

Welcome to the May edition of the Volunteer Voice. The Volunteer Team would like to wish you a happy Volunteer's Week, and would love you to send in any photos of the amazing things you do as a volunteer this week. Read on to find out about some of the work our volunteers do, as well as how we celebrate you as volunteers within ECHO. Also within the newsletter, you can find out about events coming up soon, and how to become involved in them.

Volunteers' Week 2024

Volunteers' Week was first established in 1984, by what was then known as Volunteering England. This year celebrates the 40th anniversary, from Monday 3rd to Sunday 9th June, and is a chance to recognise, celebrate and thank the UK's incredible volunteers for all they contribute to our local communities, the voluntary sector, and society as a whole. Hence, the Volunteer Social event last week.



VOLUNTEERS' WEEK

40th Anniversary

Volunteer Social Event

Held last Wednesday at 35 West in Leominster, the Volunteer Team were joined by around 30 of ECHO's fabulous volunteers, for food, drink and chats. It was such a good evening, that they forgot to take any photos until the very end, when most people had gone!

The Volunteer Team hope that events like this not only ensure that their volunteers feel supported, valued and celebrated, but also that it makes you feel part of a whole organisation, rather than just part of the project you volunteer at.



Feedback from volunteers following the event, included

“It was great to meet volunteers from other projects but also from Eaton Barn where I volunteer! Not met a few of the Eaton Barn volunteers before so that was really good.”

“So nice to have a get together and a chat with people, the food was great and 35 West is fabulous!”

“Thanks for organising this event, we should do more together as volunteers. I know Studio Mirai often go out together socially, I will have to organise something at my project.”



But why do people volunteer and what are the benefits of volunteering?

What Roz has seen over the last 3 years of recruiting and inducting volunteers, is that people always have their own reason for volunteering. This ranges from being new to the area and wanting to get to know your local community, undertaking work experience to help with future employment or to fulfil volunteer hours for work, school, college or university, wanting to earn the benefits you receive from the DWP, needing to find a new normal after bereavement, and most often seen, to improve confidence, self esteem, and mental health, and to reduce levels of loneliness and isolation. And of course, the age old reason of wanting to help others and give back to your community.

This mirrors the national findings, which show that volunteering most definitely improves wellbeing.

- Volunteers feel they benefit from their volunteering in a number of ways, with enjoyment being the highest rated (93%). Those who volunteer frequently particularly feel these benefits.
- The majority of volunteers feel like they make a difference through their volunteering (90%), and they most commonly feel they make a difference to an individual's life (47%) or a particular group of people or issue in society (44%).
- Many report social benefits from their volunteering. Almost nine in ten volunteers say they have met new people. Young people aged 18–24 (77%) and 25–34 (76%) are the age groups most likely to say their volunteering helped them feel less isolated.
- Over three-quarters of volunteers (77%) reported that volunteering improved their mental health and wellbeing. This benefit was more widespread than physical health benefits (53%).

NCVO (2019) 'Time Well Spent' survey

Threads Through Creation

5th June to 18th July 2024 at The Priory Church.


‘Threads through Creation’ is a community festival based around 12 amazing embroidered panels by Jacqui Parkinson, based on the story of creation from the Old Testament. Organised by Priory Arts on behalf of Leominster Priory, the celebration seeks to be inclusive, inviting those who visit to develop their own response to the art work and supporting activities.

Starting this Thursday and every Thursday up until July 18th, from 10:30am—12:30pm, the Volunteer Team will be at The Priory Church running free craft sessions based on the Threads through Creation panels. To kick off our sessions, you can come and learn how to create a circular weaving, as shown below, with one started by Roz. If she can do it, then anyone can!

The circular weaving is inspired by Panel 1 where Trinity is depicted in one huge spiral, and Panel 3, showing the sky at night, a circular sun and moon and the Trinity at its centre. A circular loom will be provided, and you can be as creative as you want with the coloured threads chosen. Weave through strands of gold and silver to show the constellations, and to add the North Star in the centre.




Here are details for the following 6 sessions. No need to book, just come along. If you would like to help out with the sessions, please let the Volunteer Team know. Any help is greatly appreciated, especially with session 2, the stop motion filming activity.




Session 2

Let there be Light!

Panel 2 is the muse for our 'Let there be Light!' art activity. This mirrors the silhouette theme of dark and light existing together, using shadow puppets and light to make a stop motion film of the story of Creation. Work as a group to write your play, make shadow art props to set the scene and film your story. This will be shown on a loop through the rest of the art sessions, and you can show your friends and family your finished art project, which will be emailed to you following the session.


