

The 'Means of Use' document for Nightingale Community Garden is to help the garden volunteers, the City Council and any individuals, businesses and groups interested in using/hiring the garden. All parties want to be fair to potential users of the garden, and also respectful of garden volunteers, garden neighbours and local residents.

Background

The vision for Nightingale Garden is to be '**a biodiverse garden for everyone to enjoy**' and the park and garden have been considered by the City Council as a place for informal leisure. The Garden is, however, becoming increasingly popular, with more individuals, businesses and groups wanting to use it. Garden users are coming from across Cambridge and into the county.

Currently, the Garden Co-ordinators, with other volunteers, organise most of the events and activities, and manage most of the requests for events.

By the end of 2022, it became clear that a Means of Use document would be very valuable, outlining what types of events and activities are desirable and can be held in the garden. It could also clarify the role of the Nightingale Gardeners group in event organisation and approvals and help recruit one or more new Garden Co-ordinators during 2023.

Characteristics of the garden

Several features of the garden need to be considered when deciding how the garden should be used:

- **There are residences near to the garden that can be affected by noise**, including music. Until 2013, the garden was a quiet bowling green.
- **The garden is locked overnight, before it gets dark**, by a rota of volunteers. This is at the request of neighbours of the garden but, also, it gives the garden and its wildlife a break.
- The garden is **designed for daylight use**. It has some features (including a nature pond) that could be trip-hazards or dangerous in the dark if children are not closely supervised.
- There are times when the garden is quite busy, for example out of school hours and in good weather, and other times when it isn't heavily used, for example in weekday mornings and in cold or wet weather.
- Parts of the garden **can get very muddy in wet weather** and never quite recover.
- There are **no lights (or power)** inside the garden or the wider park. Installation of lights is not desirable for a biodiverse garden.
- There are only about six parking spaces in the small car park by the playground. Parking is restricted to less than three hours. The car park is used heavily by dog-walkers.
- Until the park pavilion re-opens, there are **no toilets in the garden or park**. This should change when the park pavilion is rebuilt in 2023. The pavilion will be a facility that individuals and groups can hire.
- The garden has **three areas that are sheltered from the rain**. They, and the garden, have become very popular during and since the pandemic for activities including informal leisure.

- The **level of vandalism in the garden** is increasing. Twice in 2022, this meant the garden needed to be locked for 1 to 2 days for repairs; once, this was immediately before a booked event. The responsibility for repairs and repainting falls mostly on the Garden Co-ordinators, just once helped by the Council graffiti team. If there are many events and activities this puts more pressure on them to do repairs quickly. The Council graffiti team can be contacted here <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/report-graffiti>

Holding events in Nightingale Garden: guiding principles

- **The primary use of the garden should be for informal leisure.** People coming to the garden on their own, in family groups or with friends and making use of it in a similar way to using the adjacent park. People should feel it is a place that is free to use. Typically, groups are likely be under 25 people. There are some plastic chairs and benches in the garden for about this size of group.
- For practical reasons, the garden needs to be **available for volunteers** to work in it.
- Most organised events and activities **shouldn't be of long duration**, perhaps two hours or less. They should be simple enough that they can have a short set-up and take down.
- Events and activities **shouldn't be too frequent**, for example with no block-booking every week or throughout the year.
- Nearby residents shouldn't be disturbed by unacceptable noise from the garden so there should **not be the use of recorded music or amplified live music or voice**, especially close to neighbours.
- Nearby residents should not be worried about problem parking, which means **events should be targeted primarily at the local area and/or for small numbers of people.**
- A core aim of the garden and its volunteers is to **support and encourage biodiversity** and nature-friendly gardening. Garden Co-ordinators can organise events and activities to support this, such as:
 - **To encourage volunteering**, small social events for volunteers and potential volunteers. These should be of a nature that anyone in the garden at the time can be invited to join in and for free. It is anticipated that these will have far fewer than 50 people taking part. Garden Co-ordinators can organise these with a Nightingale Gardener's risk assessment and insurance.
 - There is a **Friends of Nightingale Garden group** (a project of Nightingale Gardeners) and it is friendly to invite them 2 to 3 times a year to 'drop-by-and-say-hello' social get togethers in the garden. These should be of a nature that anyone in the garden at the time can be invited to join in and for free. It is anticipated that these will have fewer than 50 people taking part. Garden Co-ordinators can organise these with Nightingale Gardener's risk assessment and insurance.
 - **Biodiversity-related events** with the **City Council or other groups similar to Nightingale Gardeners.** These can use Nightingale Gardeners risk assessment and insurance. It is anticipated that these will have fewer than 50 people taking part. These should be of a nature that anyone in the garden at the time can be invited to join in and for free. There might be small fees for

materials, but it is preferable to have this sponsored in advance.

