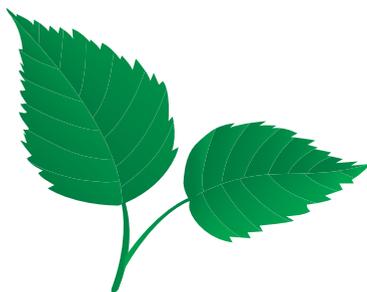




# HANDBOOK FOR PARK PALS

Helsinki

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Helsinki

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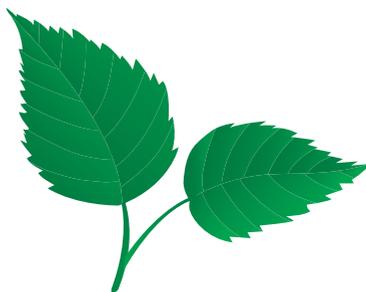
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**Special thanks**

to all our active Park Pals and colleagues who helped proofread the text!

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# Welcome to work as a volunteer in Helsinki's green areas!

Park Pals is a programme organised by the City of Helsinki's Urban Environment Division in which volunteers help look after Helsinki's parks and other green areas. The Park Pals programme was introduced in 2005 by what was then the Public Works Department following a proposal by the City Council. The "Good Things Grow in Helsinki" brand (*Hyvä kasvaa Helsingissä*) was created for volunteer work and corporate sponsorship, and volunteer work is carried under the slogan "For a Good Cause" (*Hyvällä asialla*). A full-time volunteer coordinator was appointed in 2011 to coordinate and develop activities.

The City of Helsinki's official strategy highlights the importance of inclusion. A good city is created together with its residents, who are given opportunities to influence the issues pertaining to them. Park Pals help look after their own surroundings and make them even more enjoyable. Helsinki's green areas are extremely popular. City workers have their hands full keeping them in good condition. Any help that our volunteer Park Pals can give is extremely welcomed and appreciated by the City of Helsinki.

This handbook describes the principles and practices of being a Park Pal.



## Where do Park Pals work?

Park Pals work in the City of Helsinki's public green areas, which include its parks, forests, meadows, shorelines, streets and paths. Private gardens and yards around apartment buildings are not covered by the programme.

As their name suggests, Park Pals work primarily in public parks. Park Pals may also help tidy up streets and paths if special attention is paid to safety. For picking up litter, each Park Pal can choose where he or she would like to work. Other tasks, such as tending to summer flowers and roses, can be performed in designated areas. Information about these areas is available from the volunteer coordinator.

## Who can volunteer as a Park Pal?

Any local resident who would like to work as a volunteer in Helsinki's public green areas can register to become a Park Pal.

Residents' associations, daycare centres, schools, companies and other organisations can also form Park Pals groups. The group's contact person is responsible for communicating with the Park Pals Supervisor and volunteer coordinator. Each year the contact person should also notify the volunteer coordinator about the number of Park Pals available in his or her group.

## How do I register to become a Park Pal?

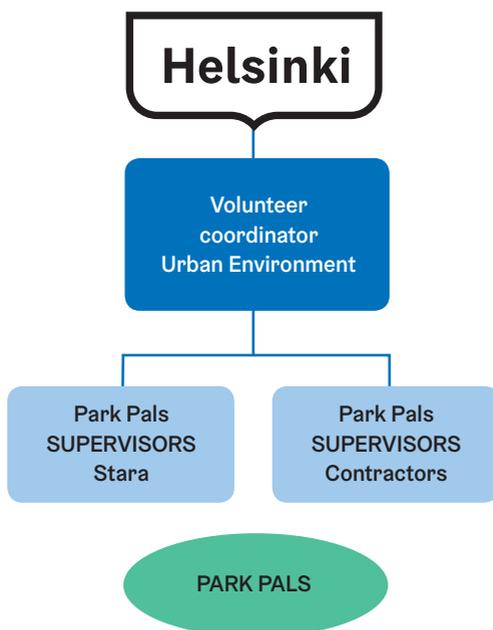
You can register to become a Park Pal at the Customer Service desk of the City of Helsinki's Urban Environment Division (see page 20 for contact information). Your personal information will then be added to the Park Pals register. The register includes your name, address, e-mail address and telephone number for contact purposes. In addition, we ask that Park Pals give their year of birth so that we can maintain statistics about the age structure of volunteers. The Park Pals register is used internally within the City of Helsinki only by employees who work with the Park Pals programme. The personal data contained in the register is never disclosed to third parties.



