

Monthly Newsletter



MALVERN HILLS VOLUNTEERING

March 2025



New community recognition scheme celebrates local heroes

A new recognition scheme has been launched to help celebrate residents who go above and beyond within the local community. The scheme aims to shine a light on individuals, teams or businesses in the district that make a difference to their community and the lives of those around them.

The council is asking residents to come forward and nominate their local heroes to help celebrate them and all that they do. Those nominated will receive a letter of thanks and a special keepsake from Cllr Daniel Walton, Chairman of Malvern Hills District Council.

Nominees can also be entered into a prize draw to win a pair of tickets to a special community celebration event, taking place in June 2025.

Visit <https://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/community/connected-communities/connected-communities-celebration> for more information, criteria, and to nominate.

It has also posted about it on Facebook, feel free to share the details and encourage volunteers to take part.

In this newsletter you can expect:

Celebrating volunteers

Volunteer references

Branding changes

Volunteer handbook

Spring has sprung

Find out more

Sam Palmer
Volunteer Manager



Creating consistency in branding

Community Action offices have had the same red and yellow branding for many years and it was definitely time to make some changes.

Last year, with the launch of our new website, we created a new brand image, taking in the Malvern Hills and a more neutral colour palette.

Over the last 6 months we have been working through changing our externally facing image, to include the new logo. We've been working with a local graphic designer and print service, to create signs and vehicle wraps.

We've had a great response to the new branding with plenty of positive comments. Next time you are walking past, call in and we will put the kettle on!

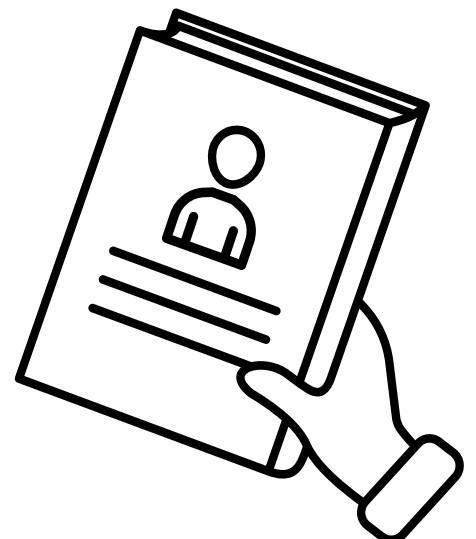
Volunteer handbooks

A recent project I have been working in, is to look at all elements of volunteering and check processes and paperwork.

I've been putting together a new volunteer handbook, for all volunteers, as well as an appendix for admin volunteers and volunteer drivers.

If you are a small community group that doesn't have a volunteer handbook, get in touch and I will be happy to share the document.

It's a great place to start for your own processes



Spring has sprung - it's time to bloom

When we think about new beginnings and a fresh start, we often think about a new year. For most of us, we make promises to ourselves at the start of the year; plans to change or improve ourselves, our wellbeing or our position in life.

In nature, it's March 1st, not January 1st, that marks the start of Spring, the start of growth and renewal. We stop cutting our hedges and we wait with anticipation to see bulbs re-emerge and buds swell with growth.

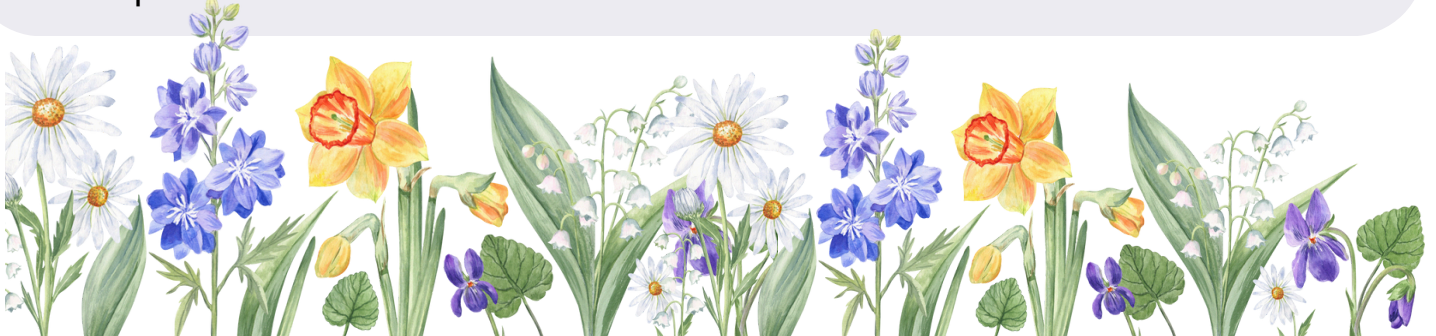
This makes it a great time to also reflect on what we want for ourselves, our community and the well-being of those near to us. To reflect on how to commit to improving our lives and those of others.

