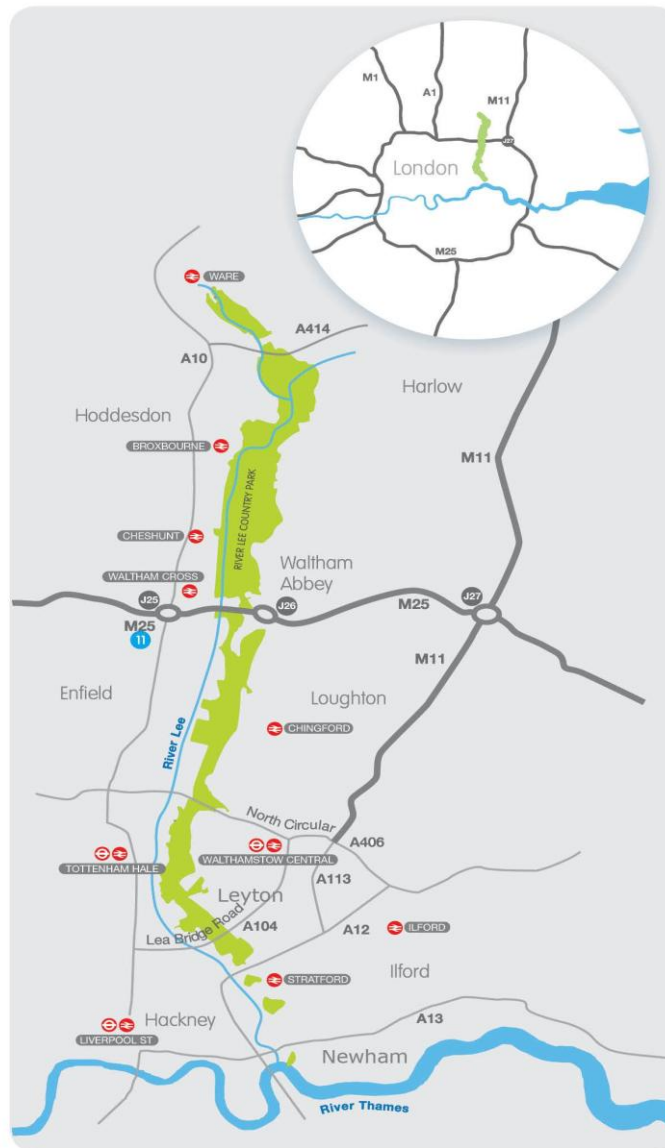


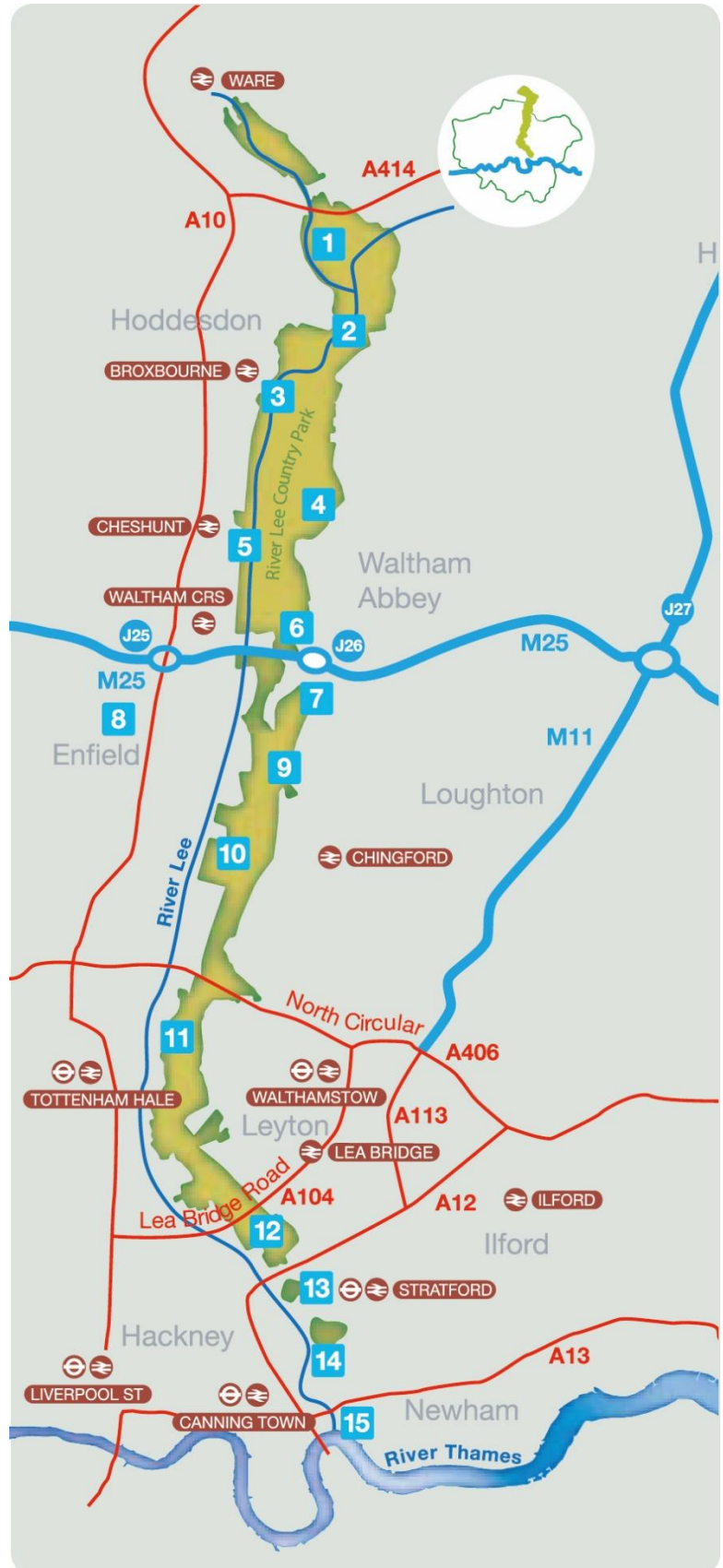
Lee Valley Regional Park Authority

Volunteer Handbook



Bringing you

- 1 Lee Valley Marina, Stanstead Abbots
Stanstead Innings
Rye House Gatehouse
- 2 Glen Faba
Lee Valley Caravan Park, Dobbs Weir
Dobbs Weir
- 3 Lee Valley Almost Wild Campsite
Broxbourne
Broxbourne Old Mill and Meadows
River Lee Country Park, Clayton Hill
- 4 Wildlife Discovery Centre
River Lee Country Park, Fishers Green
Holyfield Hall Farm
River Lee Country Park, Hooks Marsh
- 5 River Lee Country Park, Turnford
River Lee Country Park, Pindar
- 6 Lee Valley White Water Centre
Cornmill Meadows Dragonfly Sanctuary
Waltham Abbey Gardens
- 7 Gunpowder Park
- 8 Myddelton House Gardens
- 9 Lee Valley Campsite, Sewardstone
- 10 Lee Valley Athletics Centre
Lee Valley Camping and Caravan
Park, Edmonton
Lee Valley Golf Course
- 11 Tottenham Marshes
- 12 WaterWorks Centre nature reserve
Lee Valley Riding Centre
Lee Valley Ice Centre
Leyton Marsh and Walthamstow
Marshes
Lee Valley Marina, Springfield
- 13 Lee Valley VeloPark
Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre
- 14 Three Mills Green
- 15 Bow Creek Ecology Park
East India Dock Basin



Welcome to the team!

Thank you for volunteering with Lee Valley Regional Park. Your support is greatly appreciated, and we hope your time with us is enjoyable and rewarding.

We want to make you as welcome as possible and ensure that you feel part of the team in the Lee Valley Regional Park, helping to provide quality environmental open spaces, sports and leisure facilities.

Lee Valley Regional Park is owned and managed by Lee Valley Regional Park Authority. Six of the sports venues owned by the Authority are managed on their behalf by Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL, trading name Better). Depending on what you have signed up to volunteer with will depend on your day-to-day contact but overall, you can always contact the Volunteer team who work with both organisations to deliver quality and rewarding volunteering activities within the park.

This handbook is given to you so that you have the information you need to volunteer safely and securely and is designed as a book for you to refer to whilst you are volunteering. It is divided into three parts, which should make it easy to use.

The first section provides information about the park and its history. The second section includes our Volunteer Policy and explains what you can expect from us and what we expect from you. The third section provides you with details regarding health and safety.

Although you may feel that a few of the sections do not apply to you, it is important that you have them available to refer to should you need to do so.