# Operations and organisation

The Park Pals programme involves regular volunteer work rather than one-off projects. Park Pals should commit themselves to volunteer for at least one year. Since the work is voluntary, no wages are paid or expenses reimbursed. Volunteer work by definition involves *“Organised, charitable activities that are carried out for the general good rather than for the benefit of friends or relatives. It is performed voluntarily without compulsion or financial compensation.”* The Park Pals programme complies with the general principles of volunteer work. These include equality, reciprocity, non-remuneration, non-professionalism, trustworthiness, commitment, cooperation, and the right to support and guidance.

Park Pals receive support and guidance for their activities from the volunteer coordinator and their local Park Pals Supervisors.



## Volunteer coordinator

The Park Pals programme is organised by the City of Helsinki's Urban Environment Division and coordinated by the **volunteer coordinator**, who is responsible for developing operations and providing support and guidance to the Park Pals and the Park Pals Supervisors.

The Volunteer coordinator Cooperation maintains contact with registered Park Pals throughout the year by sending bulletins about events, either by e-mail or letter if an e-mail address has not been provided.

Contact the Volunteer coordinator:

- if your contact information changes or if you no longer wish to serve as a Park Pal so that we can update the Park Pals register
- if you have suggestions for how the Park Pals programme could be improved
- if you are interested in tasks other than cleaning up litter
- if you are unable to contact your Park Pals Supervisor.

*Contact information can be found on page 20.*

## Park Pals Supervisors

Local **supervisors** provide practical assistance to Park Pals. Supervisors work either for Helsinki City Construction Services (Stara) or for private contractors, depending on who has the contract for maintaining the area in question as decided by the City of Helsinki's Urban Environment Division. Contact your Park Pals Supervisor whenever you require advice or assistance, for example in order to remove litter. You will be given the contact information for your local supervisor when you register as a Park Pal.

**Park Pals Supervisors can be contacted during working hours (Mon–Wed 9am–3pm, Thu–Fri 9am–2pm) by phone or e-mail.**



## What jobs can I do and when?

Park Pals may freely choose their working hours according to their own abilities and schedules. In principle, Park Pals should volunteer their time on a somewhat regular basis and more than just once a year.

For the most part, Park Pals help clean up litter. When it comes to enjoying our environment, littering is one of the biggest problems of our time, so there is plenty to do for everyone in this regard. Other jobs may include weeding, raking, tending to the summer flowers, roses and shrubs, and any other small tasks as agreed with the Volunteer coordinator or your Park Pals Supervisor. Any park maintenance job that does not require motorised equipment is possible.

If you have any special skills or gardening know-how, make sure to inform your Park Pals Supervisor or the Volunteer coordinator. For example, these kinds of skills are needed for tending to streams and to the rose gardens at the Meilahti Arboretum and the Winter Garden. Knowledgeable Park Pals can also serve as guides in Helsinki's special parks and as Lapp Hut Pals at the Utela recreational area.

### MAIN TASK

(does not require supervision)

- cleaning up litter

### OTHER POSSIBLE TASKS

(as agreed with the Volunteer coordinator)

- weeding
- raking
- removing invasive species
- removing water sprouts from trees
- trimming and weeding around trees
- watering
- snow shovelling
- removing sand from paths after winter
- helping out at events
- removing brushwood from forests
- planting flowers
- trimming shrubs and bushes



Park Pals may also do non-physical work, such as carrying out campaigns to prevent littering and enlighten residents to care for the city's green areas. This kind of work should be carried out with a positive attitude and together with other park users. Park Pals should make it clear that they are volunteering as Park Pals when doing this kind of work.

