



Volunteering at Castlebank Horticultural Centre FAQs

Castlebank Horticultural Centre is managed and operated by Lanark Community Development Trust. The development of the centre has been funded by LEADER, the Renewable Energy Fund and the Climate Challenge Fund. Proceeds from the hire of the centre, workshops, events and produce sales are returned to the Development Trust to continue the project of rejuvenating and maintaining the gardens of Castlebank Park for the local community to enjoy, with the help of a team of dedicated volunteers. The centre hosts a range of horticultural training opportunities, courses, workshops and community activities will be on offer. Local charity, Lanark in Bloom, are also based at the centre's growing compound.



Why we need volunteers

What's the purpose of the volunteers? The main purpose of volunteers at Castlebank Horticultural Centre is to maintain and develop the gardens of Castlebank Park, keeping them looking beautiful for the local community to enjoy – and to encourage more of the local community to visit the park. Volunteers also are involved with helping out at fundraising events at the centre, helping out with fruit and vegetable production in the growing compound: a project which directly benefits our local Clydesdale Food Bank, and participating in different projects run at the centre.

Why can't you just pay staff carry out these roles? Lanark Community Development Trust is an independent, volunteer-led charity which receives no ongoing core funding. The Development Trust relies on volunteers to be able to deliver services at Castlebank Horticultural Centre. Financial support is received annually from the 'Friends of Castlebank' organisation, but this would not amount to covering any salaries. The Development Trust regularly applies for grants to be able to carry out projects and maintain services, such as: Tesco Bags for Help, Border Biscuits Community Support, LEADER, the Renewable Energy Fun and the National Lottery Community Fund.

Becoming a volunteer

Who can be a volunteer? The opportunity to volunteer at Castlebank Horticultural Centre is open to the full community. The minimum age for unsupervised volunteering with us is 16, and there is no maximum age. Under 16s are welcome to volunteer with us as part of an organised group visit or with their parent/guardian. Individuals who receive additional living support are welcome to attend with their carer or support worker.

Can I volunteer if I receive benefits? Yes - but we'd suggest you tell your Job Centre about your volunteering hours.

How do I become a volunteer? If you would like to volunteer with us, it would be helpful if you could call or email us in advance so we know to expect you on the day. You can call the centre on 01555 728 329 or email info@lanarktrust.co.uk . Once you make initial contact, we will arrange which day will be your first visit (usually a Tuesday or a Thursday) during one of our regular weekly volunteer sessions. If you prefer, we can arrange to have a private chat and visit to the centre first, before coming along to an actual session.

What experience do I need? You do not need to have any prior experience of gardening to volunteer at the centre. All we ask is that you have a positive attitude and are willing to 'give it a go'.

Where & when you will volunteer

Where does the volunteering take place? The volunteering opportunity takes place at Castlebank Horticultural Centre, which is based within Castlebank Park in Lanark. The centre includes a growing compound with polytunnels and raised beds, and a Community Hub building which includes an office, kitchen, two meeting rooms and toilet block.

What days can volunteers attend? Our current volunteering days are Tuesdays and Thursdays, and one weekend day per month – usually around the second Saturday of the month.

How much time do I have to commit? It's up to you! The Tuesday and Thursday volunteer sessions run from 9.30am until around 3pm including a break for lunch. Some volunteers stay for the entire day, or some just come for the morning or afternoon. Even if you can only stay for an hour, you're welcome to come and lend a hand. The weekend sessions start a bit later at 10.30am and end around 2pm, again with a break for lunch.

How often do I have to attend? It's up to you! We have some volunteers who come regularly twice a week, and we have some who come once a month. You are not tied into a contract which sets your dates or times to volunteer, we are happy for any help you can give.

What if I'm off sick or don't feel like coming in? You are not required to let us know if you are not going to make it to a volunteering session, but if you wish you are welcome to let us know by calling the centre on 01555 728 329 or emailing info@lanarktrust.co.uk

Will I be paid? As a volunteer you will not be paid. As per our Volunteer Expenses Policy, you can be reimbursed for pre-agreed expenses occurred through purchasing items on behalf of the Horticultural Centre.

Who will be my manager? The centre's Educational Gardener is the volunteer leader. They will participate in the volunteering sessions and be your point of contact on the day for any questions.

Will I be trained? The Educational Gardener will be on hand to offer a variety of 'on the job' learning opportunities through undertaking different tasks and activities. If you have something specific you would like to learn, such as how to prune a fruit tree, they will be more than happy to help. Volunteers will also have the opportunity to attend different community workshops and training events held at the centre, recently these have included CPR training, a workshop on growing organic fruit and veg, Alzheimer Scotland's Dementia Friends training and a SAMH mental health awareness training session. Specific training will always be given before you can use certain types of tools or equipment, such as the lawn mower.

Can groups get involved? Yes, many different types of group volunteer at the centre, from youth groups, schools and nurseries to corporate groups and community organisations. If you would like to organise a group visit, please contact us on info@lanarktrust.co.uk or call 01555 728 329.