You will be allocated a supervisor who will be an employee of the Authority (or GLL) and they will be your main point of contact for all that you do. In many instances, apart from a few roles which require lone working, you will be with your supervisor or another employee when carrying out activities. You can also contact the Volunteer team at any time you wish.

Happy volunteering!

Jessica Whitehead
Volunteers Officer

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Section 1

1.1 Lee Valley Regional Park

Lee Valley Regional Park has a unique mix of sport and leisure facilities, heritage sites, gardens, nature reserves and riverside trails. Stretching over 10,000 acres, the park winds its way 26 miles along the banks of the River Lee from Ware in Hertfordshire, down through Essex, North London, past the Olympic Park to East India Dock Basin on the River Thames.

Easy to reach by cycle, car, bus, train or on foot we are an ideal place for volunteering. We hope that you enjoy the many different sites, facilities and experiences that the park has to offer.

1.2 History of the park

The possibility of rescuing the Lee Valley from its years of neglect and regenerating it as a “Great Playground for Londoners” was first proposed sometime before the Second World War. Sadly, the war intervened but in 1944 Sir Patrick Abercrombie revived the idea in his Greater London Plan when he suggested “the Valley gives the opportunity for a great piece of regenerative planning...every piece of land welded into a great regional reservation.”

The idea lay dormant until in 1961, Alderman Lou Sherman, Mayor of Hackney, took up the challenge to regenerate the Valley. He inspired and cajoled seventeen other Local Authorities to support him, and in 1963 the Civic Trust was invited to undertake an appraisal of the Valley’s potential as a vast leisure and recreational resource. The Civic Trust report was extremely positive and on the back of it a Bill was promoted in Parliament to establish the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority as the development body with the responsibility and the powers to deliver the vision.

Following Royal Assent to the Lee Valley Regional Park Bill in December 1966, the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority was formally constituted on 1st January 1967. The Authority’s remit, described in the 1966 Act, embraces just about every conceivable aspect of leisure, sport and recreation, including nature conservation and the protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

The Authority played an active part in the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Within the Park the Authority owns three London 2012 legacy venues: Lee Valley White Water Centre, Lee Valley VeloPark and Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre – these venues are operated on the Authority’s behalf by Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL, trading name Better) who oversee the day-to-day management of these venues. GLL also manage three other sporting venues: Lee Valley Athletics Centre, Lee Valley Riding Centre and Lee Valley Ice Centre. These six venues create a zone of sporting

excellence throughout the park which are enjoyed by local and regional communities and elite athletes alike.

In addition to venues, the Authority manages the open spaces, Myddelton House Gardens, Holyfield Hall Farm, campsites, marinas, biodiversity and the volunteer's programme.

1.3 Funding

The Authority is an independent statutory public authority established by an Act of Parliament. The Authority is financed from the council tax base of Hertfordshire, Essex and Greater London.

1.4 Volunteer Strategy

The Volunteer Strategy has six aims which are in turn supported by a series of objectives which will:

- 1) Develop our volunteer programme at venues and the Authority's parklands for all by:**
 - (i) Improving awareness and increased access to volunteering opportunities to raise the current ratio of volunteers to staff.
 - (ii) Working with Authority departments to continuously identify new opportunities as our business plan directs.
 - (iii) Maintain the Investing in Volunteers accreditation at successive renewals.
- 2) Match the Authority's business needs with volunteer support through:**
 - (i) Continually reviewing the organisations capacity gaps and matching these with existing volunteer skill set.
 - (ii) Regularly reviewing our recruitment processes to ensure new volunteers have the right skill set where possible to serve our business needs.
- 3) Develop specific opportunities to promote diversity involving Global Majority and Hard-to-Reach community and voluntary sector groups:**
 - (i) Actively promote volunteering and programmes to specific 'target groups', through new and established links with local authorities, external partnerships, volunteer centres, action groups and community groups.
- 4) Attract additional support for volunteers by:**
 - (i) Actively promoting engagement of companies through presentations and visits. 'Corporates' represent a good opportunity for partnerships linked to volunteering as part of their corporate 'social responsibility'.
 - (ii) Rewarding dedication, endeavour and contribution.
 - (iii) Supporting with routes into employment within the Authority and beyond.
- 5) Encourage staff to pursue volunteering opportunities to support communities across the Region.**

The Authority recognises the importance of volunteering as a means for personal 'enrichment' and the achievement of new skills. These skills should not be denied to our staff.

This will be achieved through:

- (i) The Volunteer team working closely with Human Resources to find a system to actively encourage opportunities for staff either within the park or in other areas across the region to volunteer as part of a Corporate Social Responsibility activity for the Authority or external organisations.

6) Actively seek opportunities for joint partner programmes:

- (i) The delivery of joint programmes and the shared use of a 'dedicated' pool of volunteers across the range of opportunities. The Regional Park represents a major extension to our current activity which is consistent with our corporate vision.

This will be sought through:

Identifying partners where jointly agreed volunteer or corporate programmes can be delivered.

A full version of the Volunteer Strategy is available to download from our website via this link: [Volunteer Strategy](#)

Section 2

2.1 Why do we involve volunteers?

We recognise the huge number of positive reasons for involving volunteers in the work of the Authority.

We aim to include a wide range of people, helping us to better reflect the varied communities in the region that we represent, leading to a greater capacity, and the ability to reach a wider section of society. Involving and supporting volunteers gives us a better understanding of park users and helps us to model good practice in volunteer management.

Having a diverse range of volunteers supporting the work of the park increases our skills as staff. We recognise that we can learn from our volunteers' skills and experience, and from supporting them. We are committed to involving volunteers at every level in valuable and interesting roles.

The Authority has the ethos of working with volunteers to add value and enhance what we are providing for our customers and our regional community. Unlike some organisations we try not to use volunteers in any position of service delivery and if we stop working with all our volunteers tomorrow, we should still be able to operate.

We also strive to ensure we are benefiting the volunteers as well as the park, so it is a mutual partnership. It needs to be a mutual activity, and we should not be looking at volunteers as a form of cheap labour but as enthusiastic supporters of the park that want to contribute something back because of a passion or interest in what we do.

All staff and volunteers should make the effort to be aware of this and always have this ethos in mind when working with volunteers. All members of staff should be familiar with at least our Volunteer Policy which can be found on the web site.

2.2. Volunteer Policy

The Volunteer Policy sets out the principles and practices that the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (Authority) will adopt to ensure all volunteers are treated fairly and that it meets with its legal obligations.

The Authority has adopted the National Council for Volunteering Organisations (NCVO) definition of volunteering as: “Volunteering is when someone spends unpaid time doing something to benefit others. Helping your close friends or relatives isn’t volunteering. But doing something to the benefit the environment (and through that, other people) is. Volunteering can be formal and organised by organisations, or informal within communities. It should always be a free choice made by the person giving up their time”

Volunteering plays a key part of the continued transformation of the Lee Valley Regional Park. The vision for the Authority is to be a world class leisure destination for nature, sport and discovery. The dedication of our registered volunteers continues to grow year on year through a range of mutually beneficial volunteering opportunities and quality volunteer management.

This policy is designed to illustrate the Authority’s commitment to volunteering and its volunteers. To outline the Authority’s intention to treat all volunteers with fairness and ensure consistency throughout decisions made relating to our programme. This document will explain what volunteers should expect from the Authority and inform them of where they can find support if something goes wrong. It is also an important tool in educating internal and external stakeholders of the role that volunteers play within the Authority and why. This policy will outline how volunteering relates to our business plan as well encompassing the following key points defined:

- Volunteer recruitment
- Equality, diversity and inclusion
- Volunteer role accessibility
- Volunteer induction and training process
- Volunteer expenses
- Supervision and support process for volunteers
- Health and safety for volunteers
- Volunteers' role in confidentiality and data protection
- Problem solving and complaints procedures for volunteers

Our values:

- **Environmentally focused:** reducing our carbon footprint and delivering nature-based solutions by applying the principles of sustainability and nature conservation in volunteering
- **Community centred:** working with communities across the region and actively promoting Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- **Commercially driven:** maximising investment and delivering additional income streams to underpin a resilient budget position
- **Innovative:** at the leading edge of new thinking and developments in sport, leisure and conservation
- **Empowering colleagues:** through continuous professional and personal development
- **Collaborative:** with partners and stakeholders to deliver the greatest possible outcomes

A full version of the Volunteer Policy is available to download from our website via this link: [Volunteer Policy.pdf](#)

2.3 Code of conduct for volunteers

What we aim to do for you:

- Make sure you feel part of the team
- Ensure you understand what the park is and what it does
- Give you an employee of the Authority (or GLL) as a supervisor
- Ensure you know who to talk to if there is a problem
- Give you regular feedback
- Consult and talk to you about your volunteering role
- Ensure you receive the training you need for your role
- Ensure you are safe and insured whilst volunteering
- Tell you when things are changing
- Ensure you feel valued and are thanked for your contributions

What we ask of you:

- Be reliable, if you agree to do something please try to make sure you do it
- Tell us as soon as possible if you are unavailable or running late
- Respect confidential information
- Give us feedback
- Take part in required training
- Ask for help if you need it
- Ensure we have your up to date information

2.4 Volunteer role descriptions

Role descriptions are available which give you advice and guidance on your volunteer role, as well as any skills or experience that will be useful. Each role description has risk assessments associated to it.

