

Maintenance Guide

General advice and guidance on the maintenance and logistics of managing your new local green space.



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Disclaimer: Everything in this guide is a suggestion and intended to help you manage your groups safely and successfully, but it is up to you how you use this information. All volunteers are responsible for themselves.

Welcome, Volunteers!

Thank you for your dedication to enhancing the green spaces in our community. Your efforts truly make a difference.

This guide is here to help you maintain your site effectively. It's designed with convenience in mind, so you can access it on your phone or computer but you can print it out if you prefer. Inside, you'll find links to various appendix documents for quick reference.

Happy greening and good luck!

From the Islington Greener Together Champions Team

Islington Greener Together Code of Conduct

Our Commitment

Islington Council pledge to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone involved in the Islington Greener Together projects.

This Community Code of Conduct outlines Islington Council expectations of behaviour for the sponsor of the Islington Greener Together project and everyone involved Islington Greener Together activities, whether online or offline. You will be required to sign the Code of Conduct which you will receive when you join the project. Failure to read or acknowledge this Code does not excuse non-compliance.

Our Standards

Positive and professional behaviour includes:

- Using welcoming and inclusive language
- Encouraging all voices to be heard
- Being respectful of differing viewpoints
- Accepting constructive criticism gracefully
- Focusing on the community's best interests
- Showing empathy, being direct and professional
- Leading by example

Unacceptable behaviour includes:

- Publishing confidential information without permission
- Excessive profanity
- Advocating for unacceptable behaviour
- Trolling, insults, or derogatory comments
- Harassment
- Violent threats or language
- Discriminatory jokes or language
- Sexualized language or imagery
- Unwelcome sexual attention
- Sharing sexually explicit or violent material
- Personal insults using racist or sexist terms
- Any other inappropriate conduct in a professional setting

If you experience abusive, harassing, or otherwise unacceptable behaviour, please contact Islington Council at greenertogether@islington.gov.uk. All complaints will be reviewed and investigated, and we will respond appropriately.

Sponsor Responsibility: Islington Greener Together Sponsors are responsible for clarifying acceptable behaviour standards with support from Islington Council.

Administration Plan

Action	Who	When
Asset liability	It is the responsibility of applicants to maintain the planting and or trees in accordance with the standards set out in the maintenance agreement.	Ongoing
Accessibility Checks: Check site for access obstructions or barriers to remain inclusive.	To be arranged by local Islington Greener Together Champions Group.	Ongoing
Accidents: Ensure all participants know the site address, or What3Words location (NB emergency services can use this). Site sponsors protecting themselves against claims made by fellow volunteers.	All volunteers who visit the site are responsible for themselves. It is good practice to make a record of all accidents, incidents, dangerous occurrences, activity-related ill-health and near misses. If you would like some further Health and Safety advice, please contact greenspace@islington.gov.uk or greenertogether@islington.gov.uk	Ongoing - Risk Assessment should be updated in the event of an accident, or near miss.
Deliveries: Agree secure delivery address/addresses. Be aware of local access restrictions (bin-day etc).	If items can't be delivered to individuals homes than further coordination might be required.	Ongoing
Meetings: Meet up as a garden group before each season to plan the jobs for the upcoming season. Use the maintenance plan as guidance. Identify plans, goals and things that need changing/repairing etc.	To be arranged by local Islington Greener Together Champions Group.	In advance of each season
Safeguarding Concerns	If you are worried about a volunteer you can contact greenertogether@islington.gov.uk and they can signpost you to other services.	Ongoing
Risk Assessments: Complete/review for workdays and events.	Islington Greener Together Champions Group Risk Assessment to be completed and reviewed annually, and revised if the space, activities & equipment change, or if volunteers with additional requirements join, including prgenancy. See Appendix for Risk Assessment Template and example. Make sure all new volunteers are aware of the risk assessment.	Group events
Induction to site	To be arranged by local Islington Greener Together Champions Group.	When new volunteer arrives to the group
Flytipping	Report to Islington Council https://www.islington.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/enforcement/fly-tipping-and-littering	As required