Lapp Hut Pals in turn work at the Uutela recreational area, watching over the fire in the Lapp hut and preventing vandalism. If you are interested in serving as a Lapp Hut Pal, contact the Volunteer coordinator.

Park Pals can also assist at events that are organised in public areas, including major national and international gatherings, as well as local happenings. For example, Park Pals have already helped out at the Kallio Block Party and the international gymnastics event Gymnaestrada. The Volunteer coordinator notifies Parks Pals by e-mail, as well as on the Park Pals' Facebook page and Good Things Grow in Helsinki website, whenever volunteers are needed for events and who they should contact. Website addresses are listed on page 20.



If you have any ideas about how the Park Pals programme could be expanded and would like to do something that is not mentioned in this handbook, please do not hesitate to contact the Volunteer coordinator. Your proposal may very well lead to action.

## Safety

Always observe prudence and diligence to make sure that you don't endanger yourself or others.

The Park Pals safety vest should always be worn when doing volunteer work. This is also a good way of identifying yourself as a Park Pal to other residents, especially when doing more than just picking up litter, for example when tending to summer flowers. Wearing the safety vest is mandatory when working near traffic and along streets.

Park Pals are not provided with motorised equipment for safety reasons. Park Pals may use their own tools, including motorised equipment, but it is essential that you have the appropriate protective gear and insurance. The use of motorised equipment must always be agreed in advance together with the Volunteer coordinator or your Park Pals Supervisor.

When picking up litter, be careful of sharp objects, especially glass and syringes. Never touch piles of leaves and litter with your hands. Use a rake or litter pickers instead.

We recommend that you carry a bottle or other closable container with you in case you find syringes. Use your litter pickers to place them inside the bottle or container first so that no one else is accidentally pricked when handling the trash bags. Bottles or containers containing syringes can be disposed of in mixed waste trash bags. If you do not have a suitable bottle or container, leave the syringes where they are and notify your supervisor or the Volunteer coordinator about their location. If there is a syringe disposal bin in the vicinity, you can use it to dispose of the syringes, but avoid carrying unprotected syringes for long distances.



## Insurance and liability

Registered volunteers are covered by the City of Helsinki's group accident insurance when working as Park Pals. The insurance covers medical costs within the public health system, such as fees for health centres, polyclinics and hospitals. Pharmaceutical and travel expenses are also covered. The insurance does not include liability insurance, i.e. it does not cover damage or injury caused to a third party.

The insurance does cover injuries caused by dog and snake bites, as well as stings by bees and wasps, but it does not cover against tick bites.

If you are injured while working as a volunteer and your injury incurs medical costs, notify the Volunteer coordinator immediately. The Volunteer coordinator will then provide you with a claim form to fill in for insurance purposes. Park Pals should first pay medical costs themselves and then apply for compensation by showing receipts.

Park Pals are not liable for compensation for broken tools or equipment. New litter pickers and safety vests can be picked up from Customer Service. If any tools or equipment borrowed from Stara or a contractor is broken while working, notify your Park Pals Supervisor.



## Record your hours in your Park Pals calendar

Since most Park Pals work independently, we recommend that you record the number of hours you have volunteered in the *Park Pals calendar* that is sent to all Park Pals before the start of each year. In this way the Urban Environment Division can demonstrate the added value that the Park Pals programme brings to the City of Helsinki. This is important for ensuring that the Park Pals programme is appreciated, that its impact is understood and that its activities continue to be resourced. Information about the amount of volunteer work that has been performed is also important for measuring the success of Helsinki's policy of inclusion.

