community who use the garden – keeping them up to speed with events, general notices, asking which plots are in use / plots coming free is of great importance.
- Manage the Abbey Gardens email inbox, Instagram and Facebook - Trustees are regular posters on the Instagram, so this will be part managed by them
- Liaise with Newham Council and other partner organisations, to ensure positive relationships, mutual benefit and successful fulfilment of agreements from both sides. We often work with GoodGym for instance, so we can call on them when we have some work to be done, and they can participate for free.
- Manage and plan the 'clean up' and 'harvest sessions' we run. We do this for 1 hour on the last Saturday of every month from 12-1pm. We need the manager to run these sessions with the community – unlock the on-site storage facility, give everyone gardening equipment, and tell them what they can harvest, and what the volunteers can do. GoodGym always turn up if we contact them - so we'd be looking to you to make sure we're using their services.

- Have a part responsibility for managing the budget of the organisation. This is currently handled by 2 of our Trustees, so they will be speaking with you on this to guide and help.
- Plan and deliver when necessary educational and outreach events at the Garden, such as events and workshops.
- Have a lead responsibility for all marketing and publicity activities with the support of existing volunteers.
- Ensure that the charity collects and collates appropriate qualitative and quantitative data to enable us to produce monitoring reports and support funding applications.
- Prepare regular reports for our funders, partners, and trustees, and present these to them.

Person Specification:

- Be energetic, friendly and clear
- Experience in establishing successful community projects or social initiatives
- Strong networking and relationship building skills, particularly with local council & government, funding organisations and community groups
- Live locally to Newham and be passionate about local issues and improving community experience in Stratford and Canning Town.
- Strong finance, budgeting and planning skills, particularly project based, and preferably in horticultural, agricultural or primary industry spaces
- Strong strategic development skills
- Experience in fundraising - identifying appropriate sources of funding, writing funding applications
- Able to connect, influence and build local support for a rare and valuable green space both from a volunteer engagement perspective but also from a social and wellbeing perspective
- A team player, who is able to present to the Trustees and keep us in the loop with what needs doing, and when

Pay and further details:

- The salary for this role is £850 p/month
- This will cover the individual working 2 days a week
- 2 days a week constitutes 14 hours per week - this can be spread out as needed, but must be met
- This role will be re-considered in December 2021, and is likely to roll into 2022

How to apply:

Email your CV and cover letter to: admin@abbeygardens.org

We will review all of the applications fully before making a decision. Be sure to keep an eye on your email as we will reach you via there.

All that's left to say is good luck!