Site Maintenance Plan

Action	Who	When
Keeping the space clean, tidy, fertile and well cultivated.	To be arranged by local Islington Greener Together Champions Group.	Ongoing
Checks by Islington Council.	Islington Council.	As required
Damage and disrepair	If your green space is damaged, please contact the council at: highwaysroads@islington.gov.uk	As required
Garden Workdays: Organising seasonal workdays for site maintenance including promotion by posters, leaflets and local promotion spaces.	To be arranged by local Islington Greener Together Champions Group.	Most important through April - October. If access to Mulch, Two big mulching days in spring and autumn. Monthly maintenance days through spring and summer.
Garden signs: kept up to date, with relevant contacts	To be arranged by local Islington Greener Together Champions Group.	Ongoing
Weeding Beds: weed around the planters without the use of weed killers.	To be arranged by local Islington Greener Together Champions Group.	Ongoing, mostly spring and summer
Maintenance of structures on site	Do not attempt to fix yourself – contact Islington Council highwaysroads@islington.gov.uk or greenertogether@islington.gov.uk	As required
Sweeping site and litter picking	Regular street cleaning operations are provided by Islington Council. Additional litter picking and sweeping can be arranged by the local Islington Greener Together Champions Group as necessary.	Ongoing
Tree pruning	Do not attempt to prune it yourself - contact Islington Tree Service treeservice@islington.gov.uk	Ongoing
Removal of Green Waste from Highways Sites	One nominated person from the group will be given a free permit for green waste management.	To be agreed per site

Session Planning

Suggestions on what to include in your session.



Check weather in advance & reschedule if necessary.

Avoid working when soil is saturated as soil structure will be damaged if walked-on.



Review site safety and activity safety for each session.

Take appropriate Risk Assessment to session



Pre-plan the tasks. Discuss during the session to ensure everyone is clear.

Print-out tasks or write on a noticeboard.



Only plan as much work as can be achieved within the agreed hours.

Make time for comfort breaks and refreshments.



Conduct a tool maintenance check. Count quantity of tools.

Remind members to bring own gloves if used.



Only carry out tasks that are suitable for the growing season, weather, and plant growing calendar.



Check for up-to-date contact details for group members.

Update useful council and service contacts. Share with the group.



Encourage the group to warm-up before & stretch down after.

This can be done in private/homes if preferred.



Water only as per the plant requirements. Check ahead for rain.

Check water butts are secure/working order. Mulch beds.



Check site and plants for pests, diseases, trapped animals or animal damage/faeces.

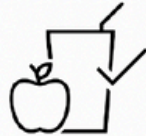
Update Risk Assessment if necessary.

Gardening Do's and Don't's



Be aware of your own limits and those of participants.

Don't over-do it. Help each other with lifting and manual tasks.



Keep hydrated and fed. Take breaks as needed.

Wash hands before eating. Clean surfaces used for food/drink before use.



All waste should be disposed of in personal home bins.

Green waste can be placed in composts or green bins if available.



Do not use chemicals, pesticides, or herbicides in the garden. Use PPE where necessary.

Consider the ecosystem on the site.



Carry tools safely, below the knees. Place sharp edges or points facing down. Be aware that tools can cause trip hazards. Clean & put away tools at the end of session.



Group members and visitors are responsible for their own safety.

Members should look out for everyone on site.



Parents/carers are responsible for children brought onto the site.

Children should be informed of dangers and asked not to run.



Wear clothing appropriate for the activities being carried out, and weather conditions.

Wear sturdy footwear and gardening gloves.



Wash hands before eating & at the end of the session.

Some plants/flowers/berries are irritants or poisonous. Soil contains bacteria.



Be aware of surroundings when working near vehicles, machinery, or workpeople.

Update Risk Assessment if necessary.

Tool Use

Equipment:

A limited amount of equipment will be available from the council and cannot be replaced if lost or broken. It is important to use the equipment list to check all tools are returned at the end of each session. If you are applying as a group, we ask that as a minimum you supply all members of your group with gloves. More information will be issued at the handover stage. The council aims to keep costs to individuals as low as possible.

When gardening, tools are put under stress, as well as being exposed to moisture, diseases and pests. It is important to ensure tools are safe to use before the session starts and are clean and safe to store at the end of the session.

Before use:

Carry out a full, visual inspection of the tool's general condition, looking for cracked/loose handles, damaged blades, loose bolts. Note and make a plan to deal with any defects. Ensure you know the correct way to use the tool – speak to a member of your group if unsure. Use the correct tool for the job – see Tools & Materials List in Appendix.

Rust:

To remove existing rust, soak tools in a 1:1 mixture of vinegar and water for 12 hours. Use steel wool in a circular motion to remove the rust. Rinse with water, then dry. Rub tool oil onto the metal, following instructions in the packaging.