Roles that currently have vacancies are available to view on the volunteer section of our website visitleevalley.org.uk/volunteers under the Individual volunteering tab. For all other role descriptions please contact the Volunteer team if you require a copy.

As a volunteer you are entitled to refuse to undertake any activity you consider to be unrealistic, beyond the scope of the role, or that you do not have the skills to undertake.

2.5 Recruitment and selection

We follow the same process for recruiting volunteers with each enquiry. This begins with registration, as a volunteer you can create your own log in and register directly onto our database or you can complete a paper Enquiry and Registration Form and the Volunteer team can enter this information on your behalf

(volunteer.visitleevalley.org.uk/vk/volunteers/registration.htm).

We ask all volunteers to provide referees so that we can ensure we are working with trustworthy, honest and reliable people. This protects staff, other volunteers and members of the public. We will send out a standard questionnaire to the referees you provide within two weeks of receiving your registration. Completed references are stored on your area of the database. If you are unable to provide references for any reason, the Volunteers Officer will invite you to have an informal interview as an alternative way to find out more about you. Most of the roles we have available also require volunteers to have a short interview with the member of staff who will be acting as your volunteer supervisor. This ensures that you are matched to the most appropriate role, and are happy with what to expect from us, and what we expect from you. This also ensures that all volunteers are given the same opportunities and support when volunteering within the Regional Park.

If the role you are interested in requires a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, we will ask you to complete the relevant forms and provide specific identification documents.

2.8 Induction

After you have registered as a volunteer and references have been completed you will be asked to complete a General Induction which can be completed online or in person. If you would like any help in completing any of these steps, you are welcome to contact the Volunteer team and we will be happy to print out any materials and post these to you or arrange to meet you in person to go through information, if this is preferred.

The first part of the General Induction involves reading the Volunteer Handbook. You then need to watch a short video on Manual Handling and confirm that you have seen a copy of the Authority's Health and Safety Policy Statement. The final step is to complete a short quiz based on the information provided. If you are not sure about any of the answers you can refer to the Volunteer Handbook for help. Once you have successfully completed the quiz, a copy of the answers will be sent to the Volunteer team who will check the answers and then upload a copy to the volunteer database under your personal record as evidence that you have completed your General Induction.

Once your references and General Induction have been completed, you will receive confirmation that you have been cleared to apply for volunteer roles and the team will put you forward for any roles that you expressed an interest in during your registration.

As part of this process, you will be sent the descriptions of these roles by a member of the Volunteer team. For most roles you will be contacted by your potential volunteer supervisor so that they can arrange to have an informal interview with you to give them a chance to learn more about you and you a chance to ask any questions and make sure the role is right for you.

In addition to a General Induction you will also need to complete a role specific induction for each of the roles you would like to take part in. The Authority has many processes and procedures to keep staff, volunteers and visitors safe. Processes and procedures relevant to your roles will be explained to you as part of your role specific induction. For example, if you are going to be using computers or IT systems, you will need to read the IT Usage Policy. If you are unsure about any of the information mentioned during or after your induction, you can ask your volunteer supervisor as many questions as needed. You should endeavour to adhere to Authority's processes and procedures and should not be worried about asking for help if you are unsure.

Your role specific induction will cover the following topics and expand on topics mentioned within this handbook:

- Role description
- Risk assessments
- Partnership information
- Site / place of work information
- Support and supervision available
- First aid provision
- Fire safety
- Evacuation procedures
- Role specific training
- Times of attendance
- Unable to attend procedure
- Trial period
- Any other role specific information

If there is anything that you are unsure of, please contact the Volunteers Officer. Do not be afraid to ask questions it is better to ask and get things right than to do things wrong.

2.9 Training and development

As well as your role specific induction, volunteer supervisors are responsible for your ongoing training requirements. This may be standard training that the Authority can provide or contracted in training. If you require or would like to request specific training, then you or your supervisor can seek advice from the Volunteer team. The Volunteer team will also advertise any ad hoc training opportunities that may be of interest to volunteers.

2.10 Support, supervision, reward and recognition

Your supervisor and the Volunteer team are there for you. Please feel free to contact them if you need to feedback on anything connected with volunteering for the Authority.

You may never need them and if you are happy with how things are going then contact may be minimal. However, if there are any issues you wish to discuss please make sure you talk to a member of staff. We cannot support you unless we know there is a problem.

If you have opted in to receive emails from us, you will receive a regular e-mail with a link to our volunteering opportunities webpage and a monthly email with a link to our Park Life newsletter updating you on what is going on within the Regional Park.

Appropriate reward and recognition are given to all volunteers. The Volunteer team arrange and host two thank you events each year that all volunteers are invited to attend. Some volunteer supervisors also arrange social activities for their volunteers, please ask them for more information.

The biggest of the two annual events arranged by the Volunteer team is the annual Volunteer Party which gives the Authority an opportunity to say thank you to our volunteers. This is normally held during the early evening to enable those who work or volunteer during the day the chance to attend. Volunteers, staff, partner organisations and Authority members are all invited to one of our venues for thank you speeches from our Chief Executive and Chairman, a delicious free buffet and the chance to meet people from all over the Lee Valley Regional Park. Included at the end of the speeches is an awards ceremony.

In addition to the Volunteer Party, there is also a volunteer thank you buffet held at Myddelton House. This is held during the daytime to enable any volunteers to attend that prefer not to attend evening events. This event does not involve any speeches or awards and gives people the chance to meet other like mind people from across the Regional Park.

Volunteers are very welcome to attend both annual events if they wish.

Volunteer awards

Each year volunteers, staff and partner organisations are invited to nominate an individual or group for a volunteer award. The identity of the nominees remains a secret until the night of the party. All nominees receive a certificate and badge, as well as a big round of applause and thank you. Information about each nominee will then feature in a special edition of our newsletter the week following the party.

Long service

The authority recognises 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 years of service. The team issue a certificate and pin badge for each award, and these are limited edition. This award is open to all volunteers and is administered by the Volunteer team.

Discount cards for volunteers

This scheme aims to give regular volunteers recognition for the hours of personal time they donate to the park. The scheme recognises volunteers that give a minimum of 20 hours per annum in any one calendar year. Volunteers who give less than 20 hours per annum will not be eligible for this recognition scheme. Please check with your supervisor that your volunteer hours are being recorded properly, so we know who can take part in the scheme. Remember you can always send your volunteering hours into the Volunteer team (volunteers@leevalleypark.org.uk) to check they have been entered and ensure you get your discount card (also referred to as a Lee Valley membership card).

There are two levels to the scheme, the first will be eligible for volunteers that give between 20 hours and 100 hours in one calendar year, the second will be eligible for volunteers that give greater than 100 hours in one calendar year.

Level 1

Any volunteer that gives between 20 hours and 100 hours in a calendar year will be able to obtain a Lee Valley membership card, which entitles them to get a discount of 25% on food and beverages available at all our sites within the park (excluding vended products). This discount will be available for the calendar year following the year you achieved your volunteer hours and will last for one calendar year.

Level 2

Any volunteer that gives greater than 100 hours in a calendar year will receive the same benefit as Level 1 and the additional benefits which will be confirmed each year and detailed in full in a letter or email sent to each eligible volunteer. This discount will be available for the calendar year following the year you achieved your volunteer hours and will last for one calendar year. Eligible volunteers receive an email link so that they can sign up for a free pay and play membership with Better (trading name of GLL) who run some of our sport and leisure venues. Please note it may take Better up to four working days to send you an automated activation email to validate your membership.

