



# Bedford Fields Community Forest Garden



# VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

NAME: .....

# WELCOME TO BEDFORD FIELDS COMMUNITY FOREST GARDEN

Bedford fields community forest garden is an open-access garden demonstrating how forest gardening can be a viable alternative to our food system - resilient to social and climactic change. it serves the local communities of woodhouse and Hyde Park, and all who happen to visit this part of Leeds.



# HISTORY & GRATITUDE

Huge gratitude and thanks to Joanna Dornan, who founded the project and who first cleared and planted it. Joanna brought her permaculture expertise to the gardens, and involved the Leeds Permaculture Network, as well a number of other like-minded organisations.



How it looked in Feb 2010



Some of the old skool gang

Ben Lawson, who joined in 2013 and took on the main responsibility of developing and managing the garden. Nigel Lees, who supervised the planting of the wildlife corridor hedge, and continues to oversee its development. Nigel is also responsible for the stewardship management and ongoing development of the Woodhouse Ridge woodlands.

Doug Louis, who has represented the Parks and Countryside department of Leeds City Council in securing and developing the project. It is the Education department that have the site vested within their portfolio but they delegated its oversight to the Parks and Countryside team. Thanks to both departments

Mercia Southon, who first identified the unused bramble- and bindweed-choked site as a possible community resource, sought and gained permission and funding to initiate the project, and created the quarter-mile wildlife corridor hedge that extends from it to the woodland of Woodhouse Ridge. Mercia also led the public campaign to have the path that runs alongside the gardens and the wildlife corridor hedge registered as a public footpath.



Walter Lewis, Lloyd Spencer and Liliya Farzudinova Lawson, who have taken brilliant photographs that can be seen on the gallery.

Take a look at more of Walter's great work on his new website here: [www.feedingbodyandsoul.com](http://www.feedingbodyandsoul.com) and see his other work at [www.spiritoftheland.co.uk](http://www.spiritoftheland.co.uk). Visit

<http://theheartofleeds.com/photography/> for Lloyd's work.

Andrew Lambeth and Nat McAnuff, who have created our website.

All the lovely volunteers who have helped to create and maintain the Forest Garden in its first decade.



## The Bedford Shed

We have a basic but beautiful 'shed' which we use to make tea, sit and chat and host events and training sessions. We also have a small shipping container which we use to store our tools.

## Workshops and Courses

Throughout the year we run and host various workshops and courses. Check out our website, Facebook Page and WhatsApp group for regular updates.



# WHAT IS VOLUNTEERING?

Volunteering is a choice made freely by people to spend time doing something that aims to benefit individuals, groups and communities. We try hard to make sure that volunteers come from all types of backgrounds and life experiences, because we think that's the right thing to do and because it makes us better at supporting individuals and communities across Leeds. The time, expertise, knowledge and skills that you give will help to change Leeds for the better. We know many people who, through volunteering, have gained experience, learned new skills, met new friends and developed new interests.



# VOLUNTEERING WITH US

We want you to have a positive experience:

- **Communication:** we want things to be clear and for you to know who to speak to if they are not.
- We support you to gain skills, knowledge and experience
- We offer refreshments (tea/coffee/soft drinks)
- **Feedback:** we ask for your opinion and we value honesty - it's what helps us to improve things in the future.

We are a Volunteer led organisations, we are all giving our time freely to make this amazing space work. Please be mindful of this and offer any support and feedback in a spirit of solidarity and a wish to make things better.



# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

All volunteers are asked to sign a volunteer agreement, outlining appropriate behaviour and conduct whilst at Bedford Fields



## HEALTH & SAFETY

- The First Aid Box is located in the Bedford Shed, there is usually a first aider on site, but we cannot guarantee this.
- Sites and Activities are risk assessed and you will be made aware of any hazards and how to avoid them.
- Please wear appropriate clothing for the weather and the task, including sturdy shoes. Speak to us if you need support.



## SAFEGUARDING

- Protecting the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow people – especially children, young people and vulnerable adults – to live free from abuse, harm and neglect
- If you have a concern about a child/young person or adult ACT. If you feel anyone is in direct danger just call 999, if not speak to a lead Volunteer.
- You can also contact the Leeds Safeguarding Children or Adults Partnerships by searching online.



# EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

WE ARE AN ORGANISATION THAT  
WELCOMES EVERYONE



At Bedford Fields we want everyone to feel welcome and safe. Here everyone is valued and everyone is of equal worth. We will not tolerate discrimination and want to build understanding. You might meet people with different sexualities, faiths, ethnicities, disabilities and abilities, refugees or asylum seekers, people who are experiencing poor mental health. Everyone comes to Bedford Fields to meet new people, learn and share their skills. Please be welcoming, kind and supportive.

# CONFIDENTIALITY

- There may be times where you find out people's private information (address/number/personal details about their life/health) through being at Bedford Fields.
- Any personal information about fellow group members should not be shared without that person's consent (unless you are legally obliged to, or there is a Safeguarding concern).
- Be thoughtful about what personal information you disclose to other group members, especially if it is sensitive information.
- Any data Bedford Fields Forest Garden takes is kept in line with the Data Protection Act 1998, The Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018.



# POLICY AND PROCEDURES

All of our policies are available on request by paper or email



## MOVING ON?

Found another place to volunteer? Moving house?  
Too many things on your plate? Got a job?

Please let us know if you're planning to go, we'll be supportive and understanding. We'd also love to get some feedback about your experience and how we can improve it for others.

## IF YOU DON'T KNOW...ASK!

. If you feel that you need help with anything, please ask! Other Volunteers will be happy to help. And if you can help someone else out, please do.

# VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT



- I will treat everyone at the group positively and with respect.
- I agree to be sensitive to the feelings of others.
- I will promote equal opportunities and not demonstrate any kind of discrimination.
- I agree to maintain confidentiality.
- I will avoid putting myself or others at risk and will report any concerns to a member of staff.
- I will not attempt to engage with Volunteering while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- I will avoid behaviour that is aggressive, destructive or dangerous.
- I agree to use any tools responsibly and report any incidents or defects to a lead Volunteer
- I will aim to resolve conflict positively and assertively.
- I am happy for Bedford Fields to hold my information and to contact me with regards to volunteering. I understand that my details will not be passed to other organisations without my permission.

Name:

Signature:

Date:

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**Bedford Fields will:**

- Maintain confidentiality and store all details within the boundaries of our data protection policy.
- Support you to volunteer in a safe environment suitable for your individual needs.
- Treat you in a positive, respectful and courteous manner.
- Be aware and considerate of your safety and wellbeing and the safety and wellbeing of others.

Name:

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Signature:

Date:

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[www.bedfordfields.co.uk/](http://www.bedfordfields.co.uk/)

[www.facebook.com/bedfordfieldsforestgarden](http://www.facebook.com/bedfordfieldsforestgarden)

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