

Volunteering News Summer 2023



RSVP West Membership

Welcome to all new members who have recently joined RSVP West – we hope you will enjoy your chosen activity.

Unfortunately a number of members who had to curtail their activities during the pandemic have not been able to return. Please keep telling your friends and family about RSVP – we know that word-of-mouth is still by far the most effective recruitment method.

Please suggest a name (with email address) of any organization or person that you think might like to support us.



Volunteering News

The Editor, Pam Eastley pamela.eastley@rsvp-west.org.uk, is always looking for news articles, preferably with a photograph.

Please let Office Coordinator Hilary Roberts hilary.roberts@rsvp-west.org.uk have the names of people (with their email addresses) who will be happy to be added to the Newsletter External Contacts list.

Volunteering Matters (VM) RSVP Steering Group

Our representatives on this group Paula Johnson and Judy Harris, and Hilary Roberts have been heavily involved in the creation and delivery of a survey of RSVP West's Organisers. The results were very encouraging (see later) and have led to the release of a national survey.

It is great to see most of our activities returning to some form of normality this summer.

Finance

In the year-ending March 2023 we maintained a good balance between income and expenditure. We are grateful to have received continued funding from South Gloucestershire and North Somerset Councils, the John James Foundation and the Paradigm Norton Trust.



Happy Volunteering!

Bob Maggs
office@rsvp-west.org.uk
Regional Coordinator

RSVP West
The CREATE Centre
Smeaton Road, Bristol BS1 6XN

T: 0117 922 4392
office@rsvp-west.org.uk
www.rsvp-west.org.uk



Disclosure and Barring Service

Well done to all of our Organisers who are now using the online system for DBS applications. We've had a few hiccups along the way as we all became familiar with the technicalities but now the 'Dashboard' is no longer a mystery to us.

There are a number of advantages to using the online version:

Speed – applications are handled much more quickly than they were with the old paper form version. As long as there are no queries, DBS certificates are usually issued within a few days.

Simplicity – the online forms provide prompts to ensure that applicants complete the forms correctly in the first instance.

Efficiency – forms no longer need to be signed, posted to the DBS Co-ordinator,

verified, then posted to a counter-signatory in London before being posted to the DBS. Lots of envelopes, stamps and leg-work!

However, one of the greatest advantages is that applicants can register online for the "Update Service". Once registered, they will no longer have to do repeat applications after every 3 – 5 years. It is also possible to undertake other roles without having to do a separate application for each one... and it's free for volunteers. Apologies to Organisers for my endless nagging about using the Update Service!

Of course, we've had to learn how to use a new system and there's no escaping the need for computers, but we've learned new skills and become much more efficient in making sure that our volunteers are properly vetted.

Julie Parry DBS Co-ordinator

Fallodon Way Tea and Talk Group

The group meets monthly at Trinity-Henleaze United Reform Church and is made up of mainly isolated individuals who live alone. We are supported by volunteers including the RSVP volunteer drivers who transport our guests to and from the venue. Our meetings are an opportunity to socialise, have a cuppa and cake and often include guest speakers.

In April we had a very entertaining hour with Joel (The Hat Man) who talked about the history of different men's hats punctuating his presentation with some comical musical interludes!

In May we didn't have a speaker so we took the opportunity to reflect on experiences of the Royal Family (It was of course the Coronation weekend so was very topical). We shared stories of royal encounters including garden parties. By the end of the meeting we were all looking forward to the Coronation celebrations. In June, Aisha, Fallodon Way Medical Centre's Pharmacist, attended and gave an interesting and informative talk on patient safety and addressed a number of common misconceptions around medication and its use. Aisha was happy to

answer questions and join us for some cake once she had finished.

I think we would all agree that after the talk we were all more educated albeit quite shocked at the value of unused/wasted medicines.

Mina Tana





The Matthew of Bristol's Maintenance Period runs during the winter months. Whilst the ship was on the slip at the Underfall yard in December volunteers cleaned it's bottom etc and painted same with anti fouling paint. After returning to the water a small dedicated team of volunteers, lead by the Skipper Rick Wakeham, carried out further maintenance to get the ship looking as great as it does today.

This film can be viewed on our web site. It is about half an hour long but well worth watching. There is also a version with sub-titles.

The Matthew Trustees and Volunteers are looking forward to the next few months when it will be our busiest time with Gorge trips happening almost every other weekend.

Unfortunately we have lost a few volunteers this last year due to ill health, age, death etc and are currently on the look out for more, hopefully catching people who have recently retired.

The Volunteers we have are a stalwart bunch who give their all for The Matthew.

Ann May Trustee and Volunteer of the Matthew of Bristol.



Schools Programme

Many volunteers have now happily returned to their previous, or sometimes new, schools and in May we ran a face-to-face training session – it was lovely to participate once again ‘in person’ rather than through Zoom!