Sharpening:

New tools should be sharp, but keep an eye on secateurs in particular for jagged blade edges. Ragged cuts caused by damaged blades will allow disease to penetrate the plant. A sharpening stone or sharpening file should be used periodically to keep blades clean and sharp. Follow the directions on the sharpening tool for best use.

End of use:

Wash down tools with a hose, remove dirt with a stiff brush or wire brush, or wipe with a damp cloth. If tools are exposed to diseased plants/soil, use a garden disinfectant to wipe down the tool (following safety information on the packaging). Wipe blades (secateurs, loppers, shears) with disinfectant or rubbing alcohol to remove bacteria or fungus. Dry tools with a cloth before storing.

Storage:

Tools should be kept in a dry, ventilated, secure space. Ideally, larger/long-handled tools should be stored upside down, on tool hooks. Drying tools before storage will help prevent rust.

Hazards and Risks

Your group will need a completed risk assessment – The Appendix contains a Risk Assessment that can be completed and followed. It is important that you regularly update your risk assessment and make sure that all new volunteers read it. Below is a table of hazards that should be considered.


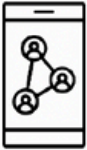
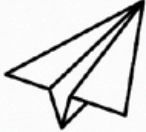



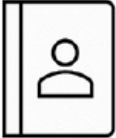
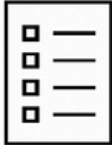


Hazard Checklist:

Workplace		Substances	
Slips and trips	X	Chemicals	
Edge Protection	X	Dusts	
Traffic Routes	X	Fumes	
Obstructions	X	Asbestos	
Access & Egress	X	Legionella	
		Biological	X
		Flammables	
		Pesticides	
		Body Fluids and Animal Faeces	X
Equipment		Work Organisation	
Lifting Equipment		Lone Working	X
Machinery		Violence and aggression	X
Hand Tools	X	Driving / cycling	X
Physical		Contractors	
Noise	X	Workload	
Vibration		Stress	
Electricity	X	Working Hours	X
Manual Handling	X		
Other			
Cuts/Burns	X		
Pregnant Workers	X		
Dogs	X		
Weather Conditions	X		

Communication Agreement

Applicable to messaging groups, social media, and general communication. This is based on the council code of conduct which is listed above in the guide (see page 3).

If you are interested in setting up a community WhatsApp group, please see additional guidance in the Appendix.

 <p>Agreements are in place to help the group run successfully. If agreements are repeatedly disregarded, participants may have their access to groups/social media removed.</p>	 <p>Be aware of communication and information posted online. Only tag people or include photos if permission has been given.</p>	 <p>To raise an issue or report a post/comment, Email: greenertogether@islington.gov.uk</p>	 <p>Avoid sharing links to social media feeds. Look for original sources of information. Use trusted links from reliable sources.</p>	 <p>Do not post or forward comments that could be deemed to be offensive, profane, hateful in nature, or information that is misleading, speculative or inaccurate.</p>
 <p>Be kind, and treat each other with respect. Make positive comments to support group members.</p>	 <p>Obtain consent before sharing contact details</p>	 <p>Communicate information related to the project only. Focusing on the community's best interests.</p>	 <p>Do not post comments that could be seen to be offensive, harass, criticise, or be threatening any person, group, organisation or company, including political, government, or local authority.</p>	 <p>Consider the language you are using and the points that you are making as coming from a positive stance that creates a welcoming environment for all.</p>

Pre and Post Session Stretches

Gardening and other outdoor activities can be physical on the body and muscles. Warming up before a session – on site or at home – and cooling down afterwards will help your body work efficiently, hopefully reducing tightness and stiffness that can be caused by manual work. Below are some suggested stretches:

Please note, individuals should be briefed to only do stretches within their personal capabilities.

Arm Circles

Stand straight with your feet hip-width apart, raise arms to the side keeping elbows extended, and slowly rotate arms forward making a circle. Repeat 10 times in each direction.

Hip Rotations

Place your hands on your hips and circle your hips around keeping your torso straight. Circle 10 times one way, and 10 times the other way.

Leg Swings

Hold on to a support keeping your torso upright, and gently swing one leg forward and back like a pendulum. Repeat 20 times each leg.

Knee Lifts

Stand with support if needed and lift one knee to your chest to tap your opposite hand. Alternate knee lifts 20 times on each side.

Mini Squats

Stand with your feet hip-width apart, bend your knees and lower your bottom a small way as if sitting on a chair slowly return to start position. Repeat 20 times.

