

PEOPLE CARE AT PLOT 22

Plot 22 is based on the permaculture principals of people care, earth care and fair share, which promotes following the natural rhythm of the seasons and the laws of nature, resulting in a grounded harmony of mind, body and soul. People do care at Plot 22 - they care about themselves, each other, the community and the earth. And in particular they care about this little plot of land in the middle of an urban environment, which in turn cares for them. The practical care and maintenance that the volunteers and participants have tended Plot 22 with has enabled Plot 22 to blossom into a little piece of heaven on earth. It has become a calm oasis within a bustling city providing a calm and peaceful sanctuary for many.

As John Burroughs wrote;

I go to nature
To be soothed
And healed
And to have
My senses put
In tune
Once more

The practical care and tending of plot 22 is clearly visible in the beauty and bounty that has arisen from this. What is not so visible, but is deeply felt and spoken of by those who attend plot 22, is the calm holding and a sense of safety experienced when visiting the plot. The work that is done behind the scenes and invisible to the eye that contributes to this are many layers of holding from the volunteers, workshop leaders and facilitators to the governance that is provided by the board of trustees in support of Emma the founder and CEO of Plot 22.

We are currently recruiting for new trustees with a focus on inclusivity and diversity and are, ideally, looking for skills and experience that will complement the existing professional/vocational skills and experience of the current board of trustees. In a recent survey of life experience and qualities of past and present trustees of Plot 22 we discovered that, no matter what their back ground, skills or experience, all our trustees possessed many invisible qualities such as reliability, commitment, emotional intelligence, shared ethics relating to the principles of earth care, people care and fair share, and without exception all trustees demonstrated great kindness.

During our skills audit process, we discovered that this kindness had been embodied by their care for others, their communities and the earth throughout their lives. Motivated by their own direct experiences of the healing power of nature and community or by the lack of this, our trustees are united in their embodied knowing that a little kindness goes a long way. It is these formative life experiences that we value at Plot 22, as much, if not more, than formal qualifications and professional training and experience.

The diversity of each person's life experience provides depth and richness to this organisation. Past and current trustees life experiences for example have included being a single mum in need of community, subsequently found within camps on Dartmoor with children being brought up around camp fires, cooking and singing together outside in the elements. Another became a young activist as a child, protesting to save apples trees from being cut down which led to supporting others to find their voice and their creativity. Another trustee overcame addiction by teaching others practical skills in nature, an other trustee found a sense of belonging and community by growing, cooking and sharing food with other cultures. It is this human need for a sense of belonging and to be warmly welcomed as we are that underpins what matters at Plot 22.

If you are considering applying to volunteer as a trustee of Plot 22 we are interested in the whole of you are and what you bring – both your tangible visible vocational skills and experience and your life experience that have grown the invisible qualities such as kindness, wisdom, integrity, ethical values such as earth care, people care and fair share.

If you are interested in applying to be a trustee and are wondering what is in it for you, anyone who volunteers to give their time and care and kindness to Plot 22 receive a great deal back – not just in vegetables! Here are a few examples of the richness received by past and present trustees.

“Being a part of Plot 22 has given me so much. Knowing I am part of the support structure that provided such a wonderful resource to so many people just warms my heart. The healing qualities of nature, sharing food together, and connecting to people and plot are some of the amazing aspects of it. Another is the quality of volunteers, sessional workers and staff with their skills, commitment and integrity, creating a very unique memorable and fundamentally important impact to any visitor to the plot. Who wouldn't want to be a part of that?”

“Like all relationships, mine with the plot is constantly evolving – sometimes you are giving a lot, sometimes you're receiving a lot, most of the time it's nicely balanced even though the elements of what you are giving and receiving might change. My initial reason for going to the Plot was to be part of an outdoor project for my own personal wellbeing and also because I wanted to get more experience of working outdoors. What I received was a lovely warm mini community to be part of, a beautiful place to be once or twice a week when I didn't have a job, somewhere I was needed and lots of caring encouragement from Emma in using existing skills and developing new ones, as well as being able to develop my Plot role(s) over the years. I have picked up a huge amount of invaluable experience over the past nine years of being involved, growing with the Plot as it has evolved. I have no doubt that it's my Plot experience that helped me to get my other current job with Changing Chalk... and I am also extremely grateful that I didn't have to give up my Plot 22 work as it is an extremely difficult place to walk away from!!”

“When I was first asked if I was interested in becoming a trustee at Plot 22, I was not sure what I would be able to bring to the role, I was not even sure what it meant. However I did already know a bit about the charity and was really impressed by the work they do, and I was looking for a volunteering role that I could fit into an already busy life, that matched my social and environmental values, so I decided to give it a go. I am so pleased that I did, working with this charity I have met new people and gained new skills, and the skills and experience that I brought with me have been genuinely valued. I feel very proud to be a trustee for this wonderful charity”

“ Despite being moved by the good work done at Plot 22 I wasn't sure initially if I actually had the time to give to be a volunteer trustee, but what I soon found was that I received much more than I gave. Belonging to a trustee team united in our care for the aims and ethics of Plot 22 and each other makes it a pleasure to be part of the underpinning structure. In addition to the quarterly governance meetings, I have also been inspired to get involved with various projects at the plot ranging from safe guarding to grief tending and hosting poetry evenings. Volunteering at Plot 22 really does offer diversity on many levels. Bringing my previous skills and experience to the mix and having them valued is really rewarding, particularly knowing that what we are doing as a charity is making a difference to many lives. And, it's not all work by any means - the Plot socials, open days and opportunities to simply be at plot 22 enjoying it's beautiful tranquillity add to the pleasure and joy of being involved. Meeting new people and hearing the stories of what brings them to the Plot is often very moving and also enriching in its own right.”

