

Retire into action

Regional structure

I am delighted to confirm that Sylvia Carpenter, Regional Surgery Schemes Development Organiser, has agreed to take on the role of Deputy Regional Coordinator. Essentially this is a job-share and Sylvia will be authorised to make the decisions I normally take if I am unavailable.

RSVP West Region office team

We now have a very strong team providing our office support, namely:

Sue Hughes, Office Coordinator, also in charge of the new Office Procedures Manual;

Esme Nourse, Membership Database Updates, with support from Rob Freeman;

Sandra Barnes, Bookkeeper and Newsletter ('Volunteering News') Publisher*;

Rob Freeman, Membership Database Development and Maintenance; and

John Griffiths, Regional IT Organiser.

Please let us know if you have any suggestions about how the office could operate more efficiently and/or provide better services.

(* Please note the current Editor is Sue Silvey, and that Sue Hughes has kindly agreed to take over from her in the New Year – many thanks, Sue and Sue!)

Recruitment

Please spread the word amongst friends and relatives. Although most new members join via our website nowadays (including an online Membership Application Form), word-of-mouth is still the best recruitment method.

Also, we need **Surgery Schemes Organisers** for Bristol, Bath & North East Somerset, **Schools Placement Organisers** in South Gloucestershire and another **Lay Assessors Organiser** and **Lay Assessors** to join Ken

Dolbear and Jan Snook in their excellent Care Homes and Home Care work with Bristol City Council.



'Mina Malpass from RSVP West and Dawn Lloyd, Bristol's Quality Assurance Manager who supports our Lay Assessor Scheme in care homes across the city, manning the RSVP stall at the Celebrating Age Festival held in October.

Please let us know if you need help with recruitment: apart from the website (with a vacancies section), we use the national volunteering recruitment Do-It database, REACH (Retired Executive Action Clearing House) and a number of 'free' local newspapers and magazines.

Fundraising

If you have any suggestions about private or charitable sector organisations that might be willing to contribute, please let us know. All donations (however small or large – any amount very welcome!) go into the bank account of our local registered charity 'Friends of RSVP West Region'.

We are delighted that Simplyhealth has made another very generous donation to support our good works. They have been impressed by our highly sustainable volunteer-led model and, helpfully, have a very simple, unbureaucratic application



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process – very important for small charities like ours.

Bristol Ageing Better (BAB)

Aardmann Animations have produced an excellent video well worth seeing – available on 'You Tube', under 'Bristol Ageing Better Animation' or, for the more technical amongst you:-

www.youtube.com/watch?v=NK381zwvrrU.

Also, congratulations to our RSVP West Organisers Jan Snook and Ken Dolbear (in partnership with the Alive! charity) who have won the first funding obtained from BAB for supporting their Care Homes work.

And finally... Many thanks for all your efforts and the help and excellent support you

provide. We know that the services we offer are very much appreciated and, hopefully, bring enormous satisfaction to our members.

As this will be the last Volunteering News in 2015, may we take this opportunity to offer you, your family and friends, all the best for the festive season and a peaceful New Year.

Best wishes,

Bob Maggs

PS. Watch this very funny speaker at a conference on aging in California: he is a weatherman, but should be a standup comic.

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/LR2qZ0A8vic?rel=>

Volunteer Surgery Scheme Organisers needed in Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset and BANES!

We are already working with 20 surgeries in Bristol and some more in the neighbouring areas but we want to expand to be able to work with all GP surgeries. To achieve this we are looking for more Surgery Scheme Organisers.

If you are interested you will help us to contact GP Surgeries in your neighbourhood and assist them to recruit potential volunteers – from amongst their own patients - to transport or befriend some of their lonely and isolated older patients.

You will join an existing team of 4 enthusiastic Surgery Scheme Organisers and will also have regular meetings with organisers of other RSVP West projects.

There are approximately 25,000 isolated and lonely people living in the above area and organising volunteer befrienders for them is a very rewarding and important task.

If you would like to hear more about this role please contact:

Sylvia Carpenter
Regional Surgery Schemes Development Organiser:
sylvia.carpenter@rsvp-west.org.uk

We look forward to hearing from you.

Please help!

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RSVP Schools Project - making a difference to lives, young and old.

Our schools' project is going from strength to strength. We are now fortunate to have three organisers in Bristol, which will enable us to recruit and provide more support to volunteers as well as build closer relationships with our placement schools. We have recently branched out in to South Gloucestershire and have volunteers in primary and one secondary school in the Yate/Hanham area and are looking for an organiser to help build capacity. Meanwhile our projects in BANES and North Somerset are continuing to flourish. Our picture is of some current and former BANES volunteers.