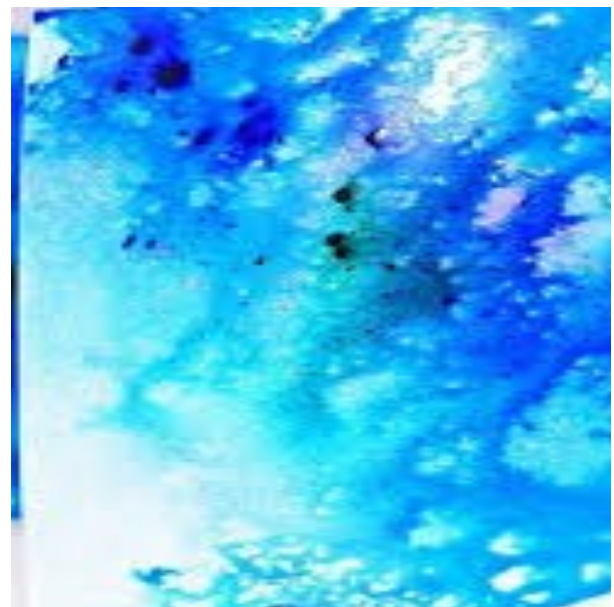




Session 3

Water of Life

Come and join us for oil painting on water, where you use your art to make a bookmark and card to take home. You can also make a beautiful sensory bottle, filled with glittery stars and snowflakes to portray the magical ice crystals stitched into Panel 3, or add coloured ink to the water in your bottle to show the skies full of rain, the churning seas and thunderous waterfalls of the Panel. As with snowflakes, no two are ever the same, so come and create some unique art with us.



Session 4 Earth's garden

This session illustrates the theme in Panel 4 where the Creator covered the world in miraculous vegetation. In this session, you will be able to plant seeds to take home where you can watch the plant cycle of life, shown by seeds and leaves around the edge of Panel 4. Take advantage of the bountiful nature around Priory Church, by collecting leaves, twigs moss and whatever else you may find to create your own bug hotel to take home. Find some peace by raking patterns into our Zen Garden, made from local soil, and we will take photos of your patterns for you to collect at a later point and take home to use to make your own collage if you want to.



Session 5 Reflections in nature

These activities celebrate Panel 10, through reflections in nature. You can join us to make symmetry paintings, colour in mandalas and collect leaves, moss and whatever else you come across from outside to create a nature collage. You can also take rubbings of trees, leaves, and other natural wonders to form the basis of your collage or to make a card from. There will also be a side activity where you can use mirrors in water to see the reflection of anything you find outside, or even draw a self portrait of yourself from your reflection!



Session 6 Animal patterns

You can choose from a selection of premade clay tiles covered in different animal patterns or footprints to paint representing the colourful animals, birds, and fish in Panel 6. Maybe you will choose the scales of a flying fish, the tentacles of an octopus, the feathers of a macaw or the shell of a turtle.

Make your own ink stamper with animals or animal patterns carved into it to take home or travel over our floor art to show the motion and prints of humans as living creatures.

Wallpaper covered in plastic with blobs of paints in between will be fixed to the floor, so this is an activity accessible for small feet, big feet and wheelchairs.

Photographs of this installation will be taken, and if you would like to see the finished artwork, we can email it to you.



Session 7 Angels

Based on Panel 12, where the tree of life is guarded by angels, please join us to make an angel. There will be different art activities to choose from. You could make a paper angel, paint a premade clay angel adding shimmery gossamer wings and a glittery halo, or stitch an angel made from fabric. Decorate a feather and write your wishes and hopes for the future and be interviewed on film about what you have written.



This will be our last art session, so please make sure to come and collect anything you have made that you did not take home with you originally.

Pop Up Shop this Week!

Clever Betsy and the ECHO Weavers are all ready and set up for a week of selling! Pop along to their Pop Up Shop downstairs at Leominster Library.

Open 9:30am—3:30pm on:

Monday June 3rd

Tuesday June 4th

Thursday June 6th and Friday June 7th.

(Card payment is available)



ECHO Colourfest 2024!

This Saturday!

10am

At the Grange in Leominster

Come and have paint thrown at you by the Volunteer Team as you run/ walk past them.

(Be assured, they will be covered in paint too!)

Arrange a team within your project or bring you family and friends.

It will be a beautifully colourful day.



Scan here to book
your tickets now!

