

Terri

Property and Asset Manager

Joined The Parks Trust: 2021



What do you do?

I am part of the team that manages our property portfolio, overseeing the maintenance, leasing and lettings of a wide variety of properties. A typical day usually involves instructing contractors, negotiating with tenants and visiting our sites.

What did you do when you left school?

Whilst studying for my A Levels, I started a part-time retail job. After deciding university wasn't right for me, I left 6th Form and continued working in retail, while looking for a long term career. This led to a career in Dental Nursing. I completed a level 3 NVQ and worked in the dental profession as a nurse for almost 10 years.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

I have lived in MK all my life and have been lucky enough to grow up surrounded by the parkland managed by The Parks Trust. I loved the idea of being part of a team that is an integral part of Milton Keynes.

Describe your career journey so far.

After I had my children, I moved back into retail to take advantage of the flexible hours. I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to go back to the same store I worked in during my 6th Form years and I was promoted to the management team. After this I went to work for a software company as a receptionist. Here I had the responsibility of managing the company house, booking stays and managing the maintenance of the property.

I originally applied for a receptionist job at The Parks Trust. I was not offered this role but as I had some experience managing a property, I was offered the role of Assistant Property Manager. I am now a Property and Asset Manager. Having completed a RICS training course in Commercial Real Estate, I am now taking an access course at the University College of Estate Management. This will lead to an apprenticeship degree to help me achieve my long term goal to become a Chartered Property Surveyor.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

Organisation is key, there are usually many tasks to complete and deadlines to meet across various properties.

Relationships with tenants and contractors is also extremely important, the ability to build and maintain working relationships will make your working life run smoothly.



My words of wisdom...

You are never too old to start a new career, I am studying again after 20 years and looking forward what the future brings.

David

Recreation and Volunteer Engagement Coordinator

Joined The Parks Trust: 2023



What do you do?

I have 2 main parts to my job - one is to ensure we have lots of opportunity to be active in the parks. The other is to engage with all of our volunteers to ensure we're supporting them, and providing a fun and positive experience. As my role is quite varied and each day can feel quite different. I might be out in the parks delivering an event, providing training for a group of volunteers, organising recreational activities like runs and walks, or office-based work like writing documents or updating our website.

What did you do when you left school?

I finished A-levels and went straight to University to study Sports Science, and Chemistry. I left Uni early and worked in logistics and then took a trainee role in an IT company.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

I started with the Trust as a volunteer - and it's values and mine align very closely. I love Milton Keynes and feel we are so lucky to have a brilliant place to live with an organisation that's unique like ours to look after all of the green spaces. When a role became available I was very excited to join.

Describe your career journey so far

After leaving University I worked for an accountancy firm working with their IT providers for many years, this led into my next role with an IT hardware company where I eventually ended up running 2 datacentres for large corporate and government clients. Alongside this I continued my education, and volunteered with organisations that shared my interests and beliefs. This enabled me to change field from IT to Public Health for Local Government at MK City Council, and now in this role at The Parks Trust.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

The main thing you need is motivation - everything else stems from that. As the role is diverse so are the skills, but you have to have great people skills, collaborating when you can, resolving conflict at times, project management, time management, local knowledge, working independently, and practical skills like driving and putting up gazebos!

My words of wisdom...

If you can find a
role that you love,
work never feels
like work.





Emma

PR & Marketing Manager

Joined The Parks Trust: 2019

What do you do?

Raise awareness of our charity in Milton Keynes through effective communication and campaigns.

I help residents of MK to understand the work we do, the events we put on and how they can become involved in supporting us.

What did you do when you left school?

I studied History at Oxford Brookes University.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

Having spent 5 years working for a commercial business I wanted to go back to working for a non-profit and to work for an organisation which makes a direct impact to the place where I live.

Describe your career journey so far.

After university, I got a job as a marketing assistant at the National Trust, gaining industry experience. Since then I have held other marketing roles within Tourism and Leisure businesses, such as Web Editor / Digital Executive roles and Brand Manager roles. I have experience in working in commercial / corporate environments as well as non-profit / charities.

I joined The Parks Trust as a PR & Marketing Manager, the same level role I was doing previously in another organisation.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

Working in communications means I have to be good at communicating with a vast range of people. From the public, journalists, my direct team and senior management, I need to be able to confidently present ideas, challenge and influence.

My role also requires a lot of strategic thinking and planning so being organized and able to work well under pressure is important.