In my role as Volunteering Manager, I see first hand the difference the life of one person can have on another; the positive change they can make. We are talking about the transaction of converting time into positive energy, renewal of hope and an appreciation of being valued. Simply put, giving time to improve the life of someone else.

Every volunteer will know it's that's never a one-way process. Giving one day a month to support one other person doesn't just make a difference to their lives; it makes a difference to the volunteer too.

People volunteer for different reasons, but fundamentally they want to give and in return, they receive. For some, it's not a conscious decision to look for something in return, but the drive to volunteer comes from the feeling they have experienced when their own energy and time have been given to another. When they have seen the positive change their time can make.

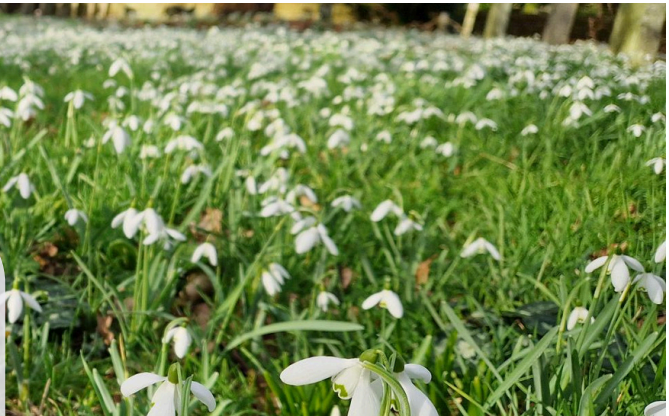
I was at the local community fridge recently when an unexpected delivery of pizzas arrived. There was a buzz of excitement in the air and a flurry of people arrived to pick up a pizza. There were smiles and nods of appreciation. A volunteer had turned food that was going to waste into positive energy and enthusiasm. That might seem a little extreme, but if it wasn't for the volunteers involved in that process, there wouldn't have been pizza.



The same example can be used over and over. We turn unwanted clothing into hospice care or dementia support; we donate unwanted goods to charity shops, where they generate funds to help others. Every transaction can't happen without volunteers. It's easy to miss the essential part of that process. Someone is giving up their time to make it happen; there's a transaction where time is converted into hope, renewal, support...

The need for volunteers runs right across the community, from young people needing help at sporting events, to youth needing access to appropriate activities and a safe space. We don't stop needing volunteers to support us as we get older. Whether that's a volunteer welcoming us to a new mum's group, or a volunteer to take us to medical appointments.

So this Spring, as you watch new life emerge in the garden, ask yourself what changes you could make to bring new life and energy to someone else in the community.



Volunteer references

We've been talking about references for volunteers. Like many charities and community groups, we complete a DBS check and ask for references.

I recently raised the question of references in a volunteer managers forum and found that many national charities no longer request personal references.

For many years employers have refused to provide detailed references and charities need to ensure that their requirements don't differ considerably. One way to work around any uncertainty is to include clear expectations from volunteers in the volunteer handbook.



<p>e-mail me for more information volunteering@communityaction.org.uk</p>	<p>01684 892381</p>
<p>www.communityaction.org.uk</p>	<p>112 Worcester Road Malvern Link, WR14 1SS</p>

Thank you for reading!