Last December, Angie Osmand stepped down as our trainer after seven years in the role. We welcome in her place Frances Roberts, an ex-primary school head in Bristol. We acknowledged Angie's sterling input at a coffee morning for volunteers from Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset in February. Other events enabling volunteers to meet and exchange notes included a coffee morning for BANES volunteers in March and an upcoming lunch there in July. Together, the events have involved around 50 volunteers and always generate lively conversation.

Despite the welcome return of many volunteers, the pandemic has unfortunately dented our numbers, although their input is still much needed. We are recruiting in various ways. Joan Whitehead, our schools organiser in BANES, recently arranged for the News Editor of the Bath Voice to visit Twerton

Infants School, to see the pupils in action and learn from the Head how valuable retired/semi-retired volunteers are to the school. Publication of that article has attracted several new volunteers.

If you know someone who might enjoy supporting young people with reading and numeracy do pass on our details and encourage them to get involved. Children and staff really appreciate the support – as evidenced by children's pleas to read with volunteers, grateful thank you cards at the end of term and even ‘high fives’ between children and passing volunteers in the school corridor! It would be great to boost our numbers back to pre-pandemic levels.

Judy Harris

**Angie Osmand
studying her
farewell thank
you card**



School volunteers in lively discussions over coffee and cake

In November the children at St Saviours Junior School in Bath were introduced to Archie who is a scarecrow who has been diagnosed with dementia. The children were all given a booklet and storybook. They learn that Archie experiences feelings of loneliness and isolation. They learn that even though older people forget stuff, they will still have feelings.

The volunteer role is one afternoon a week and the children are encouraged to chat to the residents beginning with asking their names and something about their families, the jobs they had, and what activities they enjoy. Some of the residents are more chatty than others and the children begin to discover

When they leave, the elderly residents stand at the window waving to them and on the way back to school the children say that they had fun and enjoyed the experience.

Karen Boutland

How do RSVP West Organisers and Coordinators feel about their role?

All our Organisers/Coordinators were invited recently to complete a survey on their volunteering role in a pilot study that was also used to shape a national survey of RSVP Organisers across the UK. The survey was compiled in collaboration with the national RSVP Steering Group.

The survey was received by 38 Organisers and 27 responses were returned – an excellent response rate of over 70%.

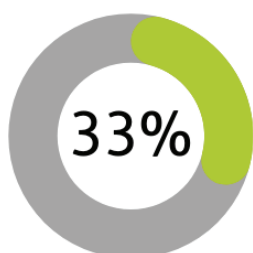
The results showed that most Organisers really enjoy their roles, with an average satisfaction score of 4.3 out of a possible maximum of 5.

The findings are summarised in the graphics below. We were interested to note that there was a positive response to retaining our name which seems to sum up well who we are and what we do.

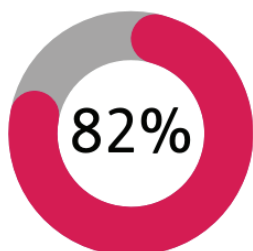
Thank you to everyone who completed the survey – the feedback will be invaluable in the development of RSVP strategy at local and national levels.

Judy Harris

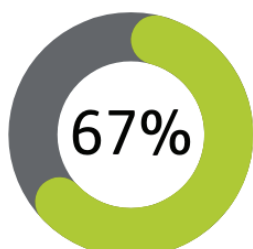
Percentage of survey respondents who...



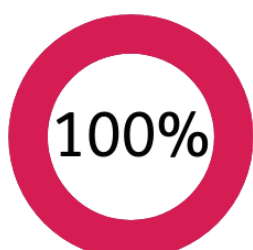
act as a 'front line' volunteer as well as an Organiser/Coordinator



feel that it is important that RSVP targets over 50s.



feel that it is important that RSVP is volunteer-led.



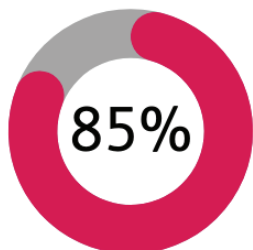
feel that the name RSVP is appropriate.



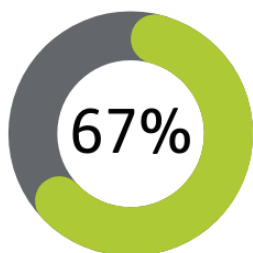
Continued...



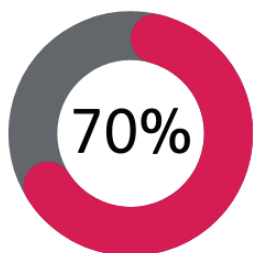
joined RSVP West because it offered projects they were keen to support



feel that the RSVP West website is attractive, easy to navigate and contains useful information.



know that the Volunteering Matters regional Delivery Leader is there to support them



have been volunteering with RSVP West for at least 6 years



Your local water company, eg Bristol Water or Wessex Water operate a register of vulnerable people who get extra help and support. This includes during emergencies such as loss of water supply, contact via a chosen method of communication or via a nominated contact, and waiting for the door to be answered if more time is needed.

Other utility companies have similar services.



8