My words of wisdom...

Don't let the bad days outshine the good. The bad days are few and far between but are often the ones remembered. Make sure to celebrate the good and take stock of what you're achieving.



Lewis

Senior Biodiversity Officer

Joined The Parks Trust: 2015 and 2022



What do you do?

My Biodiversity role is incredibly varied day to day. Some days I will be out doing plant surveys, habitat assessments, or site visits to create new ponds and woodland. Other days I will be in the office writing up reports, doing important mapping of our species and habitats, or project planning for large and exciting habitat creation projects.

Providing biodiversity advice to support our Landscape Team is an important part of my role on a day to day basis, such as advising on protected species, like great crested newts, or plant species mixes for creating wildflower meadow. Over the longer term I have a lot of opportunity to build and guide how The Trust engages with biodiversity and the climate challenges through our Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

What did you do when you left school?

After I finished my A Levels I went on to study at the University of Hertfordshire for a BSc (Hons) Environmental Management. This gave me a good grounding in management of the environment, habitats and general ecology.

Describe your career journey so far.

I initially joined The Parks Trust as a Community Ranger. This role allowed me to gain valuable experience with how people interact with the parkland landscape. I then moved away from The Trust before returning as a Biodiversity Officer. I was able to do this because while I was a Community Ranger The Trust was very supportive and let me work with the Biodiversity Officer at the time to help build my skill set.

I recently completed my MSc Applied Wildlife Conservation at Anglia Ruskin University. I enjoyed taking my Masters after a break from education as I went back to appreciating learning and studying. This qualification helped bring my knowledge up-to-date with current science in wildlife conservation and a renewed drive for evidence-based conservation using data and monitoring to inform decisions on how to manage and create habitats.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

As I had worked for the Trust before, I knew they were a supportive employer. As a Milton Keynes local, making a difference to the biodiversity of the ever expanding city was also an important draw.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

Excellent attention to detail and communication are important skills to have to carry out wildlife surveys, create projects, write reports, and communicate with colleagues and external partners.

Other than that, being flexible and creatively thinking for solutions to conflicts, problem-solving, and creating new habitats, is another beneficial skillset.



My words of wisdom...

I wish I had known that it's ok to switch careers if something doesn't suit you and your job needs to work for you. Do something you are passionate about and it will always be a pleasure!

Jay

Supervising Forestry Technician

Joined The Parks Trust: 2015



What do you do?

Thinning of tree plantations by removing trees from overcrowded areas. Woodland management, planting of trees, tidying up damage to trees after high winds and storms.

What did you do when you left school?

I did an apprenticeship in vehicle maintenance. Although not directly related to my current role, we use a lot of tools and machinery and this background has helped in many situations.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

I had previously worked in this industry but I was self employed, I wanted to take on a permanent role and progress my career to the next step.

Describe your career journey so far.

I started at The Parks Trust as a trainee technician and gradually moved my way up to supervising technician.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

You need to be confident, reliable and physically fit.

Leadership and management skills.

Working in an environment where there's lots of extreme danger and loud noise, it's essential that everyone working under me is fully aware of the targets and methods to completing a job safely.

My words of wisdom...

Lift with
your legs,
not your
back!





Bradley

Landscape and Forestry Supervisor

Joined The Parks Trust: 2013

What do you do?

I manage a small team of staff undertaking tree climbing, woods thinning and working with machinery outdoors come sunshine or rain.

What did you do when you left school?

I went to college and studied for a diploma. I then volunteered at different placements for a year in zoos, vets and woodlands.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

I enjoy being outdoors and it was always my ambition to work with wildlife and help the the environment.

Describe your career journey so far.

I Joined as a Trainee but I made quick progression to Supervisor within 4 years. I have had lots of training and there has been lots to learn.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

You need to have an open personality and good sense of humor. There is lots of banter that goes on in our team.

As long as you are energetic and get stuck in to the practical tasks you will progress quickly.

My words of wisdom...

If you want a career in wildlife or the environment, practice your observation and ID skills whenever you are outdoors.





Jeremy Finance Director

Joined The Parks Trust: 2019

What do you do?

I am responsible for managing The Parks Trust's money and our financial investments. Each day brings with it different challenges. One day I might be working on a multi-million pound debt refinancing and the next I might be dealing with insurance claims where someone has had an accident in one of our vehicles.

What did you do when you left school?

