

Volunteer Role Description - Gardening Club Volunteer Project Assistant – MECS Gardening Club

Location: Barley Mow Clinic, Waterloo, SE1

Time Commitment: Wednesdays, 11am–5pm (6 hours per week) during 8-week blocks (3 blocks per year)

Reporting to: Trauma-Informed Sessional Facilitator & BOST Volunteer Coordinator

About Bankside Open Spaces Trust

Bankside Open Spaces Trust is an environmental and volunteering charity. In 2025 we 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 the MECS Gardening Club

The MECS Gardening Club is a weekly gardening group co-created by Bankside Open Spaces Trust and Waterloo Community Counselling (WCC). It supports individuals from refugee and migrant backgrounds, many of whom have experienced trauma and displacement. The club transforms the outdoor space at

the Barley Mow Clinic into a welcoming, healing environment through gardening, nature-inspired activities, and shared meals.

Role Summary

As a Volunteer Co-Facilitator, you will support the delivery of weekly gardening sessions alongside a Trauma-Informed Sessional Facilitator. You will help create a safe, inclusive, and welcoming space for participants, assist with session setup and wrap-up, and engage in gardening and creative activities. This role does not include planning, reporting, or administrative responsibilities.

Main Responsibilities

- Attend regularly on Wednesdays during scheduled blocks.
- Support session setup and wrap-up, including preparing materials and helping with lunch arrangements.
- Participate in gardening and nature-inspired activities with participants.
- Help foster a trauma-informed, inclusive, and respectful environment.
- Welcome participants, assist with sign-in, and help maintain a tidy space.
- Engage in reflective practice with the team when available.
- Follow health and safety guidance and instructions from staff.
- Uphold BOST's policies on Equal Opportunities, Safeguarding, and Confidentiality.

Person Specification

Essential:

- Friendly and empathetic attitude
- Interest in community gardening, wellbeing, or outdoor activities
- Respectful approach to working with people from diverse backgrounds
- Good interpersonal and communication skills
- Willingness to work outdoors and engage in hands-on activities

Desirable:

- Experience working with refugee or migrant communities
- Understanding of trauma-informed practice (training can be provided)
- Additional language skills relevant to the community
- Experience in creative or participatory activities

Registered in England & Wales. Registered office: Red Cross Garden, 50 Redcross Way, London, SE1 1HA.

Charity number 1085454.

Clothing

Volunteers should wear comfortable clothing suitable for outdoor activity and covered footwear. Offensive slogans are not permitted.

What We Offer

- Full induction and training
- Ongoing support from BOST's team
- Experience in trauma-informed community work and therapeutic gardening
- Travel expenses reimbursed (if this would be a barrier to volunteering)
- Meal deal lunch during sessions
- References for long-term volunteers

How to Apply

If you're interested in this role, please email our Volunteer Coordinator, at volunteer@bost.org.uk and explain why you are interested in this role how you meet the person specification. We will be in touch to arrange a time for a chat. If you're a new volunteer, we'll ask for two references (one professional). Please provide these when you send your email expressing interest in the role. If you need help finding a suitable referee or require reasonable adjustments, please email or contact the volunteer coordinator on 020 7403 3393.

We welcome applications from underrepresented groups and aim to make volunteering accessible to all.

Other Bankside Open Spaces Trust volunteer opportunities available include:

- Crossbones Warden
- Gardening Volunteer / Pond Volunteer / Compost Volunteer
- Events volunteer
- Ecohouse Volunteer
- Living Space Repair Ranger Volunteer
- Trustee

For more information on these roles or on anything related to volunteering please contact our Volunteer team – volunteer@bost.org.uk / 020 7403 3393.

SESSION DATES

Round 1 & 2: 3rd September 2025 – 17th December 2025

6 weeks until end of January 2026 off

Round 3: Restarting 4th February – 25th March

3 weeks off

Round 4: 22nd April – 10th June

3 weeks off

Round 5: 8th July- 26th August

3 weeks off

Round 6: 22nd September – 10th November 2026