

Volunteer Role Description

Garden Steward

What is a Garden Steward?

The garden at Gainsborough's House is an important part of the museum visit. Set behind the house, new galleries and café, the garden offers an all year-round tranquil space with its venerable fruit trees and glorious flower beds, The centrepiece is the cherished 400-year-old mulberry tree and other highlights include the quince tree, a medlar, shrub roses and a small collection of irises and other plants selected by Cedric Morris to continue the artistic themes of the house into the garden.

The garden provides the link between the new galleries and the Grade I listed House and will welcome all visitors as they move between the gallery spaces. Garden Stewards can help us in two ways – actively helping to maintain the garden to the highest standard and also engaging with visitors on the history of the garden and the planting scheme, answering questions and chatting about all things plants. A horticultural background is not essential to this role although enthusiasm and an interest in gardening and plants is desirable. You will need to be able to chat about the garden and its contents and to be comfortable engaging with visitors in an approachable manner whilst you work.

What's in it for you?

- Becoming part of a friendly and dedicated team
- Meeting people and making new friends
- Improving your communication skills
- Enjoying new experiences and developing your knowledge
- The chance to give your time in your local community
- Being involved with gardening in an art and heritage surrounding

What's involved?

- Helping to maintain the garden as a whole, with pruning, planting, weeding, grass cutting and general maintenance
- Assisting with potting up cuttings and establishing an income through plant sales

- Providing a warm, friendly welcome to every visitor as they experience and interact with the garden
- Enhancing the visitor experience by engaging in conversation about the museum, garden and plants we have here
- Developing and sharing a knowledge of the history of our garden
- Developing a basic understanding about Gainsborough's House, Thomas Gainsborough and the collections of other artists on display
- Being aware of the needs of visitors as they negotiate the garden, helping to make Gainsborough's House accessible to all visitors to ensure they get the best experience
- Ensuring visitors' safety by actively helping to evacuate during an emergency
- Acting as an Ambassador for Gainsborough's House whilst on duty

This role will suit people who... have a keen interest in gardening and enjoy working outdoors; are able to help with some manual lifting when needed; have an enthusiastic and friendly manner; enjoy meeting people; like being part of a team; are keen to learn and wish to give some time in their local community.

Hours

Time spent in the garden can be decided by the level of commitment you wish to give and the tasks needed to be done. Volunteers are encouraged to sign up to a rota by phone or in person. Scheduling is flexible, the recommended commitment is one shift per week and volunteers are welcome to commit to more if they wish, we value all help offered. The minimum commitment is one shift per month.

Training

A compulsory volunteer induction plus the opportunity for relaxed learning about the plants here, plus the art collections and temporary exhibitions on display and in our archives.

Benefits

- Unlimited free admission to Gainsborough's House and all exhibitions
- Quarterly volunteer meetings and breakfast tours of each exhibition
- Training on the plants here and art collections on display
- Invitation to the annual summer garden party and a seasonal drinks event.
- A monthly E-newsletter

This role is purely voluntary, and this arrangement is not meant to be a legally binding one or an employment contract.