Calf Pumps

Stand and lean onto a support with your knees straight. Alternate calf pumps lifting one foot to tiptoe and as you lower down lift the other leg to tiptoe. Repeat 20 times.



Key Contact Details

Islington Council Greener Together Contact: greenertogether@islington.gov.uk

Islington Tree Service: treeservice@islington.gov.uk

Other Useful Links

Learning through Landscapes	https://www.ltl.org.uk/
Muddy Faces	https://muddyfaces.co.uk/
Forest Schools	https://forestschoollassociation.org/what-is-forest-school/
Capital Growth	https://www.capitalgrowth.org/
Groundwork London	https://www.groundwork.org.uk/london/
Islington Council: use search function to find relevant pages	https://www.islington.gov.uk/
Garden Organic	https://www.gardenorganic.org.uk/expert-advice
Islington In Bloom	https://www.islington.gov.uk/physical-activity-parks-and-trees/parks-and-green-space/gardening-and-greening/in-bloom
Bulbs for London (free bulbs for community groups)	https://www.mpga.org.uk/bulbsforlondon.php
Hackney Mosaic Project	https://www.hackney-mosaic.co.uk/

Octopus Communities	https://www.octopuscommunities.org.uk
Islington Gardeners	https://islingtongardeners.org.uk/
The Garden Classroom	https://www.thegardenclassroom.org.uk/
Roots to Work	https://www.rootstowork.org/
Love Clean Streets	https://lovecleanstreets.com/reports

Maintenance Tasks, Links to further information

Advice	Link
Controlling pests and diseases without chemicals	https://www.rhs.org.uk/prevention-protection/controlling-pests-and-diseases-without-chemicals
Identifying common weeds	https://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/common-weeds
Tool maintenance	https://www.rhs.org.uk/garden-jobs/cleaning-tools
Leaf mould	https://www.rhs.org.uk/soil-composts-mulches/leaf-mould

Glossary

Annual – A plant that lives for one growing season and dies above and below ground at the end of its growing season. Note an annual in the UK might be a perennial in a warmer climate/country.

Biennial – A non-woody plant that lives for two growing seasons, e.g. Foxglove.

Compost - Decayed organic material used as a fertilizer for growing plants.

Dead head – To cut off fading or dead flowers (future seed heads) from a plant to encourage additional flowering, or to let the plant send energy to a bulb.

Deciduous – A tree or plant that sheds its leaves annually.

Dividing – To split a plant into smaller sections, with roots attached. To create more plants or reinvigorate an existing tired plant.

Evergreen - A tree or plant that retains its leaves (or most of its leaves) through the whole year.

Herbaceous - Plants which do not have woody stems, and which die back over winter.

Herbaceous perennials – A subset of perennial plants. Plants which do not have woody stems, and which die back over winter but will re-emerge in spring and live for more than two years. E.g potato.

Mulch - A layer of material applied to the surface of soil to retain moisture in the soil, suppress weed growth, improve soil structure (as worms will pull mulch down into the soil), and for visual appeal.

Perennial - A plant that lives for 3 or more seasons. Non-woody plant, not a tree or shrub. Various shapes, sizes, types and flowering periods. Developed structures underground to allow them to store energy (tubers, bulbs, crowns, stems/root system).

Pernicious weeds – Invasive wild plants in the wrong place that should not be put in a household compost because even after breaking down they are likely to retain energy to re-grow.

Propagate – To produce new plants from a parent plant in any way. This can be taking cuttings, dividing or sowing seeds.

Pruning - Trim (a tree, shrub, or bush) by cutting away dead or overgrown branches or stems, especially to encourage growth.

Risk assessment - Risk assessment determines possible mishaps, their likelihood and consequences, and the tolerances for such events.

Shrubs – A woody perennial plant that has multiple stems near the ground, and is not a tree. Can be deciduous or evergreen.

Weeds - Weeds are [often self-seeding or root-spreading] plants in the wrong place, which compete with your chosen plants for light, space and water.

Woody plant – Plants which have a woody and hard stem. Most shrubs and trees would be considered woody, and most of these are also perennials.

Appendix

1. Islington Site Tools & Materials List
2. Islington Site Plant List
3. Islington Site Regular Maintenance Tasks - Highways
4. Islington Site Regular Maintenance Tasks - Housing
5. Islington Site Risk Assessment Example - Highways
6. Islington Site Risk Assessment Example - Housing
7. Islington Site Risk Assessment Template
8. Islington Session Plan Template
9. Community WhatsApp Group Guidance