

Case Study: Samantha Leighton

Samantha is a regular volunteer who has been attending the park over the last 5 months as she wants to be more active in nature. ICOS need people who love nature and want to maintain the natural elements Sunderland have to offer.

Samantha helps by doing the regular maintenance of the park, such as weeding, cleaning up, and providing valuable feedback for areas of improvement. She also used the time to socialise and meet new people. Backhouse park provides a good area to socialise with likeminded people, who are equally as passionate about the environment. She enjoys improving the park slowly and gradually and seeing long term projects come to fruition and seeing her hard work paid off. Working hard for future generations is one of the key reasons she volunteers.

ICOS act as a facilitator for this and in turn she is thankful for such an organization. ICOS has provided her with the opportunity to give back to the community by being involved with such a diverse range of people. Learning new things about culture, ways of life or even how garden are all things which she has experienced during her time at the park.

There are some quality-of-life things she wishes the park would have, such as a toilet, as that is a common issue among volunteers and park users alike. Additionally, she believes more seating areas spread about the park would encourage people to stay longer and enjoy the good views.

Overall, she believes ICOS has provided a good space for the community to grow and being part of it has allowed her to leave her mark on the park for the future generations.