Any discount will only apply when volunteers present their Lee Valley discount card. Failure to produce your card will result in being charged full price. All volunteers who qualify will be contacted by email or letter of authorisation by the end of February each year. A member of the Volunteer team will then double check your postal address and issue you with your card. If you already have a card, the email you receive will confirm which level of discount you have qualified for each year or if your discount has expired (i.e. you are no longer eligible). All LSC discounts are subject to availability and not available in conjunction with any other offer. The venue may limit the number of spaces available per session at the discounted price. Limited spaces are available on a first come first serve basis. This discount is not available during events at the LSC venues. Discounts apply only to the catering outlets and not group catering orders.

2.11 Uniform

It is not compulsory, but uniform is available if you wish to wear it.

If you do wear uniform, we ask that you only wear it when on duty as a volunteer or representing the park.

You will only be issued with uniform after completing 30 hours or 3 months of volunteering as decided by your supervisor. In some cases, you may also need to have completed a successful trial period. Some public facing volunteers may be offered uniform from day one if undertaking events or public facing activities.

When wearing uniform, you may be approached by members of the public, and you should remember that you are always representing the park, so please treat them as customers and be as helpful as you can.

There may be queries or questions that members of the public may ask that you cannot answer. Remember you can always refer people to our website:
<https://www.visitleevalley.org.uk/contact-us>.

2.12 Travel expenses and car parks

Volunteering with the Lee Valley Regional Park is designed to be inclusive and we aim to provide you with what you need to undertake a role at an agreed location. In view of this, we can arrange to pay travelling expenses to volunteers from their home address to their place of volunteering.

Travel expenses

- The expenses will normally be for reimbursement of public transport costs. However, we can also reimburse car mileage (please check with your insurer that you are covered for driving to and from your place of volunteering) and bicycle mileage (20p per mile). The payment of 5p per mile per passenger is also available for volunteers carrying fellow volunteers to their place of volunteering by car.
- Mileage will be paid on a postcode to postcode basis. If a postcode is not known (i.e. at an open space) the nearest dwelling postcode should be used.
- Mileage will be paid at the shortest route from postcode to postcode (according to mapping software used in the Authority's expenses system). If a journey is interrupted or deviated from the direct route as a result of traffic or roadworks etc. the claim will still be paid at the shortest route from postcode to postcode.
- A **V011 Volunteer Expenses Claim Form** with supporting train or bus tickets, or receipts must be completed.
- Taxi fares will only be paid if it has been agreed with both the Volunteers Officer and the volunteer supervisor prior to travel.
- No claim can be made if a volunteer is receiving expenses from another source for the activity.

Car mileage expenses for volunteers will be paid at the following rates:

	451-999cc	1000-1199cc	1200-1450cc
Per mile first 10,000	45p	45p	45p
Per mile after 10,000	13.7p	14.4p	16.4p

All travelling must be authorised by your supervisor or the Volunteers Team

All expenses must be claimed using V011 Volunteer Expenses Claim Form. Please ask your supervisor or the Volunteer team for a copy of this form. The first time you claim expenses you will also need to email the Volunteers Officer with your bank account number and sort code so that they can request that your details are set up on the Authority finance system for reimbursement of your expenses to you via BACS payment.

Where possible claim forms should be signed by your supervisor before being sent to the Volunteers team. The Volunteers Officer can also sign off the expense form but only if they have evidence from your volunteer supervisor(s) that you volunteered on the dates you are claiming for.

All claims (except mileage) must be accompanied by evidence showing the journey information and the cost of the journey e.g. TfL statement, tickets or receipts with journey information. Volunteers or volunteer supervisors should not send in forms without these kinds of receipts. Payments will not be made without receipts.

Before incurring any expenditure, volunteers are advised to check with the Volunteer team that the Authority has the resources available to be able to reimburse any expenses incurred.

Note: If a volunteer needs to inform the Benefits Office that they are undertaking volunteer work the Volunteers Team can supply a letter of reference to state the type of volunteer work undertaken and the hours completed.

Car parks

Volunteers are entitled to free parking at some of Lee Valley Regional Park car parks.

Open spaces: Some of our open spaces car parks track cars using a camera system that reads vehicle registration numbers on arrival. For a volunteer to receive free car parking, they must notify us of their vehicle registration number in advance. The Volunteers Officer will then register their name and vehicle with our parking provider. If at any point, a volunteer changes their vehicle registration they must let us know as soon as possible so we can update the system and ensure they still have free parking. Our parking provider controls parking at the following sites: Broxbourne Old Mill & Meadows, Cheshunt Country Walk, Clayton Hill, Cornmill Meadows, Fishers Green, Gunpowder Park, Hooks Marsh, Pindar Car Park and Waltham Abbey Gardens.

Once your vehicle is registered you do not need to do anything when you leave the car parks as the camera will scan your registration and allocate you free parking.

Venues: each venue has its own individual parking schemes and normally require you to go into the venue and register your vehicle for the day. If you are unsure, please check in advance with your volunteer supervisor or the Volunteer team.

2.13 Time monitoring

The government has raised the profile of volunteering in several of its priorities and action plans. One of the ways in which volunteering is assessed is the number of hours of their time volunteers donate.

Organisations that collect information on volunteer hours are also able to apply for a range of funding which can go towards projects and improvements that could benefit us and you. Volunteering hours are important to LVRPA as we include them in quarterly reports to our board of Members and analyse the data for any trends and changes. Volunteering hours are also included in applications for annual Green Flag awards at qualifying open spaces. You can find out more about Green Flag here: greenflagaward.org

When recording your time, please include time spent travelling between Lee Valley sites or for projects/events and completing any admin work that is associated with your volunteering.

Logging your hours correctly is important if you would like to claim travel expenses as the Volunteers Officer will need to make sure there is a clear record of the dates, times and places you took part in your volunteering role before being able to confirm that we can reimburse travel expenses. The same will apply for any fellow volunteers that you wish to add to your claim as passengers in your vehicle. Your eligibility for the Volunteer Discount Scheme is also based on the number of hours you complete during each annual year.

Here are some of the ways to ensure your hours are recorded:

- Signing in and out. Volunteers should ensure they sign in and out in on paper or electronic forms provided by their venue or by their volunteer supervisor. A member of staff will then use this information to record your hours on the volunteer database. Signing in and out is also important from a health and safety perspective as it ensures that our team know when you have arrived at the site and left safely. This mainly applies to the following volunteer roles: *Wildlife Discovery Centre, Myddelton House Gardens, Conservation volunteers, Lee Valley Riding Centre, Lee Valley White Water Centre and Events volunteers.*
- Keeping your own records. Some volunteering roles require you to keep your own volunteering records and submit them monthly. You can do this directly through the database (instructions on how to do this are sent to volunteers on monthly basis) or via paper/electronic forms you can send to your volunteer supervisor or the Volunteer team. This mostly applies to the following volunteer roles: *Wildlife surveyors (e.g. birds, reptiles, bats, butterflies, dragonflies and other species), Litter pickers, Honorary wardens and Livestock checkers (e.g. goats on Cheshunt Marsh).* You can enter your hours on the database yourself via your [log in](https://volunteer.visitleevalley.org.uk/volunteers/login) <https://volunteer.visitleevalley.org.uk/volunteers/login>, emailing volunteers@leevalleypark.org.uk, completing the form attached or enter them via this link: <https://forms.office.com/e/Z6w8QgHRqn> Some exceptions include: Bittern Roost Watch volunteers as these hours are recorded after everyone has signed in and out via a dedicated WhatsApp group.

Monthly reminders will be sent to volunteers which include the details above, instructions on how to log hours on the database and a copy of a form you can use to monitor your time if you would prefer not to use the database. All completed forms should be handed to your supervisor, emailed to volunteers@leevalleypark.org.uk or posted to the Volunteer team, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, Myddelton House, Bulls Cross, Enfield, EN2 9HG.

2.14 Insurance, health and safety

You will be insured whilst volunteering in the park once you have completed your basic and role specific inductions, and we have a signed Enquiry and Registration Form, or you have registered on the database.

The Authority takes health and safety very seriously and much of Section 3 in this handbook is there to protect you, staff and other park users.

You have a duty of care to yourself as well as the duty of care that we have to you. You must ensure that you do not do anything to put yourself or others at risk whilst carrying out any volunteering activities.

The Authority does not have the level of insurance in place to enable under 18s to take part in volunteering. We ask that you do not bring anyone under the age of 18 with you when volunteering.

2.15 Safeguarding

Safeguarding is about protecting children and other vulnerable groups from abuse.