We therefore kindly ask all Park Pals to notify the Volunteer coordinator once a year of how many hours they have worked. You can submit your working hours and other feedback by e-mail, phone or text message, or you can fill in the notification form that is included inside the calendar and send it by post. Postage is free of charge. All the Park Pals who have submitted their working hours will get an invitation to the annual end-of-year celebration event. Preferably, submit your working hours at the end of the year.

## Hyvä puistokummi!

Helsingin kaupunki arvostaa puistokummien tekemää työtä. Se lisää ympäristömme kauneutta ja viihtyvyyttä. Kaupunkiympäristö haluaa tehdä työn näkyväksi ja kertoa siitä päättäjille ja mediaille.

Puistokummikalenteriin 2019 toivomme sinun merkitsevän puistoissa tekemäsi työtunnit. Työtunnit ovat näkyvyyden mittari. Palautteenantajat saavat kutsun vuoden 2020 joulujuhlaan loka-marraskuun. Lähetä palaute tammikuun 2020 loppuun mennessä.

Puistokummitoiminta: [www.hyvakasvaa.fi](http://www.hyvakasvaa.fi)

Puistokävelyt: [www.vihreasyliit.fi](http://www.vihreasyliit.fi)

Palaute: [www.hel.fi/kaupunkiymparisto/fi/yhteystiedot/](http://www.hel.fi/kaupunkiymparisto/fi/yhteystiedot/) Anna palautetta

Fanita puistoja: [www.facebook.com/puistot](https://www.facebook.com/puistot)

Kalenterin tekstit:

[www.vieraslajit.fi](http://www.vieraslajit.fi)

Tiina Parkkima, Armi Koskela

NIMIPÄIVÄT © HELSINGIN YLIOPISTON ALMANAKKATOIMISTO



HYVÄ PUUSTOKUMMI  
ASIALLA



Hyvä  
kasvaa Helsingissä

## Puistokummipalaute 2019

Työtunnit yhteensä 81 h

Alue, jossa työskentelen KALLIO

VALLILAN PIIRI

Muu palaute OLEN SAANUT PALJON

KIITOSTA PUISTON KÄYTTÄJILTÄ. MINUSTA ROSKAAMINEN ON VÄHENTYNYT - JA KUNTONI KOHENTUNUT.

Työtunnit ja palautteen voi laittaa myös puistokummit@hel.fi, tai tekstiviestinä numeroon 040-7190824, 31.1.2020 mennessä. Täytä nimesi ja osoitteesi, jos haluat osallistua joulujuhlaan.

Nimi TERTTU TERHO

Osoite TORKKELINKATU 7 T 7

00500 HKI

Vastaanottaja  
maksaa  
postimaksun  
Mottagaren  
betalar  
portot

Helsingin kaupunki  
Kaupunkiympäristö  
Info: Hyvis  
Tunnus 5001629  
00003 VASTAUSLÄHETYS

# Useful information about working in green areas

Helsinki has many different types of green areas, all with different maintenance needs. The Urban Environment Division defines the maintenance targets for green areas according to their quality levels. Green areas are categorised as either parks, open areas (fields and meadows) or forests. Parks require the most maintenance and are categorised according to their quality levels as either prestigious parks, recreational parks or protective green areas.

Park Pals do not need to remember the classification of each park when picking up litter, and the Park Pals Supervisor or Volunteer coordinator is responsible for assigning other tasks according to the quality level of the park in question.

## Park Pals are “park agents”

Park Pals serve as an extra pair of eyes on the ground and are therefore a great help in looking after public areas. If you notice any damage to structures, furniture, equipment or plants in the green areas and along the streets, or if you find large amounts of trash, please notify Customer Service at the Urban Environment Division.

Also, if you as a Park Pal have any wishes or suggestions regarding our parks or streets, please notify Customer Service who will forward your ideas to the responsible person within the Urban Environment Division. Contact information for Customer Service can be found on page 20.

