

ParkBathe is coming to West Norwood



What is ParkBathe?

- It's an accessible, slow, silent, guided session to help people 'get out of their thoughts and into their senses
- It uses forest bathing, forest school and mindfulness to encourage relaxation and lower anxiety for groups of two to twelve people
- Is secular and adapted from traditional Japanese forest bathing to operate in any urban green space (even small, noisy or socially-deprived parks), providing the benefits of nature connection
- Is adaptable for all ages and abilities and specialised groups eg. women/low mobility/dementia/bereavement/refugee communities/families.
- It only covers a short distance and uses the same route so is easy to manage
- Works in collaboration with an ambassador scheme of volunteers who assist on strolls, creating a ParkBathe community
- Provides a gateway to and sign-posting for other park-based green health activities.



"The training delivered was well received and Vanessa was able to very competently communicate effectively with other potential group leaders. It was very inspiring and non-clinical and hopefully a good resource to use in future when I can build confidence to lead some walks."

Who is ParkBathe for?

The simple answer is anyone! ParkBathe was funded by the National Lottery to appeal to sceptical people who might not consider using their local green space for wellbeing. It now operates in parks throughout southeast London and more recently, Lanarkshire.



Over 900 people have attended ParkBathe. ParkBathe's study saw an overall 40% reduction in anxiety and a 50% reduction in 'over-thinking', a 36% increase in social and nature connection and a 41% reduction in scepticism after a one-hour walk. The sessions help reduce stress and induce deep relaxation and are suitable for all mobilities and ages.

ParkBathe operates all year-round, providing local people with a free, continuous and consistent wellbeing service 'on their doorstep.'

How can you get involved in ParkBathe coming to West Norwood?

ParkBathe walks are led by a peer walk leader and assisted by an ambassador. Free training is provided for both roles.

ParkBathe aims to combat health inequalities by providing peer-led, hierarchy-free walks: *"By the community for the community."*

Nobody needs to be an expert or have any prior experience. The peer walk leaders are volunteers, often people who has already been on ParkBathe walks and want to get more involved – but that's not essential. You do not need any skills, other than enthusiasm and curiosity. As well as the training, walk leaders receive a set of printed instruction cards to use on walks and a certificate after completing the training (*this is not a professional qualification.*)

What does the training involve for potential walk leaders and ambassadors?

There are three parts to this free training. The initial walk is for anyone vaguely interested in finding out more, the following online and in-person workshops are for those committed to being involved and it will be necessary to attend them all, if you are.

1: Attend an initial walk to find out more:

Tuesday 31 March, 11am-12.30pm

Then if you find you do want to get involved:

2: Attend two, two-hour online workshops:

Wednesday 8 April, 7pm-9pm and Thursday, 9 April, 7pm-9pm

Workshop one: This covers the ParkBathe project/nature connection and forest bathing health benefits.

Workshop two: Step-by-step guide to a walk including routes and sensory exercises.

A digital link to attend these two online workshops will be provided in advance.

3: Attend two, two day in-person training sessions.

Walk leaders attend on both days, ambassadors attend just the first day:

Saturday 18 April, 9am-5pm and Sunday 19 April, 9am-5pm

Day 1: ParkBathe for trainee walk leaders and ambassadors in morning. Lunch. Training continues in the afternoon.

Day 2: Training just for walk leaders in the morning. Lunch. Training continues in the afternoon. Assessments.



There is also a final two-hour assessment at a later date to award certificates. Then you are ready to start arranging ParkBathe walks for your community!

Testimonials:

"I think ParkBathe is an incredible community-led activity accessible to all. I am excited to be a part of this and teach people who may be curious of the benefits this walk can offer."

"I get so much pleasure from volunteering on these walks for women, men and parents with children. Not only do I come away relaxed and more in touch with my own self, it amazes me every time how much these walks have helped people."

"I have just seen more in the last 30 minutes than I have seen in the last 20 years of visiting this park - and that fills me with joy."

Want to find out more?

If you are interested in finding out more, and to book your place on the initial walk on Tuesday 31 March, please contact Teresa or Kim, Thriving Norwood on: thrivingnorwood@norwoodforum.org

Thriving Norwood is working in partnership with [ParkBathe](#) to bring this project to our community. The ParkBathe walks will be open to all, free to attend and run in West Norwood Cemetery – 40 acres of accessible and spectacular listed landscape that includes 400+yr old oak trees that is conveniently located in the middle of West Norwood.

[Thriving Norwood](#) is a partnership initiative co-facilitated by Norwood Forum and Lambeth Together whose purpose is to improve the health and wellbeing of those that live, work and study in Gipsy Hill, West Norwood and Tulse Hill.