Lee Valley Regional Park Authority have a Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding Procedure in place for all staff to follow. Our procedure has been produced as guidance for all staff working for the Authority and should be adopted by staff who deal with children or vulnerable groups including volunteers, non-paid personnel, students and any partners associated with, doing work for or in conjunction with the Authority. Each of our volunteering roles are assessed on whether a DBS check and safeguarding training will be necessary before a volunteer is able to take part in that role. Very few of our roles require a DBS check or safeguarding training.

However, as volunteer if you are the first person approached or notice something of concern this will make you the first responder. The three most important things for the first responder are:

Listen – where there are concerns about a child's or person from a vulnerable group's welfare or where abuse is alleged or suspected, let them speak and listen carefully to what they say so as to:

- Clarify the issues in question e.g. establish how an injury occurred
- Offer re-assurance about how they will be kept safe
- Explain what action will be taken (additional measures may be required for a child or person from a vulnerable group with communication difficulties e.g. as a result of a disability).

- The child or person from a vulnerable group must not be pressed for information, led, cross-examined, given false assurances of absolute confidentiality or asked to give a written statement. The child or person from a vulnerable group must be allowed to divulge information in their own time and as much as they feel comfortable with.

Make Notes – use whatever paper /notebook you have to make notes then:

- Ask a member of staff for a Concern Form to complete and give it to the Designated Safeguarding Officer* (DSO).
- Ensure you fill in all sections. If you make any suppositions/opinions, these must be separately recorded.

Pass it on/Pass it up – make sure that, once you have listened and made notes you:

- Ensure the completed Concern form is given to the relevant DSO/Deputy DSO
- Where possible, discuss your concern with the DSO face to face
- If neither of the relevant DSO's are available, the form should be emailed to the Senior Safeguarding Officer (SSO) and Deputy SSO within 2 hours of completion.

*You can find out who your Designated Safeguarding Officer is by asking your volunteer supervisor or the Volunteers Officer – Jessica Whitehead
jwhitehead@leevalleypark.org.uk. In the case of an emergency call the police.

Always:

- Follow the above procedure.
- Remain calm - ensure the child/person from a vulnerable group is safe and feels safe, show and tell the child/person from a vulnerable group that you are taking what they say seriously.
- Reassure the child/person from a vulnerable group.

Never:

- Take sole responsibility – always consult the Designated Safeguarding Officer (or in their absence the Senior Safeguarding Officer) so you can begin to protect the child / person from a vulnerable group and gain support for yourself.
- Rush into actions that may be inappropriate.
- Make promises you cannot keep.
- Ask inappropriate questions, which may jeopardise any possible investigation.

2.16 Equality, diversity and inclusion

The Authority has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and all volunteers are covered under this and must abide by it. If you wish to see a copy, please ask the Volunteer team. Our Equalities Policy Statement is on our website:

<https://www.leevalleypark.org.uk/equalities-policy>

2.17 Rehabilitation of offenders

The park recognises the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and will not discriminate against volunteers with spent criminal records. However, current criminal records or convictions at any time in the past for the following offences will not come under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

Any individual with these offences will not be permitted to volunteer with the park:

- Murder
- Sexual Crimes
- Embezzlement

2.18 Alcohol and Drugs Policy

The Authority distinguishes between the use of alcohol and drugs in the workplace (which will be regarded as a disciplinary offence and treated appropriately) and sickness due to the use of alcohol or drugs. The abuse of alcohol or drugs in the workplace is likely to lead to dismissal from volunteering. The following rules apply:

- If a volunteer is found consuming alcohol or taking drugs on any park premises whilst on duty or are under the influence of alcohol or drugs whilst volunteering, this will be treated as gross misconduct under the Volunteer Problem Solving procedure. The possession of drugs for any reason other than medical is forbidden. Volunteers must inform their supervisor if they are taking non-prescription drugs for medical reasons and in particular if they are likely to affect their ability to undertake their roles.
- A volunteer may be suspended from volunteering until the problem has been resolved. The Authority will follow the Volunteer Problem Solving Procedure to decide whether to require the next course of action, this may result in advising them to approach their GP or local treatment services before returning to their role or if should they should be dismissed from volunteering.
- If a volunteer is advised to approach their GP or local treatment services but refuses to do so they may not be allowed to return to their volunteer role in the future.

Volunteers should be aware that the Authority will not hesitate to inform the police if it believes there has been an abuse of controlled drugs for which criminal sanctions are appropriate.

2.19 Problem Solving Procedure

If at any time you feel that you have been treated unfairly, there is a Problem Solving Procedure which covers all volunteers. If you wish to see a copy of this procedure, please ask your supervisor or contact the Volunteers team.

2.20 Confidentiality

Whilst volunteering for the park you may have access to information about the park, employees, visitors or other volunteers that is not readily available to the general public.

Under no circumstances should this information be passed on to any third parties. You should respect the confidentiality of any information that is available to you and keep it restricted at all times.

At the end of your induction, you will sign the induction form, to say that you have understood what is meant by confidentiality (see quote from staff handbook below), and our other policies and processes have been discussed.

Lee Valley Regional Park Authority Employee Handbook:

“Confidentiality

You are required to maintain an appropriate standard of confidentiality. Any disclosures of confidential information (including personal information kept on computer or other media) made unlawfully outside the proper course of duty will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence.

You will not at any time during your employment (except as so far as is necessary in the course of your employment) or afterwards, disclose to any person any information as to the business, dealings, practice, accounts, finances, trading, software, know-how, affairs of the practice of any of the practice’s patients or prospective patients, distributors, firms or companies otherwise connected with the practice. All information held about the practice or in connection with the practice and any of the above is to be regarded as confidential.”

2.21 Volunteers leaving the Authority

If you decide to stop volunteering, please get in touch with the Volunteer team who will send you an exit interview form to complete and give you the option to have an exit interview if you wish which can be in person or over the phone. This is to help us gain an understanding of the reasons behind you leaving. If it is established that it is because of some wrongdoing on the part of the Authority, you should inform the Volunteer team who will critically review the situation and ensure any required improvements are made. Volunteers who are leaving may request a reference from either their supervisor or the Volunteer team.

Section 3

3.1 Important information

The following information is taken from park procedures and may be relevant to the role that you undertake. They are given to you for reference purposes.

Many of the procedures may not be relevant to you, but are included for your information and protection, so it is advisable to read through this section.

Any procedures specific to your role will be pointed out to you by your supervisor during your induction. If there are issues or problems that are not covered in the Volunteer Handbook, please talk to your supervisor or the Volunteer team.

3.2 Top tips

These top tips may seem obvious but are worth thinking about every time you visit the park, whether volunteering or visiting as a member of the public.

Health and safety:

- When volunteering alone, always carry a mobile phone. If volunteering in a group, you should ensure that one person has a mobile phone.
- Wear any protective clothing you are given.
- Be careful when lifting. Always test the weight first. Bend your knees and not your back. Get advice or help if you are not sure you can lift an object.
- Do not use broken or defective tools. Report these tools to a member of staff immediately so they are taken out of circulation.
- Only use tools that you have been trained to use.
- Do not use your mobile phone when driving.
- Always tell someone where you are going and when you expect to be back.
- Only use ladders if you have been trained properly to do so.
- Always wash your hands after being outside, near water or with animals.
- Do not attempt to pick up any unwell or dead animals (see Section 3.7) or any rubbish that could be dangerous (e.g. needles, knives) or that may belong to rough sleepers please report these incidents to your volunteer supervisor.
- Report any near misses, accidents or incidents to your volunteer supervisor or the Senior Responsible Officer (see Section 3.3) as soon as possible. Where possible make a note of the people involved, what happened, location, time and date etc.

Dealing with people and members of the public:

- Dress appropriately for your role – particularly in a public facing role uniform should be worn.
- Always inform members of the public that you are a volunteer for the park – remember you are representing the park in your volunteering.
- Greet people with a friendly and non-threatening attitude.
- If you don't know the answer to a question from a member of the public do not guess, ask them if they are happy for you to pass on their contact details to a member of staff who may be able to help or direct them to <https://www.visitlee valley.org.uk/contact-us>.
- Never approach anyone who is causing problems within the park. Always get yourself to a safe place and then follow the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) Policy and Emergency Procedure (see Section 3.3).
- If someone approaches you asking for your help to deal with a problem, stay calm and show concern for the customer's difficulties. Do not argue with them, try and be supportive and defuse the situation if you can.
- Do not shout or swear at / in front of members of the public or children.

Support for volunteers:

- If you have any problems your first point of contact is your supervisor or the Volunteer team, including the reporting of accidents, incidents or near misses.
- Know who your First Aiders are and where the First Aid kit is located. If you are interested in First Aid training, please ask your supervisor or the Volunteer team.
- Know your emergency evacuation procedure including fire drill, alarm sound, fire exits and what to do in the event of a fire or cause for emergency evacuation.

