



Corporate Volunteer Guide

Introduction to the farm



History

Windmill Hill City Farm was formed in 1976 by a group of local residents determined to see a piece of inner-city wasteland put to more productive use, rather than the lorry park that the council had planned, giving the local community the opportunity to experience farming in the heart of the city. Now, more than 45 years later, the farm remains a hidden oasis and community resource in south Bristol, sandwiched between an industrial estate, Victoria Park, and East Street, Bedminster.

Community

We are proud that the farm is so special to so many local people. It serves as a vital green urban oasis in Bristol, offering educational, recreational, and therapeutic resources to the local community. With an annual footfall exceeding 120,000 and supported by 100 staff and 400 volunteers, we provide essential community spaces and services, including a working farm, gardens, café, five-a-side football pitch, and educational programmes. The farm's Outdoor Learning team aims to reconnect children with nature through various activities, fostering appreciation for the environment. The Health and Social Care team runs a supported volunteer programme, aiding individuals navigating mental health challenges, with a focus on improving mental health, enhancing wellbeing, and boosting resilience.

Alongside these the farm also hosts events, a sauna, markets, theatre performances, a pop-up bar, yoga classes, and much more. The trading arm of the farm helps us to fund our educational and volunteer work. There's always plenty going on!

Corporate Volunteering

We host around 10 corporate volunteering days a year and it's amazing what a difference a group can make in just one day! These team building events are great fun, motivating and challenging. They are also a great way of supporting us as a charity at the heart of the community. We always have opportunities available for companies to build longer-term supportive relationships with the farm. This can be explored further by contacting our Fundraising Team who will be happy to discuss with you how we can support your wider CSR aims.

Potential Projects

Here are some examples of the type of jobs you might be doing on a corporate volunteering day at Windmill Hill City Farm. There is always a lot going on and activities are generally focussed around general site maintenance, but could also be related to the gardens or animals. From small to big, each job helps us to keep the farm running smoothly and looking beautiful for our visitors (and our animals!).

Site preparation – clearing and developing parts of the garden, helping to maintain our compost/manure system, clearing paths and trimming hedges.

Developing garden infrastructure – building raised beds, making and painting signs for the gardens.

Developing the 'front of house' – repainting our front gates, hedge trimming, repairing or rebuilding raised beds.

Maintaining animal housing - clearing paddocks, painting pens, repairing fences around the paddocks.

Helping with current projects - Our Orchard (see pictures below) project benefitted hugely from the involvement of volunteers.



Volunteering Dates and Group Sizes

We are able to offer volunteering events on Mondays and Fridays from the 1st of April to the end of October. Please email hannah.aspinall@windmillhillcityfarm.org.uk with a few dates that would be suitable for your group.

We accept a maximum of 15 volunteers and a minimum of 10 volunteers per day.

Catering and Refreshments

At Windmill Hill we have an award-winning café who will be providing facilities to make teas and coffees throughout the day (as well as a good selection of sweet treats to keep you going). Lunches are not included in the price, but you can pre-order a delicious spread from the café to be served at lunchtime. If you would like to do this please fill in a catering booking form and send it to hannah.aspinall@windmillhillcityfarm.org.uk two weeks prior to your event. Vegan and vegetarian options are always available – please specify any special dietary requirements for catering in your order form. Alternatively you are very welcome to bring your own packed lunches and eat them on site. On the day, volunteers can get 10% off in the café - just let them know that you are doing a corporate volunteer day when you order.

Accessibility

We endeavour to make the farm welcoming to all and a part of that is making sure that our site and services are accessible. The café, pathways around the outside of the gardens, the main farmyard area and animal housing are all accessible by wheelchair. We have a number of accessible toilets on site. If you have any questions about the accessibility of our site please get in touch.

For our corporate volunteering days please let us know if anyone on your team has any access requirements. The jobs we do will be seasonal and varied but can be adapted for different abilities/needs. The base area will be open all day with refreshments and breaks can be taken at any time.

What to expect on the day



What to bring

Please note that if it is raining, the volunteer day will still go ahead. These volunteer days are planned to fit in with other activities happening at the farm and unfortunately, they cannot be easily arranged for another date (although we try to have back-up plans if the weather is truly terrible!). So please make sure your team are prepared for all-weathers and have appropriate clothing and footwear on the day (things that don't mind getting a little mucky)!

We will provide hard-wearing gardening gloves, although you are welcome to bring your own. Please also bring water bottles - it can be thirsty work!

After the event

Once you have completed your volunteer day at the farm, we always welcome any feedback. This feedback helps us to understand any areas for improvement and get some insight into your personal experience. We will provide feedback forms on the day. If you would like to share any photos with us please do, so that we can share them on our social media.

If you are happy to be put on our mailing list, we will keep you informed of developments at the farm and new challenges that become available. Please indicate in your booking form if you are happy for us to keep your contact details.

Sample Timetable

The following is an example timetable for a day at Windmill Hill City Farm, but it may change depending on the project.

0930 - Arrival

Volunteers are encouraged to arrive by public transport, bike or on foot, in support of our Environmental Policy. Please assemble in Reception and someone will come to meet you.

0930-0945 - Farm briefing, health & safety induction

When everyone has arrived, you will meet your project supervisors for the day. They will provide a brief introduction to the farm and a health and safety induction. You will be shown where to store your belongings securely and you will have a chance to make yourself a hot drink.

1000-1300 - Morning session

Tools and equipment will be distributed and the day's tasks explained. Volunteers are free to make refreshments when required. This is the time to take the 'before' photo! Volunteers are welcome to take a break around 1115-1130 if they wish.

1300-1345 - Lunch

If you have ordered lunch from the farm café in advance, they will bring it to your base. Or you can eat your packed lunches in your base or the gardens.

1345-1500 - Afternoon session

Volunteers continue the project after lunch and will take an afternoon break around 1500 -1515.

1515-1600 - Animal feed

Generally the afternoon will end with a chance to do the afternoon animal feed.

1600 - Stop working, clear up, de-brief

Volunteers are encouraged to finish working at 1600 to allow time to clear up tools and materials. There will also be a project debrief with the project supervisor and a chance to give feedback. This is the time to take the 'after' photo!

1630 - Finish!

How to book

Please send a few suitable dates to hannah.aspinall@windmillhillcityfarm.org.uk. Once we have agreed a date you will be sent a link to a booking form.

Once we've received your booking form we will then send you an invoice. Payment within 14 days confirms the booking. If you have any questions prior to booking, please get in touch.

Once everything is confirmed, you will be sent a final email 2 weeks before the event to circulate among your group, which contains all the info you'll need to prepare for your event.

Costs

Costs are £60 per person, plus VAT. This covers admin and facilitation time, materials, and refreshments on the day. It also includes a 10% non-refundable deposit.

If you don't have a budget for team building or corporate volunteering, your team will need to think of some good ways to raise funds amongst your colleagues to enable you to participate in the project. Some ways that teams have raised funds in the past have included cake sales, pub quizzes and competitions. Please note, we do require payment up front to secure a booking for a volunteering event – so do plan ahead!

Where to find us

Windmill Hill City Farm is a five-minute walk from Asda on East Street, Bedminster. Bus numbers 75 and 76 frequently stop outside Asda. We encourage visitors to come by foot, cycle or public transport. If this is not possible, we encourage car sharing. We have no parking on site, except for disabled access. There is a 20 minute drop off point. There is on street metered parking on Philip Street and an NCP on Dalby Avenue which is 5 minutes' walk to the farm.

The address is: Philip Street, Bedminster, Bristol, BS3 4EA