



## **Go green this summer and volunteer at the UK's largest garden party**

### **Dig the City calls for urban army of volunteers**

Each summer the city centre of Manchester goes green as Dig the City takes over the streets. Shops and windows blossom and join the summer garden festival on their doorstep, and an army of volunteers is needed to keep this year's event, which runs from 31 July - 6 August, in bloom.

From keeping the plants watered and fed, to greeting visitors and giving directions, Dig the City is looking for a team of over 400 volunteers.

Event Producer Nelson Beaumont-Laurencia explains; "Volunteers don't have to be green fingered, but should be versatile and ready to get stuck in! Dig the City wouldn't happen without its volunteers, their commitment and enthusiasm really helps the festival grow in so many ways."

Volunteering opportunities range from set-up and take-down of the festival site, on-site assistance throughout the week, watering and taking care of the plants, helping with visitor enquiries, meeting and greeting the public, marketing and social media support. Volunteers also benefit from free parking (subject to demand) and those working on the last day traditionally have first pick of the plants.

Ellie Davy, 31yrs, from Chorlton, was inspired to become a volunteer this year, after visiting Dig the City in 2014:

"I visited Dig the City last summer and really enjoyed seeing all the green pockets that had popped up. I walk down King Street every day and I couldn't believe how the street had been transformed. Instead of people hurrying up and down, they were stopping and interacting with the displays and the exhibitors.

I decided to volunteer as I live in Manchester and I think we're really lucky in to have an event like Dig the City. The festival not only inspires people to garden (like me), but it brings such colour to shopping streets. I wanted to be part of it. I'm pretty new to gardening but I love experimenting. I started with a couple of pots and some hanging baskets, but I'm getting a bit braver... next stop is a wildlife pond in the back garden."

Last year's Dig the City welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors and this summer's giant garden party will offer even more attractions and free fun for visitors.

There will be over 20 Show Gardens, floral shop window displays, an outdoor fashion show, talks, and guest gardeners from TV's Diarmuid Gavin to CBeebies' Mr Bloom, as well as family activities with the National Trust and Kew Gardens.

The festival stretches from King Street to the Cathedral, with themed days including a weekend of retailer events and discounts, urban gardening, fine food and drink, and family fun.

Mavis Holt, 81yrs, from Manchester, has volunteered for the past 2 years. Mavis lives in a block of flats so has limited access to gardening but has been a tree warden and also refurbished a local piece of land that used to be an old clay pit. Mavis explained her reasons for volunteering at Dig the City again:

"I took part in the first event and everybody I came across was thrilled with the whole thing. Last year I enjoyed the changed appearance of the city centre made by the plants, and we were so happy watering them. I talked to many members of the public and it was pleasant and interesting working with the other volunteers, some of whom I knew, and others became new friends."

Volunteering opportunities are available between Monday 27 July and Saturday 8 August.

**Youth groups:** are welcome. The leader of the youth group must be over 18 years old and will be responsible for all group members at the event.

**Under 18s:** will need to have their application agreed by a parent or guardian.

**Under 16s:** will need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian on the day.

**Corporate groups:** large group are welcome for company's keen to volunteer as part of corporate social responsibility schemes. email [volunteering@cityco.com](mailto:volunteering@cityco.com)

For more information about volunteering and to register go to [digthecity.co.uk/volunteer](http://digthecity.co.uk/volunteer)

Dig the City sponsor NCP has created a Dig the City deal of a 25% discount when drivers prebook their parking online using the promo code "Dig15", during the

festival dates (31st July 15 to 6th August 15) at selected car parks. More information on the offer can be found at [ncp.co.uk/dig15](http://ncp.co.uk/dig15)

For programme announcements visit [digthecity.co.uk](http://digthecity.co.uk) and follow [@digthecitymcr](https://twitter.com/digthecitymcr) on Twitter and Instagram. [Join the event on Facebook](#)

## **[ENDS]**

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### **About Dig the City**

Dig the City is Manchester's summer garden festival and newest summer attraction. The event transforms the city's shopping streets – taking in Market Street, New Cathedral Street, St Ann's Square, King Street, Deansgate and Greengate Square. There are Show Gardens, horticultural talks and workshops, children's activities, live music, entertainment, fine food – and special shopping events and promotions.

The 2014 festival won 'Outstanding' recognition at the 2014 RHS Britain in Bloom Awards – following a 'Gold' award in 2013. The 2013 festival won a Commendation at the 2013 UK Events Awards.

Dig the City is produced by CityCo on behalf of the Heart of Manchester Business Improvement District (BID) – a consortium of over 380 city centre retailers.

The festival is supported by Manchester City Council, Manchester Cathedral, Salford City Council, Visit Manchester and the National Trust, alongside event partners and sponsors.

More information can be found at [digthecity.co.uk](http://digthecity.co.uk)

### **About the Heart of Manchester BID**

The Heart of Manchester Business Improvement District (BID) is an independent not-for-profit company governed by a Board of retailers and city centre stakeholders.

A Business Improvement District is a successful management model operating in most towns and cities in the UK, and across the USA and Europe. Manchester's BID is a specific geographical area encompassing over 380 retailers spanning King Street, St Ann's Square, New Cathedral St, Exchange Square, Market St and part of Deansgate.

The BID is financed by a levy made on the basis of rateable value – meaning over £1 million per year will be invested for a period of 5 years. Agreement to launch was made through a successful legal ballot. The BID is focused on delivering customer service and promotional initiatives aimed at increasing footfall and retail spend in city centre Manchester.

More information about the Heart of Manchester BID can be found at [www.heartofmanchester.com](http://www.heartofmanchester.com)

### **NCP**

NCP Manchester Limited (NML) was formed in 1999 as a joint venture between NCP and Manchester City Council. NML has allowed the city to change the way parking services are delivered, serving as a gateway to the city whilst integrating with the city's various transport systems. NML delivers many cutting edge innovations to ensure that Manchester enjoys the finest car park facilities, including our pre booking system, where customers can book their parking at selected car parks in Manchester through [www.ncp.co.uk](http://www.ncp.co.uk) to guarantee their space at all times.

For more information please contact: [pressoffice@ncp.co.uk](mailto:pressoffice@ncp.co.uk)