Beware of the following:

- Falls into water from paths, bridges and platforms. Be aware of any hazards and don't go too near to edge.
- Slips, trips and falls on uneven ground and paths. Be aware of any hazards, and wear shoes / boots with a good grip.
- Overhanging vegetation that could cause damage to eyes.
- Falling branches.
- Dog fouling, as there is a danger of toxicaria from dog faeces.
- Out of control dogs.
- Stings and bites from wildlife.
- Poisonous and irritating stings from plants e.g. nettles or giant hog weed that can cause blistering.
- Passing cyclists.
- Speeding traffic in car parks and access roads.

3.3 Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) Policy and Emergency Procedure

There may be times when you are volunteering that you are not directly supervised. If you are working on your own and are unable to contact your direct supervisor in the event of an incident the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) procedure should be followed.

A member of staff is appointed as SRO and is on duty every day of the year between the hours of 8am and 4pm, whenever members of staff or volunteers are on duty. The SRO is the first point of contact for incidents that require enforcement of the Regional Park Authority's Byelaws or liaison with the Police and Emergency Services.

Alerting the SRO:

- In the case of emergency, volunteers should dial 999 immediately. The process under Major Incidents at the bottom of this page should be followed.
- After contacting the Emergency Service, you should contact the SRO immediately to inform them of any incident that involves a serious breach of the Byelaws, injury to an employee, volunteer or a member of the public, damage to public or private property, or requires the attendance of the Police, Park Security Officers or Emergency Services.
- The SRO should also be alerted to any ongoing incidents that might develop to involve the circumstances described above or where these circumstances have been narrowly avoided.

Major incidents at centres or facilities:

- Contact the Emergency Services by dialling **999**.
- Inform the Site Manager.

Major incidents in the wider park:

- Contact the Emergency Services by dialling **999**.
- Call the relevant Lee Valley Regional Park contact number **03000 030 621** to advise of the incident.
 - 08:00 to 16:00: Senior Responsible Officer.
 - 16:00 to 08:00: Out of Hours Service.

If your call gets diverted to voicemail, please leave a clear message that states your name, the type of incident, where the incident is, when it happened and who it involves. If you are using the SRO number to report your lone working, please make sure you leave a clear message which includes your name, where you will be volunteering and what time you will be calling back to report you have left the site safely (see Section 3.4 for more details). Once your voicemail has been left it will be emailed to the Ranger Service Managers who will be able to answer your queries if the SRO is unavailable.

We recommend that volunteers save the SRO number as a mobile phone contact.

3.4 Lone Working Procedure

Some of our volunteer roles are carried out by volunteers who are alone. If your role involves lone working the following must be adhered to and will be covered in your induction.

The principal control measures for lone working are:

- The provision of mobile telephones.
- 'Buddy' systems, where two volunteers work together to monitor each-other's safety.
- Signing in and out systems, which record where volunteers are at any given time and when they are expected to return.

No volunteer should work alone in circumstances where there is a specific and identifiable risk [as opposed to a general possibility] of accident, illness or assault.

Lone working is prohibited by law in some situations and in several operations. These include:

- Entry into confined spaces, including tanks, grain silos, inspection covers, ceiling or cellar voids, and any other spaces where there might be inadequate natural ventilation.
- Working with boats or by water.
- Use of potentially dangerous machinery.
- Manual handling operations.
- Use of ladders and the erection or dismantling of scaffolding.

For these prohibited operations, the provision of a mobile phone is insufficient protection for lone working; a second person must be present.

Volunteers must avoid lone working between 16:00 to 08:00 (are outside the hours covered by SRO duty) unless specifically agreed in advance with a member of staff (e.g. a Bittern roost watch). From 16:00 to 08:00, the out of office service can be used to raise issues: **03000 030 621**.

Things to remember when lone working:

- You should not lone work unless you have a mobile telephone and someone has been made aware of your intention to volunteer and when you expect to be finished. This may be via a signing in and out system.
- Everyone should be cautious when working alone, assuming that there may be a risk, even if the risk is not immediately obvious.
- If you feel in danger whilst lone working, you should withdraw to a place of safety and contact the SRO.
- It is your responsibility when working alone to ensure that your phone is working and fully charged before working alone.

- If a task requires the help of another person then do not attempt to do it without a second person.
- At no point should you be working alone at a time that has not been approved.

“Buddy” system:

- The person working alone should telephone their designated “buddy” when commencing volunteering informing them that they are working alone. The “buddy” will in most circumstances be their supervisor.
- Volunteers must advise their buddy in advance of their intended actions, give them a contact number and indicate an anticipated time for either completion or an interim check. This should not normally be any more than one hour ahead of their start time.
- If the person working alone does not check-in at the specified time the “buddy” must telephone the given contact number and check the person working alone is okay.
- If there is no answer within a further fifteen minutes, the buddy must contact the SRO immediately. The SRO will then determine an appropriate course of action.
- If the circumstances are suspicious or there has been an accident the Emergency Services should be called immediately

Missing volunteers:

- If the person is more than 2 hours past the time they were supposed to return or have failed to make contact to inform of any problems, the SRO should be contacted for advice.
- When a volunteer is suspected of being missing, the SRO must be informed immediately. The SRO will then determine an appropriate course of action.
- Each circumstance will be different but common sense should be applied to suspected missing persons.
- The SRO will have available a list of home addresses and emergency contact telephone numbers for all volunteers, which will be held securely and in strictest confidence, and only used to confirm the safety of a volunteer in the event of concern.

3.5 Boats and working in or near water

While the Ranger Service Managers will act as co-ordinator on matters relating to working with boats and by water, the responsibility for the safe use of boats and work by water rests with the Boat Handler and the relevant supervisor.

A minimum of two volunteers must always be present when using a boat or working close by the edge of water. A minimum of two volunteers is required where any one volunteer intends to enter the water.

Boats

- When a boat is being used, at least one volunteer must remain on land, or the volunteers afloat should use the buddy procedure to maintain contact with the shore.
- Boat Handlers should normally only operate boats on waterbodies with which they are familiar. If it is necessary to operate on an unfamiliar waterbody, advice on potential hazards should be sought from someone who has greater knowledge of the site.
- The Boat Handler must ensure that boats are not overloaded, that any equipment onboard is stowed safely, that sufficient fuel is taken onboard and that oars are available in case of engine failure, and that the boat is equipped with adequate means of anchorage.
- Re-fuelling operations or engine maintenance should be undertaken away from the water's edge in order to reduce the risk of pollution.
- When operating a boat during outbreaks of any infectious disease the operator must insure the boat is disinfected after use in that particular water body.
- When one or more volunteers are entering the water to work, visual contact must be maintained.
- At least one employee or volunteer present must have First Aid at Work qualification. A First Aid kit and mobile telephone must be available.
- All persons involved in the operation must wear life jackets.

All volunteers working in or close to the edge of the water

Volunteers should be alert to the risk of infection and disease when working in or close by the edge of water, particularly Leptospirosis or Weil's Disease (see below).

The risk of infection and disease can be minimised by adopting a high standard of personal hygiene:

- Wear protective clothing like gloves
- Cover all cuts, abrasions and other breaks in the skin with waterproof dressings and/or gloves before working near water.
- Follow good basic hygiene including regular hand-washing and avoiding hand to mouth/eye contact etc. Wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking.
- Take rest breaks, including meals and drinks, away from the work area.
- Wash any cuts, grazes, abrasions and other breaks in the skin sustained during work near water immediately with soap and clean running water and apply antiseptic.
- Take steps to avoid the inhalation of water spray and avoid allowing spray to come into contact with eyes.

Volunteers should inform a doctor if they become ill after working by water. Lee Valley Regional Park Authority can provide a Weil's disease (Leptospirosis) Medical Advisory

Card to be carried by those volunteers working by water forms a regular part of their activities.

For further information about Leptospirosis please visit:

[HSE](https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/healthrisks/hazardous-substances/harmful-micro-organisms/leptospirosis-weils-disease.htm) - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/healthrisks/hazardous-substances/harmful-micro-organisms/leptospirosis-weils-disease.htm>

[NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/leptospirosis/) - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/leptospirosis/>

[Public Health England](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/leptospirosis) - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/leptospirosis>

Volunteers working near water may also come across risk of disease and death in animals. Provisions relating to avian botulism (poisoned birds) and fish deaths are set out in **Working with Animals and Dealing with Dead Animals Procedure** set out below.