- **Approval for events and activities not organised by the Garden Co-ordinators for Nightingale Gardeners group will be given by the City Council Assets team** using their standard process. An application or hire fee might be required depending on the nature of the event. More information can be found here <https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/hire-a-park-or-open-space-for-your-event>
- In line with **guidance for all City Council** open spaces, the following will need to seek approval from, and have a formal hire agreement with, the Council Assets team:
 - **Any events**, including those organised by Nightingale Gardeners, that will have **infrastructure (such as gazebos), suppliers/contractors (such as food carts), or charge for entry or for catering.**
 - **Any larger events (more than 50 people)**, including those organised by Nightingale Gardeners.
- The garden website will publish a **calendar of known events and activities** and the garden co-ordinators will aim to keep this up to date.

Council Assets team approval process and hire agreements

Each year the Assets team receives hundreds of applications for events, and city-wide, about 1/3rd of applications are approved.

In brief:

- There is an online Statement of Intent application form (<https://forms.cambridge.gov.uk/STATEMENTOFINTENT/launch>) that needs to be **submitted at least four weeks ahead of the event.** Most of the fields are appropriate for garden hire. There might be a fee for applying.
- This will be screened by Assets, against Nightingale Garden's Means of Use document, and any issues flagged up quickly with the applicants.
- Garden Co-ordinators will be asked for their advice and for any clashes of use they know about.
- The Assets team will decide on any fees payable. Ward councillors can also be involved in the process depending on the nature of the event

See the table below for examples of types of events and the approval process needed.

Background to 'Means of Use' for events and activities at Nightingale Garden

Table of types of events and approval process, based on past/recent use

Activity/event; number attending.	Responsibility	Documentation; Insurance	Process and notes
Garden volunteering. Fewer than ~20 people.	Garden co-ordinator(s) with Nightingale Gardeners;	Health and safety policy/procedure (written) plus on-site risk assessment; Nightingale Gardeners insurance.	For larger groups, organise with Streets and Open Spaces Community Engagement team and they can provide staff if necessary.
Small events for garden volunteers and/or Friends of Nightingale Garden. Fewer than 50 people.	Named point of contact within Nightingale Gardeners Group.	Nightingale Gardeners planning document and risk assessment; Nightingale Gardeners insurance.	Nightingale Gardeners to develop a protocol. If additional infrastructure, or external suppliers are involved, an application to Assets will be required
Small events about biodiversity and nature-friendly gardening. Fewer than 50 people.	Named point of contact within Nightingale Gardeners Group.	Nightingale Gardeners planning document and risk assessment; Nightingale Gardeners insurance.	Nightingale Gardeners to develop a protocol. Or can be with SOS volunteers (with their insurance and process) and with other groups. If additional infrastructure, or external suppliers are involved, an application to Assets will be required
Small community events organised by Nightingale Gardeners, including activities for families and performances; Fewer than 50 people.	Named point of contact within Nightingale Gardeners Group.	Nightingale Gardeners planning document and risk assessment; Nightingale Gardeners insurance.	Nightingale Gardeners to develop a protocol. If additional infrastructure, or external suppliers are involved, an application to Assets will be required
Larger community events, including those organised by Nightingale Gardeners, and	Named point of contact.	Organising group's documentation, including	Application to Assets required. Careful assessment of impact on garden.

Background to 'Means of Use' for events and activities at Nightingale Garden

Activity/event; number attending.	Responsibility	Documentation; Insurance	Process and notes
including activities for families and performances; More than 50 people.		Nightingale Gardeners planning document and risk assessment; Nightingale Gardeners insurance.	Larger events could be based in the park/pavilion.
Schools, home schoolers, cubs (etc) visiting the garden. Any size.	Named point of contact.	School/cub insurance and risk assessment.	Visiting group to seek advice from Assets. Groups larger than 50 people are not advisable in the Garden. They could be based in the park or pavilion.
Regular groups meeting for activities such as fitness, wellbeing, games and pastimes etc. Any size.	Point of contact within the user group	Business/group insurance and risk assessment.	Application to Assets required. Larger groups could be based in the park or pavilion.
Private events including birthday parties. Any size.	Not based in the garden.	Not based in the garden	See Council website for 'triggers' for hire agreement needed for Nightingale Park. No private events in Nightingale Garden.