After completing my A-levels I decided to step straight into the world of accountancy and study for my AAT qualification. My studies were undertaken alongside my full time job working as an auditor. After completing my AAT exams I chose to complete the ACA exams which would lead me to become a fully qualified Chartered Accountant.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

The attraction of The Parks Trust was very much the people, objectives and setting. The employees, volunteers and trustees care immensely for the charitable work they do and it's a pleasure to be able to work with them to help them deliver their plans.

Describe your career journey so far.

I joined the Trust as a first time Finance Director after having 2 other different accounting roles.

I have always enjoyed the day to day activities in finance but the role of Finance Director brings with it all the responsibilities of overseeing the financial direction of the Trust, team management, compliance oversight and lots more!

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

You need to have a balanced view point, be quick on your feet, have good planning skills and be effective at time management.

Good communication skills are also important as you'll be working with lots of different people at different levels within the organisation as well as external stakeholders.



My words of wisdom...

There is never a dull day in finance, despite people's perception of those that work in that environment!

Ben

Direct Works Assistant Foreman

Joined The Parks Trust: 2015

What do you do?

I assist in the day to day running of the Direct Works teams. This involves making sure the teams have work set up for them, making sure all the machinery and vehicles are working as they should, responding to emails, and coding invoices, as well as sorting through timesheets of the people in Direct Works.

I am also a supervisor on one of the infrastructure and maintenance teams, so I go out on site and help with any hard landscaping such as putting in benches or bridges or doing any maintenance that is required within our parks.

What did you do when you left school?

When I left school I went to college and completed a Level 2 NVQ in automotive repair.

Describe your career journey so far.

I first joined the Parks Trust as a seasonal ranger at Willen Lake on a 6 month contract. When my contract ended I was given the opportunity to go for an interview as a Trainee Technician in Direct Works. After a while I was promoted to Technician.

When The Trust started up a new infrastructure and maintenance team, I applied to be a Supervisor. I got this post and then after a few years I was promoted to my current role as the Direct Works Assistant Foreman.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

Before I joined the Parks Trust I worked in central London, commuting between MK and London 6 days a week, and decided I wanted to have a new career path working outside and The Parks Trust seemed the perfect job for me.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

You need to have good communication skills, be punctual and reliable, you need to be good working in a team and taking information in.

My words of wisdom...

Although I left school a long time ago, I am now studying for a level 3 diploma in management and leadership. You are never too old to learn.





Christina

Digital Marketing Manager

Joined The Parks Trust: 2019

What do you do?

I am responsible for the day to day management and development of The Parks Trust's social media, website and email campaigns. Every day is different as I work across various digital marketing channels and work with the wider team in sharing our company news and activities.

What did you do when you left school?

I was unsure what career I wanted to do when I left sixth form so I decided to go to university to do a Psychology degree as it was a subject I enjoyed.

In my second year of university I did a market research work placement which went so well that I was offered a part-time marketing role which I did alongside my final year at university. The analytical and interpersonal skills I gained as part of my degree have helped me to develop my digital marketing career.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

I wanted to joined The Parks Trust so I could work on a meaningful brand which makes a difference to Milton Keynes.

Describe your career journey so far.

I was previously a Digital Marketing Manager in the drinks sector before joining The Parks Trust.

I joined The Parks Trust as a Digital Marketing Manager but my role has grown over my time with the Trust as I now manage a Digital Marketing Apprentice and a Digital Marketing Executive.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

You need to be creative, an analytical thinker and a good communicator.



My words of wisdom...

I didn't even know marketing was a career option growing up. You will find there are so many exciting paths you can take.

James Operations Manager

Joined The Parks Trust: 2010



What do you do?

I have a very varied role where every day is different. I could be designing a landscape or editing a video one day, working out inflation increases the next or climbing into a ditch on the day after.

What did you do when you left school?

I started to study for a degree in IT but hated every minute. I'd been working for a garden centre while studying so decided to swap to a degree in landscape management. I did a work placement year which was probably more useful than the study, although it's the degree certificate that gets you into the job interview.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

I was happy at my old job and only applied for a job at The Parks Trust for interview practice. I wasn't interested in that job but was taken by surprise and offered a different job that was right up my street. The Parks Trust seemed a nice place to work so I went for it. My first ever job at a garden centre plant department came about after I applied for a job in the coffee shop, so my whole career has been the result of happy accidents.