Park Pals and all other local residents can also express their views regarding the design and maintenance of parks at special information events that are organised on a regular basis. The City of Helsinki also has a “Voice Your Opinion” service that enables residents to express their views regarding projects that are currently being planned or under preparation. These opinions can be viewed by others, who are free to comment on them and vote for their favourites. The “Voice Your Opinion” service can be found online at <https://kerrokantasi.hel.fi/>.

# Brochures and business cards

Park Pals brochures are a great way of explaining to others what you are doing. Simply tell them that you are a Park Pal and ask them politely if they would like a brochure. If you are part of a Park Pals group, you can attract new members in this way. Always keep a few brochures in your pocket, just in case. They are available from the Volunteer coordinator or from Customer Service at the Urban Environment Division.

Business cards with the “Good Things Grow in Helsinki” brand are also available. The cards list all the websites with information about the Park Pals programme, volunteer activities and other resident cooperation projects. Park Pals can also hand out these cards to anyone who is interested in the programme. They are available from the Volunteer coordinator.

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO** volunteer in the parks of Helsinki? To register as a Park Pal, visit the Urban Environment Customer Service at Sönnäistenkatu 1.

**ON REGISTRATION** we will complete an electronic form that enters you in the Park Pal Register. You will also receive a Good Cause fluorescent vest, a Park Pal Handbook, a calendar for entering your working hours and an insurance card. All Park Pals are covered by a group insurance policy.

**Additional information**  
**Park Pal activities:**  
[www.hyvakasvaa.fi](http://www.hyvakasvaa.fi)  
[www.facebook.com/helsinginpuistokummit](http://www.facebook.com/helsinginpuistokummit)  
**Park walks:**  
[www.vihreasyliit.fi](http://www.vihreasyliit.fi)  
**Comments on parks and streets:**  
 tel. 09 310 22 111  
<https://www.hel.fi/kaupunkiymparisto/en/feedback/>  
**Park fans:**  
[www.facebook.com/puistot](http://www.facebook.com/puistot)

**Puistokummitoiminta ja talkoot:**  
[www.hyvakasvaa.fi](http://www.hyvakasvaa.fi) · [puistokummit@www.facebook.com/helsinginpuistokummit](https://www.facebook.com/helsinginpuistokummit)  
**Puistokävelyt:** [www.vihreasyliit.fi](http://www.vihreasyliit.fi)  
**Palautte puistoista ja kaduista:**  
 09 310 22 111  
<https://www.hel.fi/kaupunkiymparisto/fi/yhteystiedot/>  
**Fanit puistoja:** [www.facebook.com/puistot](http://www.facebook.com/puistot)

**Hyvä**  
 kasvaa Helsingissä  
 kasvualustan tarjoaja  
 Helsinki

**THE PARK PAL COORDINATOR** is an official who coordinates the Park Pal Activities. Contact the Coordinator if you want to know more.  
 E-mail: [puistokummit@hel.fi](mailto:puistokummit@hel.fi)  
 tel. 040 719 0824

Hello, I am a Park Pal!  
 Do you want to know more?

Helsinki

**Good things**  
 grow in Helsinki  
**HYVÄLLÄ ASIALLA**

# Volunteer activities

Each year the City of Helsinki organises various kinds of volunteer activities together with partners. All residents are invited to participate in these activities, including Park Pals. Volunteer activities include, for example, raking leaves, maintaining streams, weeding, hay harvesting and spring cleaning.

