



Amisfield Walled Garden: Wellbeing and Outreach Worker (0.5 post)

Amisfield Preservation Trust (Amisfield Walled Garden) has been awarded funding from the East Lothian TSI Communities, Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund to appoint a 0.5 post for a Wellbeing and Outreach Worker (salary pro-rata £ 26,500). The post would be initially offered on a fixed contract for one year (April 2024 to March 2025). Continuation would be subject to additional funding.

Amisfield Walled Garden

Amisfield Preservation Trust provides a regenerative community space for a wide range of groups. The project is volunteer led. Since project inception, volunteers have recreated a beautiful and peaceful 8 acre walled garden , just outside of Haddington , which had fallen into disrepair. The project helps improve the life chances of those most vulnerable in our community, through support for individuals with barriers to employment ; drives inclusion through involving volunteers with a range of additional support needs; promotes learning through educational activities for school groups with their teachers, and for the general public through a variety of training events; helps the community to flourish through increased social connection and regenerative activities that improve mental and physical wellbeing and resilience and help increase pride in the local community and place. Our volunteers come from a range of different backgrounds with differing levels of skills, abilities and experiences. We aim to be an inclusive community.

The Board is currently renewing the strategic plan for the next 5 years and have set out two core objectives: 1)Support the environment (e.g. increase biodiversity, become an example of how to adapt to climate change, teach topics related to sustainable living). 2)Further support wellbeing, equality and inclusion (by reaching and supporting more people through access to therapeutic gardening activities).

We currently employ a Volunteer Co-ordinator who plans the overall work of the garden; designs and provides practical training in horticultural matters for the 80+ volunteers, as well as the many groups, who use Amisfield, and maintains the garden as a Scottish Tourist Board 3-star visitor attraction. In the last year, we provided volunteering opportunities for 9 adults with additional support needs, 10

adults with long-term health conditions and 8 with mental health challenges, 2 of whom were referred to us by their GP or mental health worker and 35 older people.

For more information about Amisfield, please see our website: www.amisfield.org.uk

Wellbeing and Outreach Worker post

We want to further develop Amisfield as a therapeutic and wellbeing resource for people. The project will take a holistic approach. Amisfield Walled Garden is a safe, protected, tranquil and 'containing' space. Our current volunteers and visitors frequently comment on the calming impact of the environment. In many ways this is what will make the project unique in wellbeing terms. The project involves:

- The appointment of a Wellbeing and Outreach worker (0.5 post) who will, alongside the Volunteer Coordinator, work with a small group of volunteers (6) to support 25 people with vulnerabilities (over the year) on a one-to-one basis to regularly visit and /or engage in gardening with a therapeutic focus.
- Participants in the project can either self-refer or be introduced to the garden by another agency
- The volunteers would be drawn from our existing group. These people already take on a mentoring role in the garden for less able volunteers.
- The post would also involve engaging with small groups of participants (4/5 people) as they work in the garden.
- Provision of supported work experience for 2 people with vulnerabilities
- Participants would be able to make use of up to 3 different half-day volunteering sessions throughout the week.

Additionally, the worker will host 6 wellbeing workshops / events throughout the year, using the garden as a venue:

- These workshops would be free and open to the general public.
- They would have a focus on wellbeing including physical movement (yoga, pilates, tai chi), therapeutic art / craft making and meditation.
- We envisage that 40 different people would attend these workshops/events.

All of the above activities would aim to improve people's mental and physical wellbeing, reduce social isolation and build a sense of community. The worker would build on our strong track record of providing work experience for people who have experienced multiple disadvantages and barriers to employment. Previous work experience referrals have successfully secured employment in horticulture-related roles. We envisage that several beneficiaries would be able to secure similar types of employment.

The project will target people with learning disabilities, people with longer term physical and mental health difficulties, women who have experienced trauma, older people, people who have experienced multiple disadvantages and people

from minority ethnic groups (who might also be refugees or people seeking asylum).

We currently have good links with up to 14 different community groups who have a focus on wellbeing. This includes amongst others carers' support groups, dementia groups, Health in Mind, MELD, Action for Children, New Horizons, Enable, Edge Autism and the Changes mental health project. The latter group already run an 8 week long WELL (Wellbeing, Environment, Life and Laughter) course at the garden. We are well linked into the voluntary sector infrastructure in East Lothian through the Volunteer Centre. The garden and the education building are fully accessible for wheelchairs, and we have a number of raised beds and other areas where less mobile individuals can work. The garden is regularly accessed by people using wheelchairs and with mobility issues.

We have good links with GPs and Occupational Therapists at the East Lothian Community Hospital. The new post will enable us to undertake more outreach with other groups who have a wellbeing focus to develop new partnerships and to bring more people with specific vulnerabilities into the garden.

Our project would be preventative and provide early intervention in a strengths-based and non-stigmatising environment. The project would enable people to make friendships and connections in a supportive community. It would also be a 'stepping-stone' for referral to other services who could complement what we provide. The worker will be supported and supervised by a Board member who has a background in social work, project development and staff supervision.

Amisfield Preservation Trust is a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in Scotland Number SC199773 and a Scottish Charity Number SC029412
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