Describe your career journey so far.

I was employed to manage contract procurement but I was able to make changes that released quite a lot of extra time to do more things. I had other skills and I've been able to mould my job to include these. The Parks Trust has always been very good at letting people do this and it's a good way to give people career progression and job satisfaction.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

I need a strong plant knowledge and understanding of how parks and open spaces are used.

I also need good design and IT skills, plus delegation and strategy skills.

The role is very varied and suits me as I get bored easily. It would not suit someone who likes a very structured role where things are always the same.

My words of wisdom...

You don't need to
decide what you want
to do now - lots of
skills are transferable.



Ellie

Project Engagement Officer

Joined The Parks Trust: 2019



What do you do?

My job is all about developing ideas - I speak with colleagues, volunteers and the public, and turn their suggestions into Parks Trust projects. Most days I will meet with our teams to discuss their operational needs and then work on solutions to problems. My projects are very varied and could involve nature, heritage, community engagement or operations, and I work both in the office and out in the parks. There are some special parts of my job too, such as taking photos with our drone and leading guided walks.

What did you do when you left school?

I studied Archaeology with Forensic Science at Exeter university. My degree included a good amount of self-guided study, which has helped me to be proactive and independent in my work. My course also involved a lot of working outdoors, which has helped me to be prepared for all weathers.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

I was drawn to The Parks Trust because of its work caring for heritage in the parks. My current job is a great match for the skills I had learnt from working in both public-facing and project coordination roles.

Describe your career journey so far.

After graduating from university, I worked as an Archaeology Curator at my local museum before moving to Milton Keynes. Here, I joined The Parks Trust as Community Engagement Officer for a large heritage restoration project. In this role I organised events and encouraged community participation in the life of the park.

When this ended, I was appointed as Project Engagement Officer for the Trust more widely and I have spent the past year learning about different parklands and our team's diverse operations. My job is an excellent blend of indoor and outdoor working and I am developing new skills in project management.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

Organisation - I manage multiple projects at once, so it's important for me to manage my time effectively and to keep accurate records along the way to avoid confusion.

People skills - I work with many different people from different departments and with different interests and motivations, therefore it's important for me to be flexible to get the best out of everyone.

My words of wisdom...

Develop your interpersonal skills as much as you can whilst you're young. This means stepping outside of your comfort zone and talking to people of all different ages.



Susi

Community Ranger

Joined The Parks Trust: 2010

What do you do?

My job involves patrolling the parks, woodlands and open spaces. I have to check our sheep and cattle, remove graffiti and remove litter and fly-tipping. It's also my job to engage with park users regarding water safety and BBQs and also answer any questions about the local area. I also get to drive a really awesome truck and be outside with all things nature.

What did you do when you left school?

I left school after my GCSE's and worked in a warehouse, soldering circuit boards. I then went travelling in Egypt and Israel where I stayed for a while, living on a Kibbutz (Commune) and was given a job as a gardener.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

I applied to work in the Direct Works team first of all as this was a practical hands on job. Although I didn't get that role, they thought I would do well as a Community Ranger. So, I hung up my garden tools and went for this role instead.

Describe your career journey so far.

When I was working as a gardener on the Kibbutz in Israel, I started to really appreciate plants. So, after I had my daughter I went to Moulton college to study for a National Certificate in Arboriculture. I then worked for AgeUK gardening services for some years before joining The Parks Trust.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

I need to be friendly and be able to listen. Even when someone wants to make a complaint.

There is lots of walking involved in my job so a good level of fitness is needed too.



My words of wisdom...

It's ok if you don't quite know the career path you want to take after school. Just try things that you like or have an interest in.



Hannah

Deputy Chief Executive

Joined The Parks Trust: 2015

What do you do?

I help to run The Parks Trust and I oversee certain areas including Marketing, Events, Volunteers and Outdoor Learning. My role involves leading teams of people, working out budgets for our work and making sure that the charity has what it needs to run effectively and achieve its mission.

What did you do when you left school?

When I finished my A Levels I went on to study at Sheffield Hallam University and graduated with a 2:1 in English Studies. I really enjoyed my degree as it included both literature and language and although I wasn't immediately sure what I wanted to do as a career I knew that my passion was in communications.

Describe your career journey so far.