The volunteering role

What's the usual pattern of a volunteering day? On Tuesdays and Thursdays, volunteers usually start to come in around 9.30am and make themselves a cup of tea or coffee. As volunteers arrive, they sign in and mark the time they have arrived. Everyone sits around the table in the Bistro Room and has a chat, before the Educational Gardener talks about the jobs to be done that day. There is a chart on the wall which lists tasks needing done 'this week', 'this month' and 'always' so if someone comes in late they can refer to the board and select which task they wish to help out with. The volunteers and gardener go out from around 10am-12pm and then come in for their lunch break, again all sitting around the table. They go back out around 12.45pm/1pm and then depending on the weather, stay out for another couple of hours. They will usually be back in around 3pm for an afternoon cup of tea or coffee and a chat. Some volunteers prefer to head home then, or others stay around for a longer blether until about 4pm. When volunteers leave, they sign out by marking the time they have left. As well as forming our fire register, this also allows us to accurately track the volunteer hours that are being contributed.

What types of tasks will I be doing? There are a whole variety of roles available that can be tailored to your mobility, ability, and what you like doing best! Below is a list of example tasks list graded from light, moderate to hard. You are welcome to choose from this list what suits you best and what you enjoy doing the most.

Light tasks	Moderate tasks	Hard tasks
Watering	Weeding	Digging ground
Taking plant cuttings	Leaf blowing	Cutting grass
Planting	Strimming	Edging grass areas
Pruning	Hedge cutting	Composting
Dead heading flowers	Clearing out flower beds	Emptying compost bins
Seed planting	Raking / hoeing	General heavy lifting / wheelbarrow use
Plug planting	Dividing plants	Moving rocks
General tidying / removing debris and litter		
Checking for pests and diseases		
Harvesting produce		

How fit do I need to be? There is no minimum level of fitness as tasks can be tailored to suit your ability and comfort.

What if I don't want to do the job I have been given? Please tell us! If you are uncomfortable doing a task or would prefer to do something else, please tell us as there will be plenty more opportunities for you to contribute.

Do I have to work with others? On regular volunteering days we can have up to 12-15 volunteers participating in a session. This can mean there are tasks that need a few helpers working in a team, and there are some tasks that people can do on their own. Some days you may feel like working in a team and some days you might just want to carry on with a task on your own, you can speak to the Educational Gardener during any volunteering session and let them know what you'd prefer to do.

Practicalities

What clothing will I need? You'll need to be prepared for dirty work in all types of Scottish weather! We would advise wearing warm layers, a waterproof jacket and outdoor trousers. Walking boots or sturdy waterproof shoes would also be recommended.

What tools do I need? You don't have to bring any tools or equipment with you. We will provide you with gardening gloves and any other tools that your task safely requires.

What else should I bring? It's advisable to bring a refillable water bottle (we have a kitchen where you can refill) and a hat/suncream for hotter days.

Do I have to bring food? If you wish to stay for the full day we'd advise bringing a packed lunch and a couple of snacks to keep you going. If you forget, Lanark High Street is around a 5-10 minute walk away.

Is the centre accessible? Yes – the centre is fully accessible and we have designated disabled parking spaces right outside the entrance.

Do you have parking? Yes – there are designated disabled parking spaces right outside the centre and there is also ample parking within the main Castlebank Car Park, or on St Patrick's Road.

Do you have toilets? Yes – we have separate Ladies and Mens toilets. We also have a large disable toilet which also contains our baby change unit.

Do you have First Aid provision? Yes – we have a fully stocked first aid kit, clearly marked in the kitchen. Two of the Development Trust's staff members have also been trained in First Aid at Work.

Being a volunteer

What volunteering policies do you have in place? We have a Volunteering Policy, Health & Safety Policy, Malpractice Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy, Referrals Policy, Volunteer Expenses Policy and Volunteer Agreement.

Once I start, volunteering how will you keep in touch with me? The best way for us to keep in touch with you is your email address. If you do not use email, a phone number will be our main way of contacting you. Each month we have a Volunteer Meeting that all volunteers are welcome to attend to discuss what is going on at the centre, upcoming plans and the sharing of ideas & suggestions.

What contact details do I have to provide you with? To ensure our volunteer records are up to date, we need to know your full name, address, an email or phone number, and the details of an emergency contact.

Do I have to tell you about medical conditions, allergies or medication I am taking? We would appreciate if you let us know about any medical conditions, allergies or medication which may directly affect your ability to undertake certain activities or jobs at the centre.

How do you store my information? Volunteer records are stored in a cabinet within a locked office of the Horticultural Centre, which is also locked and alarmed.

How do you reward and recognise your volunteers? We run an annual 'Summer Trip' to another garden and have an annual 'Christmas Lunch'. Throughout the year, Border Biscuits supply free biscuits to volunteers.

Will I be insured? Whilst volunteering at the centre and following policy, you will be covered under Lanark Community Development Trust's Public Liability Insurance.

What happens if I want to stop volunteering? You are under no obligation to keep volunteering with us if you do not want to. We would appreciate if you could tell us the reason, but this is not required. If you want to take a break from volunteering, you would be more than welcome to return in the future.

I'm not interested in gardening so how else can I support you? If you have skills or experience you are willing to share, please get in touch and we can discuss how they could help at the Horticultural Centre, or perhaps in the Development Trust's wider portfolio of community projects and activities. Email info@lanarktrust.co.uk or call 01555 728 329.

Please contact us if you are interested in volunteering at Castlebank Horticultural Centre.

Email the centre: info@lanarktrust.co.uk

Call the centre: 01555 728 329

Visit the website: www.lanarktrust.co.uk