- **Spring cleaning activities** are organised each year in April-May, when all residents are invited to organise spring cleaning activities in their own public areas. These activities focus on removing litter from green areas. The City of Helsinki provides the tools and removes the trash bags afterwards. Further information is available on the “Good Things Grow in Helsinki” website ([www.hyvakasvaa.fi/en/](http://www.hyvakasvaa.fi/en/)).
- **Shoreline cleaning activities** are organised to help keep Helsinki’s waterways clean. Information about the threat of water pollution and how to organise your own shoreline cleaning activity is available online at [www.itamerihaaste.net](http://www.itamerihaaste.net) and [www.siiستيibiitsi.fi](http://www.siiستيibiitsi.fi).
- **Stream maintenance activities** are organised together with the “Stream Maintenance Association” (Virtavesien hoitoyhdistys – [www.virtavesi.com](http://www.virtavesi.com)).
- **Hay harvesting activities** are organised at Tuomarinkylä Manor each year at the start of July. The schedule is published in the media and on the City of Helsinki’s website. These activities are organised by Helsinki City Construction Services ([Stara](http://Stara) – [www.hel.fi/stara/en](http://www.hel.fi/stara/en))
- **Leaf raking activities** in Kaivopuisto Park are organised each year in the autumn. The schedule is published in the media, on the website of the Urban Environment Division ([www.hel.fi/kaupunkiymparisto/en/](http://www.hel.fi/kaupunkiymparisto/en/)), on the “Good Things Grow in Helsinki” website ([www.hyvakasvaa.fi/en/](http://www.hyvakasvaa.fi/en/)) and on Facebook.
- **Activities to remove invasive plant species** are announced on the “Good Things Grow in Helsinki” website ([www.hyvakasvaa.fi/en/](http://www.hyvakasvaa.fi/en/)) and on Facebook.
- **Weeding activities** are organised by the Helsinki chapter of the Finnish Rose Society (Ruususeura) at the Meilahti Arboretum during the summer months. Further information is also available on the “Good things grow in Helsinki” website ([www.hyvakasvaa.fi/en/](http://www.hyvakasvaa.fi/en/)) and the Finnish Rose Society website ([www.ruususeura.fi/a-suomi/paikallisryhmat/helsinki-paikallisr.html](http://www.ruususeura.fi/a-suomi/paikallisryhmat/helsinki-paikallisr.html)).

Park Pals can also organise volunteer events, especially to help remove invasive plant species and clean up our green areas. If you are interested in organising this kind of group activity, please contact the Volunteer coordinator. Please note that the City of Helsinki provides insurance coverage only for registered Park Pals and not for other volunteers taking part in these activities. The location of these activities should be on city land and not on private property. Suitable locations can be discussed with the Volunteer coordinator. Work communities can also organise similar events in the form of teambuilding activities, for example.

## End-of-year celebrations

At the end of the year, the Urban Environment Division invites all the Park Pals who have submitted their working hours or any feedback the previous year to a special event to show our appreciation for your work. The programme includes a review of the year's activities, socialising, food and drinks, and entertainment. In past years we have gone to the movies, been to the theatre and listened to musical performances. The celebrations are also attended by Park Pals Supervisors, the Volunteer coordinator and other representatives of the City of Helsinki.

As a registered Park Pal, you will receive an invitation well in advance. There are many of us, so everyone who is interested is asked to notify us of their attendance so that we can plan the party accordingly.



# FAQ

## What do I do with the litter I collect?

- If you are tidying up a park, simply put the litter in the park's litter bins.
- If large trash containers are located in the park, use these instead.
- If the park's trash containers are full or unavailable, or if you collect many bags of litter, you can leave them next to the containers. Notify your Park Pals Supervisor about their exact location by the following day at the latest. Preferably, trash bags should not be left outside the containers on Fridays or Saturdays, as they cannot be picked up before Monday, before which they can attract birds and other animals, as well as additional trash.

## What are invasive alien species?

Invasive species spread aggressively and are a threat to our indigenous plants. *Impatiens glandulifera* in particular is a big problem. Other invasive species include the lupine, beach rose, knotweed – including Japanese knotweed and Bohemian knotweed – and goldenrods.

The poisonous hogweed must be removed by the City of Helsinki's trained professionals. If you come across any hogweed, please notify Customer Service at the Urban Environment Division to ensure that this invasive species is removed from all areas.

Park Pals may organise group activities to remove invasive species. These activities and arrangements for removing the collected plants should be agreed together with Volunteer coordinator.



