

## **Volunteer role description – Crossbones Warden, Union Street / Redcross Way, SE1**

### **About Bankside Open Spaces Trust**

Bankside Open Spaces Trust is an environmental and volunteering charity. In 2025 we will mark 25 years of protecting, preserving, and enhancing parks, gardens and other amenities in London's SE1 and surrounding areas.

We were set up in 2000 with the aim of improving people's health and wellbeing by making where they live and work greener and more beautiful. We manage and maintain open spaces, welcome volunteers from both the community and the corporate sector, run regular gardening groups, support park steering groups, organise and take part in public events and educational projects, and offer advice to others. We collaborate closely with local residents and businesses to champion green spaces.

Thousands of people enjoy our open spaces every day. Each of our sites is unique, with its own atmosphere, identity, and sense of place. Our spaces include Red Cross Garden, Marlborough Sports Garden, Waterloo Millennium Green, and Tate Community Garden.

### **About Crossbones**

A former post-medieval burial ground, Crossbones Graveyard is believed to be the last resting place of an estimated 15,000 paupers, many of whom were sex workers and children. For years, the site was almost forgotten, hiding its history behind hoardings and under rubble. But since 1996 local writer John Constable with the Friends of Crossbones have championed Crossbones, protecting the site, and promoting its important history.

Bankside Open Spaces Trust have worked closely with John and the Friends of Crossbones, alongside other local individuals and companies, to transform Crossbones into a garden of remembrance. Together we campaigned for almost 10 years to get a lease, planning permission, comprehensive surveys, and a costed development plan for the site.

The garden, led by local people, is designed to respect the outcast dead who are buried beneath. It provides a sensitive, contemplative environment for all who would spend time here.

More information can be found on our website:

<https://www.bost.org.uk/crossbones-graveyard>

## **Wardens**

We welcome applications from anyone who wants to get involved. Previous gardening, wardening or volunteering experience is not required. Tasks are suited to all levels of fitness and needs, and we endeavour to make our volunteering opportunities accessible for all. A detailed knowledge of the site is not required; however, wardens need to feel confident talking to the public and answering basic questions about Crossbones or know where to direct enquiries that they cannot answer. A keen interest in history and to provide an engaging time for our visitors is welcomed.

## **Recruitment**

All potential Crossbones Wardens are asked to complete a Volunteer Application Form and submit this to our Volunteer Coordinator. The application form asks for details of two references where at least one should be someone who knows you in a professional capacity, e.g. a previous or current employer or volunteer supervisor, a teacher, probation officer or support worker. A reference cannot be someone related to you. If you are having trouble finding a suitable reference, contact the Volunteer Coordinator.

Potential volunteers will then be invited for an informal chat with our Volunteer Coordinator, either in person or via phone or Zoom. This is an opportunity for you to find out more about us and the role and for us to find out more about you. We will then decide if this role is right for you or whether we can suggest an alternative role or organisation that would be more suitable.

## **Main responsibilities and tasks for Crossbones Wardens**

1. To attend a short onsite induction with a member of BOST staff and a history tour of the site with a current Volunteer Warden.

2. To register on the Crossbones online calendar to undertake at least one wardening session a month, alongside an experienced Crossbones 'buddy' (subject to a successful induction).

3. To open the garden to the general public and be a constant, welcoming and informational presence during the opening hours. Ensure that users of the space are acting appropriately, not damaging the planting, beds or wooden entrance, and are interacting positively with the space.

4. To provide an engaging time for our visitors and to answer basic questions about Crossbones or to know where to direct enquiries that they cannot answer.

5. While wardens will not be expected to manage gardening projects during their shift, small amount of maintenance such as litter picking and watering the garden in the summer months may be required.

6. At the end of their session the volunteer wardens will need to give all visitors a 10-minute warning and ensure everyone has left before locking the site.

7. To observe the Health and Safety requirements (as explained in the informal chat, onsite induction and handbook) and act on instructions given by BOST staff.

8. To be friendly and welcoming to other volunteers, staff and the public at all times and to have regard for our Equal Opportunities Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Confidentiality Policy and Volunteer Handbook as outlined during the registration process.

## **Hours**

Hours are flexible and based on when volunteers are available. However, in order to provide a regular service to the community, we would like to keep the opening hours as regular as possible. Once you have committed to a

shift, please try to ensure you keep the appointment unless unavoidable. Opening hours and shifts tend to be 12pm-2pm, Wednesday-Friday and sometimes we open on Saturday and Sunday. There may be hours available at other times. We are currently looking to expand our opening hours to Monday and Tuesday.

### **Clothing**

Bankside Open Spaces Trust will provide all specialised workwear and can loan sturdy boots if required. For most wardening duties clothes suitable for the weather and comfortable shoes are fine.

### **Safety/Lone working**

To open the garden a 'buddy' system is used where there will always be more than one volunteer (or staff member) on site at a time. All shifts will be in daylight hours and volunteers must clear and leave the garden by sunset.

The safety of our volunteers is paramount and during induction we will identify all exit routes. Volunteers will be encouraged to always be aware of exit points. We provide the on-shift wardens with a mobile phone for emergencies which should be returned at the end of a shift. If faced with a threatening situation, volunteers are to leave the site immediately without locking up and go directly to the Red Cross Garden or 56 Southwark Bridge Road where a member of staff will be available. If a shift is at the weekend when office staff are not generally working, they are to leave and head to the busiest area (Borough High Street) or the Boot and Flogger pub and call for help from the police or community support. We do not expect volunteers to handle aggressive or physically confrontational situations and advise calling the police or community support officers or using the agreed support points in the rare instances that this may be a problem.

Volunteer wardens should not undertake any tasks that may endanger them.

## **What we provide**

This is an unsupervised, voluntary role and no salary will be paid, but in return for your time you will:

1. Receive full induction and training
2. Enjoy the great outdoors while in Central London
3. Learn about a fascinating, beautiful, and historically interesting site and experience the satisfaction of helping visitors enjoy and learn about Crossbones Graveyard
4. Be part of a varied team and make new friends
5. Learn new skills
6. For long term volunteers references may be provided

Anyone who volunteers for five or more hours a day will be offered reimbursement of lunch expenses up to a £5 maximum limit.

Other Bankside Open Spaces Trust volunteer opportunities available include:

- Gardening volunteer
- Events volunteer
- Trustee

For more information on these roles or on anything related to volunteering please contact our Volunteer team - [volunteer@bost.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@bost.org.uk) / 020 7403 3393.