I decided to embark on a career within marketing when I left uni. I started out in one of the first in car satellite navigation companies, then I went on to work in retail marketing for Argos and then Homebase where I was promoted to senior marketing roles. I then moved to Silverstone Circuit as their Head of Marketing and then I joined The Parks Trust and took on other functions as well as Marketing and am now Deputy Chief Executive.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

Working for a charity and playing my part in looking after the beautiful parks and green spaces in the city I grew up in really appealed to me as well as the variety and scope of the work that the role offers and the strong team that are a pleasure to work with here in order to help the Trust to achieve all of its good work.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

- To be a good listener
- Be able to lead teams
- Think creatively and strategically
- Be able to problem-solve
- Be able to manage lots of different tasks at once!

My words of wisdom...

There is nothing you can't do if you put your mind to it and want it badly enough. Don't be afraid of failure or making a wrong decision - there are many paths to achieving a goal and setbacks only make you stronger.



Laura

Outdoor Learning Leader

Joined The Parks Trust: 2019



What do you do?

I deliver education sessions to people out and about in the parks. I teach them about the wildlife and the work that The Parks Trust does to look after these spaces.

I work in different parks and with different groups of people every day from families to school groups to Brownies and Scouts.

What did you do when you left school?

I studied Sociology at Loughborough University. I was very interested in understanding different communities and groups within society and why people behave as they do but I didn't really know what I wanted to do as a career.

Describe your career journey so far.

Once I had finished my degree, I did a PGCE (teaching qualification) and became a secondary school teacher. I also completed a Masters Degree in Teaching and Learning alongside working full-time. When I decided I wanted to stop teaching in a school, I looked for a job that meant I could use my teaching skills in a different way. Since getting my current job I have had to do lots of new learning to improve my knowledge about nature and wildlife.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

I wanted to work outdoors. I am passionate about nature, the environment and local history. Milton Keynes is such a unique place, so being able to teach other people about it really appealed to me.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

Confidence in talking to groups of people and being able to explain things in different ways.

Being organised to make sure you have sorted all of the things that you need ahead of a session and being able to keep to your planned timings during the session.

Good at working in a team with other people, sharing ideas and helping each other out.

My words of wisdom...

Don't be afraid to try something new or different - you might find you love it!

Teaching doesn't have to mean you are stuck inside a classroom all day!





James

Landscape Maintenance Supervisor

Joined The Parks Trust: 2020

What do you do?

I look after the landscape along some of the grid roads and in the parks in Milton Keynes.

This includes hedgecutting, species pruning, weed control and strimming. In the Winter I do lots of work managing the trees such and cutting down overgrown, diseased, damaged or dangerous trees. My job is pretty varied.

What did you do when you left school?

I left school when I was 16 and did a plumbing apprenticeship. I worked as a plumber for 4 years before going travelling.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

I really enjoy working outdoors and I'd done similar jobs briefly in Australia whilst travelling. Living in MK and seeing the trainee role advertised at the time seemed like a perfect opportunity and it's turned out to be the best job I've ever had.

Describe your career journey so far.

I started as a Landscape Maintenance Trainee and I didn't need any experience or knowledge in that field.

Not long before my initial 18 month trainee period was going to be finished, I interviewed for a Landscape Maintenance Supervisor role which I got. The Trust is a great place to progress your career in this industry. They've been really supportive helping me as I haven't been a Supervisor before.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

To be outgoing and hardworking.

It's a very physical job, so being fit and healthy helps.

Be eager to learn. I have found my managers really speak to the individuals who seem keen and have a genuine interest in the work.

My words of wisdom...

The Parks Trust is a great place to start a career in landscaping and forestry.





Colin Landscape Officer

Joined The Parks Trust: 1992

What do you do?

I arrange the day to day maintenance of the parks within the north of the city. This means making decisions about how these parks develop such as what trees and shrubs are planted where and making sure these areas are safe and well looked after for the public and nature that lives there.

What did you do when you left school?

I worked on a farm milking the cows. I went to agriculture college and am a qualified herdsman. A lifelong love of nature and the outdoors helped get me into the career I now have.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

I believe in the work that the Trust carries out on behalf of the residents of MK. I am proud that in some way I have helped shape and add to the city's landscape for the future generations of the city.

Describe your career journey so far.

I started working for the Development Corporation who planned and built Milton Keynes from scratch. I was installing paths and furniture within the parks. I got a job as a Park Ranger, which I did for around 20 years. When the Development Corporation was wound up and The Parks Trust was set up I moved across doing this job. I then became a Landscape Officer for the Trust.