Blue-Green Algae:

- Blue-Green Algae naturally occur in inland waters but can multiply during warm weather or in nutrient rich situations, to produce toxic 'scum' which is hazardous to humans, domestic animals and wildlife.
- Any suspected outbreak of Blue-Green Algae should be reported to your supervisor or the Rangers Service, who must alert the Environment Agency and decide on any further action.
- If Environment Agency advises a closure of the water body the Authority will comply with their recommendations / instructions.
- When an outbreak of Blue-Green Algae is suspected on sites with livestock, the Farm Manager must be informed immediately.
- In areas where there are Blue Green Algal blooms notices will be posted. This is the quickest and most effective method of informing the public, staff and volunteers. An example of the poster is show on the next page.

WARNING!!
Blue green algal blooms
SCUM MAY BE TOXIC

Blue Green Algae have been identified at this site. Under certain conditions they are known to have the potential to affect the health of humans and animals. The Department of Health has issued the following statement:

“Illness, including skin rash, eye irritation, vomiting, diarrhoea, fever and muscular pain has occurred in some recreational users of water who have been in contact with algal scum ***although algal scum is not always harmful, it is a sensible precaution to avoid contact with scum and the water close to it.***”

With regard to animals, the Chief Veterinary Officer of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food has stated:

“The toxin is poisonous to animals.... ***farmer and pet owners should therefore ensure that their animals do not have access to affected water.***”

All visitors are requested to observe the following guidelines:

- All visitors should avoid contact with the algal scum and the surrounding water. **No swimming or paddling.**
- All animals should be kept out of the water. **Dogs must be kept on a lead.**
- Anglers must avoid any contact with the algal scum. Fishing may be prohibited in areas of known algal scum. Hands must be washed before eating, drinking or smoking and when you have finished angling.
- If you should fall ill after visiting the site and if you feel that you may have come into contact with, or ingested algae, you should immediately contact your doctor and advise him/her of the circumstances.

Weil's disease:

- Weil's disease is an acute, severe form of leptospirosis and is contracted from the urine of infected rats.
- A bacterium enters the body through breaks in the skin such as cuts, blisters and abrasions, or via the lining of the nose, throat or alimentary tract.
- The incubation period is 7-13 days, and the disease starts with a fever, muscular aches and pains, loss of appetite and vomiting. Subsequent bruising of the skin, sore eyes, nose bleeds and jaundice may occur. The fever lasts about five days and may be followed by significant deterioration.
- Weil's Disease is tricky to detect until an infection is identified. You are strongly advised to familiarise yourself with the advice given on the next page.

- It is vital that the doctor be told that the patient may have been in contact with a source of infection. The symptoms can easily be mistaken for those of flu, and the possibility of Weil's Disease may be overlooked in the early stages.
- Laboratory testing of blood will confirm the diagnosis, but this may take undue time in an ordinary hospital lab. If Weil's disease is suspected the samples should be sent directly to the address below where they will be tested within 24 hours. Treatment is usually by Penicillin Antibiotic.

Rare and imported pathogens laboratory (RIPL)
UK Health Security Agency
Manor Farm Road
Porton Down
Wiltshire
SP4 0JG
Email ripl@ukhsa.gov.uk
Telephone 01980 612348 (available 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

DX address DX 6930400, Salisbury 92 SP

An example of warning poster is show on the next page.

WARNING!!
Weil's disease

Rivers, ponds and canals are usually infected with a bacterium which can cause Leptospirosis (Weil's Disease). Most of the time Weil's Disease may take the form of a chill or possibly resemble an attack of flu.

Weil's disease can cause serious illness or death.

Your Doctor is reminded of the existence of:

Rare and imported pathogens laboratory (RIPL)

UK Health Security Agency

Manor Farm Road

Porton Down

Wiltshire

SP4 0JG

Email ripl@ukhsa.gov.uk

Telephone 01980 612348 (available 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

DX address DX 6930400, Salisbury 92 SP

Be aware:

The disease is *curable if recognised in time*, but many doctors in urban areas will never have encountered it. If you have any reason to suspect that you may have been infected, you may need to draw your doctor's attention to the possibility that the symptoms could be Weil's Disease.

The symptoms:

The incubation period is 7-13 days.

Early symptoms are fever, muscular aches and pains, loss of appetite and vomiting. Later symptoms may include bruising of the skin, sore eyes, nose bleeds and jaundice.

The fever lasts for about five days and may be followed by significant deterioration.

Results of blood tests have been known to take two weeks or longer through the normal laboratory system. Deaths and serious illnesses have occurred because of slow identification.

Your local laboratory can provide your medical practitioner with a result within 2 – 3 hours through an PCR test for direct detection of bacterial genetic material and EIA testing for IgM the body's early immune response to the bacteria.

3.6 Other potential health risks

Tetanus:

- It is recommended that all people working in the countryside have adequate protection.
- Your doctor will give you advice about tetanus should you need more information.
- People at risk include agricultural workers, people working with animals, Rangers and engineering workers, people working outdoors or at risk from minor cuts and abrasions.

Giant Hogweed:

- Contact with the sap of Giant Hogweed can cause blistering to the skin in bright sunlight.
- If volunteers find Giant Hogweed in our open spaces, they can report the location to the Senior Responsible Officer so that they can cordon off the area from the public and arrange for safe removal of the plant.
- If a volunteer suspects their skin has had contact with the plant, they must wash the area immediately.
- Other similar plants may cause similar but less severe skin reactions and appropriate PPE will be recommended for staff or volunteers working in areas where you may find these kinds of plants.
- People at risk include Rangers, agricultural workers and others working in countryside areas.

Asthma:

- Certain materials encountered can sensitise individuals and may cause asthma.
- Substances could be dusts, such as those arising from the cultivation of edible grasses (wheat, oats, etc) or chemicals particularly those of a volatile nature (glues, petroleum manufactured substances etc).
- Substances considered to be “respiratory sensitisers” are listed in the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002.
- People at risk include people working with birds, Rangers and others handling dried grasses such as straw and hay.

Farmer’s Lung:

- Farmer’s Lung is a form of asthma. Mouldy straw and hay encourage the growth of certain moulds, particularly *Saccharopolyspora rectivirgula*.
- When handled in the field or in a barn, clouds of dust containing these spores are liberated into the surrounding air and are subsequently inhaled by people.
- Not everyone develops Farmer’s Lung as the disease is the result of individual hypersensitivity due to an antigen present in the dust of mouldy hay and other vegetable matter.

- People at risk include people working with animals, Rangers and people handling dried grasses such as straw or hay.

Aspergillosis:

- This is associated with exposure to mouldy hay or other mouldy vegetable produce which can result in pulmonary disease.
- Aspergillosis is an asthma-like condition, caused by inhalation of the spores of *Aspergillus* Fungus, principally ***Aspergillus Fumigatus*** and ***Aspergillus Niger***.
- All of these spores are encountered as mould on fibres such as jute, straw and hay.
- People at risk include people working with birds, Rangers and others handling dried grasses such as straw and hay.

Psittacosis:

- This is a pneumonia-like condition caused by an infection with the ***Chlamydomphila psittaci*** bacteria carried by game, poultry and other birds, such as parrots.
- Psittacosis can be fatal to humans if untreated.
- The illness has a sudden effect after an incubation period of one to four weeks.
- It is characterised by initial fever, headache and lethargy followed by pulmonary symptoms several days later, including non-productive cough and shallow breathing.
- Elderly or immunosuppressed people may die as a result of the infection.
- People at risk include people working with birds, Rangers and others handling dried grasses such as straw and hay.

Legionellosis:

- This is the term used for infections caused by *Legionella Pneumophila* and other bacteria from the Legionellaceae family.
- Among these infections is Legionnaire's Disease, a type of pneumonia, which in addition to affecting the lungs, may also have a serious effect on other organs of the body.
- Infection is attributed to inhaling legionellae, either by inhaling airborne water droplets which are small enough to penetrate deeply into the lungs, or in droplet particles left after the water has evaporated.
- People at risk include all coming into contact with untreated water sprays or mists.

Low level radiation induced skin cancer:

- Skin cancer produced by exposure to sunlight is caused by the Ultraviolet (UV) and Infrared (IR) radiation contained in sunlight.
- Due to the deterioration of the ozone layer, the population of the world has increasing exposure to UV radiation, and so skin cancer is increasing.

- People at risk include people that are required to spend a greater part of their working day in the open.