Our volunteers are diverse. Some are retired; others combine their volunteering with part time or other voluntary work. Some are grandparents who miss regular contact with their own grandchildren; some have recently moved to the area or are recently widowed whilst others are looking for new activities to enjoy and which are purposeful. What unites them is their interest in being with youngsters and their desire to share with them their love of books, of numbers, of a language or other areas of the school curriculum.



Our aim is for volunteers to find a context in which they feel they can help make a difference to pupils' learning, be it in helping them become more fluent readers and become excited about stories or assist, for example, in the mastery of numbers. Volunteers delight in describing the pleasure they get from seeing a young child's face light up when they meet them. For some pupils, having another adult to relate to in school can make a big difference. Our schools are enthusiastic as they recognise how the presence of other adults with time to spare can play a useful role in developing pupils' confidence and social skills.

We are grateful to ABLAZE in helping prepare our reading buddies, and to Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire County Council and the Rotary in Bath for their financial support.

Joan Whitehead
Regional Schools Development Organiser
joan.whitehead@rsvp-west.org.uk



The joy of volunteering in schools

My first day as a reading 'buddy' at a Bristol primary school brought back vivid memories of my own school days – walls covered with colourful work, youngsters trotting around purposefully and that indefinable smell of school!

Each week I work with two year groups. I meet three girls in Year 5 (aged 9-10) for an hour – usually as a group but sometimes individually. Their teacher gives us an interesting worksheet that I help the girls to read and

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discuss. Sometimes we then read a book chosen by them. Seeing the same children regularly means that I get to know them well and can see their progress during the year.

After lunch I support reading with Year 2 children, aged 6-7. Each child, selected by the teacher, reads to me for about 10 minutes from either their current reading book, a book they choose from the school library or a book that I take along with me. These youngsters vary in their reading age and attention span (!) but are always delightful and great fun.

Being a reading volunteer is definitely a rewarding and fun experience for anyone who enjoys being with youngsters and helping them to develop pleasure in reading.

Judy Harris

Could you spare half an hour to talk to a small group of children about your job?

We are seeking volunteers to come along to our Hannah More Investigators group, which meets on Wednesdays from 12.30-1.00.

This is an informal, chatty group based at our lovely, busy inner-city primary school! Each week a small group of 10-year-olds are introduced to a mystery guest from a different professional background. Through careful questioning, the children discover what their visitor's job is - and what skills they need to be successful.

We ask each visitor to bring a couple of 'props', to give the children a hint about their job (for example, a visiting pilot brought an aeronautical map with him and a visiting nurse brought a device which measures blood pressure).

If you would like more information, or would like to get involved please email Ruth on ruth.cochran@bristol-schools.uk

RSVP West and adult literacy

Having fairly recently retired, and already being aware of RSVP, became a member. For the last 16 years I had been working as a Practice Manager in two GP Practices with the last one being in an area of Bristol with significant social deprivation.

I had anticipated that it would be challenging around the delivery of healthcare but one of the things that I was not perhaps so aware of was the impact of poor reading ability in families where parents were not able to experience the joy that I had in reading with my own



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children. That in turn often led to poor achievement for children in their schooling - something of a vicious circle.

Having researched locally I found that apart from the local prison, and a number of schemes aimed at helping children in school, I could not find any schemes to help adults. Within RSVP there was keen interest in developing this and I chanced upon a group called Read Easy UK. The approach that they adopt is sound with proven success albeit they are still quite small. However, the supporting systems, training and delivery process are well thought out and offered a ready-made scheme.

Being very practical it seemed to me that there was little point in developing something else that aimed to do exactly the same thing.

My only problem then was that there was not a Read Easy group in Bristol. Fortunately two local people, with the same aim as me, had started a Read Easy pioneer group so, with my RSVP hat firmly on, I approached them and now find that I

am Chair of the South Bristol Group. Not exactly what I was looking for but I wanted to get involved and this seemed a good way of getting started.

I know that within RSVP we have more volunteers who would like to get involved and there is a real need to get other reading groups established which calls for: -

- ✓ Organisational skills at Committee level
- ✓ Co-ordination skills for the group coordinator (supported by the Committee) and
- ✓ Very practical people skills for volunteers who would like to coach readers.