The main difference between these job is that Rangers deal with the public more and Landscape Officers deal with contractors more. The role of Ranger within the Trust has changed since I was doing the role. We now have specific teams who carry out the roles which as a Ranger we used to do such as events, education, walks and talks, and wildlife management.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

For my role, you need to love being outdoors even on wet, windy and cold days, have a love for nature and be able to deal with the public.

My words of wisdom...

Some times "work-wise" we fall into a job just for the sake of having a job, however we can go down a number of avenues in life before we find out what we want to do with our lives, so don't be afraid to try as many things as you can!



Natalie

Green Infrastructure Officer

Joined The Parks Trust: 2011



What do you do?

I am responsible for the adoption of new green spaces that are built as part of new housing developments around Milton Keynes.

I work with the council and housing developers when they design and build new parks as Milton Keynes grows, and I'm responsible for making sure these new parks are built well and are in good condition when they are handed over to the Trust to look after for 999 years.

What did you do when you left school?

I studied Geography at University.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

I knew I wanted to work outdoors, preferably in the conservation field. However, I quickly learned that this was a very competitive and not very well-paid career and so changed my approach. The Parks Trust were local to me and I had opportunities to do all sorts of different work outdoors. I enjoy project planning and am well practised at managing multiple projects at one time and keeping lots of plates spinning.

Describe your career journey so far.

When I joined The Parks Trust I was working on a temporary 6 month contract as an Events Assistant. This was a tactic for getting my foot in the door. At the end of my 6 month contract I said to some of my colleagues that I was interested in more work and they told me about an upcoming position as a Ranger. After that I was a Community Ranger at the Trust for 4 years and then the Play Area Manager for 6 years before applying for my current role at the end of 2022.

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

I'm approachable and friendly so I get along with all of my colleagues at the Trust. People know they can ask for my advice and I will try to help as much as I can. I also meet and work with a lot of new people from outside of the Trust and so I need to be professional and friendly to work collaboratively with them.

Organisation is key. Keeping track of multiple projects which are all constantly moving and developing takes a lot of work to keep on top of. I'm learning how to make use of Microsoft programs such as Planner, To Do and Lists in order to keep track of all the tasks I need to undertake.

My words of wisdom...

Study something you love and go from there. Your career will take you in directions you hadn't necessarily planned and that's ok.



Carla Biodiversity Officer

Joined The Parks Trust: 2015



What do you do?

I manage the volunteers who are surveying different species such as butterflies, bumblebees and reptiles in the parks, ensuring they have the right equipment to carry out their counts. I collate and analyse the data and use this to organise and deliver habitat creation tasks for volunteers and youth groups to improve biodiversity across MK. I visit the sites involved and respond to public requests and queries on wildlife in the parks.

What did you do when you left school?

I studied Environmental Science at university on a 4 year course, with a year out in Fiji! I thought I'd end up in research lab or go down the more analytical route after my final dissertation project looking at river water quality and a stint with the Fijian Ministry for Agriculture, Fishery and Food on a self-sufficient fish farming project. I had no idea what to do when I left University as environmental science is such a broad subject but it gave me the foundations in how the world of ecology works.

Why did you want to work for The Parks Trust?

I have always liked volunteering and understand the benefits it brings. I also have a bat licence and love bats, so now I get paid to survey bat boxes and great crested newts! I hold 2 protected species licenses and hope to gain another this year. I've always wanted to do a job I was passionate about and not stuck behind a screen every day.

Describe your career journey so far.

I was the Volunteer Co-ordinator from 2015-2020. My role has developed since joining The Trust. As the organisation has grown, so has the volunteering team. This led to my role being split so I could carry on delivering conservation tasks but remove the administration that goes with managing volunteers and people.

I've always worked in local authority and charity roles related to countryside management and community. When I first moved to Milton Keynes 20 years ago I started volunteering for The Trust in the team I now lead, so I guess I'm pretty lucky to land a job in an organisation I wanted to work for all those years ago!

What skills or qualities do you need to be successful in your role?

I need to be organised and self-motivated with the ability to motivate others. I need to be good at problem solving, communicating and presenting as well as team and partnership working. I am always be willing to learn and I guess it always helps to be friendly and approachable in any job!

My words of wisdom...

All jobs have some admin attached to them. I've learnt that writing things takes me a lot longer than I expected!