Avian influenza (bird flu):

- We advise all volunteers to keep up to date with the current situation on this issue through the media.
- The Authority will issue advice to volunteers who may encounter wild birds or poultry as and when necessary.
- Staff monitor the situation closely and any instances of bird flu in wild bird populations will be detected and dealt with very quickly.
- As a volunteer you may be in a position where you observe signs in populations of wild birds such as significant numbers of suspicious deaths of wild birds (5 or more), and rapidly increasing numbers of sick or dead birds.
- Do not touch any of the dead birds but report the incident immediately to the site Ranger / site manager or Senior Responsible Officer on **03000 030 621** (for volunteer and staff use only).

3.7 Animals and dealing with dead animals

All work around animals must be carried out with care and compassion, with the animals' welfare given equal priority with that of employees, volunteers and the public.

All animals carry a range of diseases, some of which can infect humans. These diseases are known as Zoonoses.

Health risks for Lee Valley Regional Park Authority volunteers are Leptospirosis or Weil's Disease, which is associated with work by water, and Lyme Disease and Q Fever, which are associated with ticks, often from deer and sheep.

If a volunteer comes across or receives a report of an animal who in distress or has died, they must not touch the animal or attempt to deal with the situation themselves and must inform either the site Ranger / Manager or the Senior Responsible Officer on: 03000 030 621 (for volunteer and staff use only).

Useful information to pass on when reporting an animal:

- What kind of animal has been found?
- How many animals are there?
- Where is it located? (**what3words location** if possible – see Section 4.1 for details)
- What time was it spotted?

The risk of infection and disease can be minimised by adopting a high standard of personal hygiene:

- Wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking.

- Cover any cuts or grazes with some form of waterproof covering before working near animals.
- Wash any cuts or grazes sustained while working near animals immediately with clean water and apply antiseptic.
- Ensure PPE is fitted correctly e.g. gloves or safety glasses
- Take steps to avoid the inhalation of water spray whilst cleaning and avoid allowing spray to come into contact with eyes.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt and long trousers when working near animals.
- Clothes should be brushed off when entering a building.
- Volunteers should check for ticks when getting undressed.
- Volunteers should inform their doctor that they have been working near animals if they later become ill.

Avian botulism:

- Avian botulism is a bacterial disease particularly affecting ducks, which spreads and can become virulent during warm weather and anaerobic conditions.
- If an outbreak of Avian botulism is suspected the relevant site Ranger / Manager or the Senior Responsible Officer should be informed.

Fish deaths:

- Large scale fish deaths can occur during anaerobic conditions or during periods of high fish stress.
- Where large scale fish deaths occur, the Ranger Service Manager must be informed immediately. You can do this via the Senior Responsible Officer on **03000 030 621** (for volunteer and staff use only).

Avian influenza (bird flu):

- The signs to look for are suspicious deaths of wild birds which involve significant numbers (5+), and rapidly increasing numbers of sick or dead birds.
- **Do not touch any of the dead birds** report any incidents immediately to the SRO on **03000 030 621**.

3.8 Working with hand tools

Responsibility for the safe use, maintenance and storage of hand tools rests with managers and the tool-users themselves.

Tool talks are given before each volunteering session as part of an induction or refresher for those that need it.

A safe zone should be maintained around the work area. An adequate number of employees and volunteers must be on-site to maintain the boundary of the safe zone as well as to undertake the task itself.

Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) must be worn at all times when using hand tools.

Any defect with a hand tool must be notified to the volunteer supervisor so that the tool can be taken out of circulation.

3.9 Manual handling

The responsibility for ensuring that manual handling operations are carried out safely lies with supervisors and with the volunteer undertaking the specific task.

Volunteers whose role might involve lifting should undertake basic training for manual handling.

The correct technique for lifting a heavy load is always:

- Make sure route is clear.
- Approach the load in an upright manner.
- Do not bend the back or lean forward from the hip.
- Get as close to the load as possible.
- Keep the feet apart – place one foot slightly forward so that the load is now as close as possible under the crotch.
- Lower the body by bending the legs – never the back.
- Get a good grip on the load before straightening the legs.
- Pull the load into the abdomen and keep elbows into your side.
- Lower the load by bending the legs – not the back.

No manual handling operation should be undertaken where there are too few people available to undertake the operation safely or where there is a risk of injury.

If any volunteer is in doubt about the safety of a manual handling operation, they should seek further guidance from their supervisor before proceeding.

4.1 Keeping in touch

WhatsApp Groups

WhatsApp is a free* application** that many people use on their phone instead of text messaging. WhatsApp uses your data connection (3G/4G or Wi-Fi) to send and receive messages, so requires a phone with an internet connection to work. It is possible to create chat groups so that everyone in the group can read everyone else's responses and see each other's mobile numbers. If a volunteer has provided us with their mobile number we may invite them to join WhatsApp groups that are relevant to their volunteering role(s). Joining of these groups is optional and volunteers do not have to accept the invitation and can leave any of the groups at any time. Our WhatsApp groups are a useful tool for communicating with other volunteers and staff. However, in most cases WhatsApp groups

do not replace the need for volunteers to inform an individual member of staff or SRO when they have arrived and or left a site safely (see Lone Working Policy for full details).

WhatsApp groups should only be used for sharing messages, photographs and videos that are relevant to the subject of the group (e.g. litter picking or the Wildlife Discovery Centre). Examples include arranging times and places to meet for volunteering, requesting equipment or PPE, reporting hazards that may affect other volunteers / staff in the local area.

The Volunteers Officer will create the groups and will be the 'Group Administrator', so will be the only person who can add or remove people to/from the group and will set the group title.

It should not be used to share or transmit any material which might reasonably be considered to be obscene, abusive, sexist, racist, defamatory, libellous, intentionally false or inaccurate or inappropriate. If a user receives such material, they should report the matter to the Volunteers Officer immediately, to make them aware of the situation.

Examples of topics not permitted within these groups:

- questions that require an immediate response – please contact the relevant staff member or the SRO directly
- jokes or 'banter', especially if they may be considered offensive to others
- People's personal views about Authority decisions or request / instruction on any given subject – if you have concerns or questions regarding any instruction these should be taken up directly with your volunteer supervisor or the Volunteers Officer
- GIFs or irrelevant / inappropriate photos or videos
- photos containing upsetting content (e.g. dead animals – please only report directly to the relevant member of staff with a warning of what the image contains)

Never give out any of your personal details out in a WhatsApp group (e.g. address, date of birth or bank details)

If a volunteer does not stay within these guidelines they will be removed from our WhatsApp groups by a staff administrator. If you notice any content shared by volunteers or staff that you believe are inappropriate please report this to the Volunteers Officer (volunteers@leevalleypark.org.uk) or HR (hr@leevalleypark.org.uk).

what3words

what3words is a tool that has been used to map the world into precise 3-metre squared areas. Each 3-metre square area of the globe now has its own unique label made up of unique combination of three words. what3words is accessible for free via a website (<https://what3words.com/>) or by downloading an app*. Sharing what3words locations with others can be useful especially within open spaces with no obvious landmarks. You can use what3words to report the location of hazards or litter you have spotted within the park. It can also be useful when you need to communicate your exact location to the emergency services. Please visit the what3words website to learn more.

* The app itself is free to download and use but requires an active internet connection. It will use your data allowance when not connected to Wi-Fi.

**When downloading apps, make sure that you go to official app stores.

4.2 Adverse weather

We ask that all volunteers check the forecast for the days they are due to volunteer and are appropriately prepared for the weather conditions including adapt their clothing and travel plans as necessary.

Inclement or adverse weather can include the following:

- Extreme cold events (temperatures from 0°C down to minus 10°C or lower)
- Snow/Ice
- Extreme heat events (Heat Health alert levels)
- High wind
- Extreme levels of Rain/Flooding

Any of these conditions will be covered by the national severe weather warnings as provided by the Met Office, Environment Agency, UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and broadcast on national and local TV/Radio and other media platforms.

Staff within Lee Valley Regional Park Authority also monitor the messaging from the agencies mentioned above and will make decisions based on this guidance that may require volunteering tasks to be changed, adapted or cancelled based on the likelihood and level of risk of harm. In all cases your volunteer supervisor or the Volunteers Officer will keep you updated on the weather. However, we also rely on volunteers to keep us informed of any issues that may affect their ability to perform tasks in different conditions (e.g. a volunteer is taking a medication which makes them more susceptible to heat stroke).

Please remember to use your personal judgement on your own capabilities in different conditions and do not put yourself or those you may be supporting at unnecessary risk of injury or illness. This is particularly important to volunteers who are lone working.

You can find out more about weather health alerts here: <https://ukhsa-dashboard.data.gov.uk/weather-health-alerts>