This feels like a win win for both groups providing much needed support for Read Easy and a new and real opportunity for RSVP volunteers. So, an exciting new venture for RSVP and I will be very happy to talk to anybody who would like to get more involved or would just like to know more.

Paul Mugford

01792407102
pjm590@aol.com

Dave Brown **Area Organiser, Swindon**

It is with great sadness and enormous shock that I have to announce the recent passing away of Dave Brown. Sylvia Carpenter, Jan Snook and I attended his funeral - there was not room to get everyone in.

Apart from being a very nice person (never a harsh said about anybody or anything), Dave was a massive champion of RSVP. He was the author of an excellent paper and presentation on 'Climate Change and the Over-50's' in which he pointed out that we tend to have the highest carbon footprint - flying around the world, heating our homes all day, etc.

Recently he helped set up, and chaired, the Swindon Older People's Forum.

Perhaps his most famous contribution was a regular radio program on BBC Swindon, with fellow RSVP Organiser Patrick Williams, highlighting in a humorous way the joys and trials of being an older person.

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Dave was struck down just days before he expected to attend our recent Organisers Meeting in Bristol - another case of 'the good die young'. He will be sorely missed by all of us who had the privilege of knowing him.

Bob Maggs

Tim Lloyd-Yeates

It was with great sadness and an enormous sense of loss that we heard that Tim Lloyd-Yeates died in July this year. He died peacefully at home following a long spell of treatment for Leukaemia. He faced his treatment with courage and much positivity. A large band of supporters willed his full recovery, but unfortunately this was not to be. Our thoughts are with his wife Chiara and daughter Kezhia who were with him to the end.

Tim founded the charity Alive! in 2009. It was Tim's brainchild, borne out of a deep, deep concern for older people and driven by a desire to champion dignity in old age, with quality of life, meaningful activity and person-centred care being matters of absolute entitlement for all. Under his leadership Alive! has made great strides, earning a reputation for innovation and excellence, and inspiring many to strive for change in the care sector. The work of Alive! now regularly benefits an incredible 7,000 older people in over 350 care settings across the West Country and the South of England. These extraordinary achievements are a tribute to Tim's vision, drive, skill and compassion.



Tim worked closely with RSVP-West on several projects. He was a keen supporter of the volunteering work in care homes and joined RSVP as a volunteer and later as a lay assessor. He jointly initiated an Alive!/RSVP project to provide training for RSVP volunteers in care homes leading activity/exercise groups and he firmly believed that Alive! and RSVP had much in common in improving the quality of life of care home residents.

On a personal level Tim was an extraordinary person who strongly affected everyone he met. His humanity, drive, energy and total commitment to improving the lives of older people in care homes was inspirational. The many care home residents and staff and others who came across Tim will never forget his warmth and genuine empathy, especially towards those people living with dementia. He was a rare person and he will live on in the service Alive! will be providing in the future, for all those involved with the charity are fully committed to ensuring this happens.

A terrible loss but a great legacy.

Ken Dolbear

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Victor helps Children's Hospice South West

Earlier this year I offered my help to our local charity - Children's Hospice South West which is based in the village of Wraxall, North Somerset. They had been given permission by Bristol Airport to carry out fundraising in the concourse for two months. This venture was extremely successful and raised £16,000 to help with the upkeep of the children's home.

This local charity needs lots of help to fund the operation of the home. I receive a regular newsletter showing all their forthcoming activities. If any of you are interested to help occasionally then I would suggest you offer to receive their newsletters via e-mail. The address is: claire.ewing@chsw.org.uk.



Victor Rawlings



Are you over 50 with time to spare and skills to share?

Then volunteer with RSVP!

You could help all kinds of people, young and old, in all kinds of places. The choice is yours and you decide how much time you can spare.

Use your experience to help other people in your community. You will have fun and make new friends.

We always need volunteers and volunteer organisers so please get in touch.

T: 0117 922 4392

E: office@rsvp-west.org.uk

www.rsvp-west.org.uk

Contacts for RSVP West projects

If you are interested in volunteering with RSVP West projects please contact one of the following:

Surgeries and Drivers Group

Dr Sylvia Carpenter

sylvia.carpenter@rsvp-west.org.uk

Schools Programme

Joan Whitehead

joan.whitehead@rsvp-west.org.uk

Lay Assessors

Ken Dolbear

ken.dolbear@rsvp-west.org.uk

Jan Snook

jan.snook@rsvp-west.org.uk

The Matthew

Ann May

annemay@talktalk.net

Knitting

Judith Cains

cainsie36@gmail.com