Further information about invasive alien species is available online at <http://www.ymparisto.fi/vieraslajit>.

## What should I do if I want to rake leaves in my local park?

If a Park Pal would like to rake leaves in one of Helsinki's green areas, you should first contact either the Volunteer coordinator or your Park Pal supervisor. Any help in raking the autumn leaves is very much appreciated, but you should ask first where help is most needed.

In recent years, our approach to autumn leaves has changed somewhat. These days we prefer to let the leaves decompose naturally on the ground wherever possible. In this way they help improve the soil by providing humus and as a fertiliser. Fallen leaves should not be considered litter. They are part of nature and play an important role in the cycle of nature.

Our gardeners often mulch the leaves together with grass using a lawnmower or rake them onto flowerbeds. In places where the quality level requires fallen leaves to be removed, they should be raked into a few big piles along the sides of paths and roads so that they can be picked up with a machine. Small piles of leaves here and there should be avoided, as they require more time and effort to collect. Putting the leaves in plastic sacks should also be avoided to eliminate unnecessary plastic waste. When raking leaves on gravel paths, be careful not to collect rocks and sand together with the leaves. In natural green areas, such as forests and meadows, leaves are not collected or mulched but instead are left to decompose naturally.

## How should I respond to reporters?

The Volunteer coordinator is responsible for official communications about the Park Pals programme. You are free to tell members of the press about your activities as a Park Pals volunteer, but information and statements about the programme as a whole are the responsibility of the Volunteer coordinator. Should a reporter contact you regarding the Park Pals programme, kindly forward their enquiries to the Volunteer coordinator. It is important that media enquiries are handled in one place.

# Useful websites



## “GOOD THINGS GROW IN HELSINKI”

[www.hyvakasvaa.fi](http://www.hyvakasvaa.fi) contains lots of information about the Park Pals programme, volunteer activities, corporate sponsorship, environmental education, and guided park walks. The website is in Finnish, Swedish and English.

## FACEBOOK

[www.facebook.com/helsinginpuistokummit](https://www.facebook.com/helsinginpuistokummit) is the official Facebook group for Park Pals and is used to share topical information. Park Pals can also discuss issues and ask questions.



[www.facebook.com/puistot](https://www.facebook.com/puistot) is the Facebook page for Helsinki’s parks. It contains information about park events, such as guided walks, as well as updated information about the plants in our parks.

## “GREEN HEARTS – PARK WALKS IN HELSINKI”

[www.vihreatsyliit.fi](http://www.vihreatsyliit.fi) is a source of information about all the parks and green areas in Helsinki, with new ones added each year. The parks are grouped into walks, so you can access the site on your mobile device and read about the parks as you walk. You can even use your smartphone to listen to some of the presentations. The “Green Hearts” website is also in English, making it easy to present our parks to foreign visitors.



# CONTACT INFORMATION

Volunteer coordinator,  
tel. 040 719 0824, puistokummit@hel.fi

**Urban Environment Division, Customer Service**  
tel. 09 310 22111

<https://www.hel.fi/kaupunkiymparisto/en/feedback/>



## My supervisor's contact info

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## Clean Team

We're the Park Pals, yes we are,  
Hard at work in the city's parks.  
Mornings, evenings, whenever we care,  
We head outdoors to enjoy the air.

We have special tools to pick up the trash,  
And bright yellow vests that make us match.  
Being outside is important to us,  
And cleaning the parks is a must.

Just one piece of litter in the morning  
Can lead to a pile of it by the evening.  
So we clean it away as soon as we see it,  
Then everyone else can simply enjoy it.

So join us as a volunteer,  
Grab your vest and all your gear.  
Find some trash and then some more,  
You'll soon discover it's never a bore.

With your cheeks aglow and a smiley face,  
You'll be feeling good about this place.  
Anyone can join our team,  
If you like to keep things clean.  
A tidy environment is the key  
To happy people and a nice city!

*Lauha Pajunen, Park Pal*

