

# Volunteering Newsletter



Central Bedfordshire  
**CHEERING  
VOLUNTEERING**



  
Central  
Bedfordshire  
Together

## May 2022

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## Cheering Volunteering



The role of volunteers in helping Central Bedfordshire through the pandemic cannot be overstated. There have also been hundreds of people who have continued their non-covid related volunteering, supporting communities and individuals through extremely challenging times in the last few years. These volunteers have shown what can be achieved when we come together to make a difference. Their commitment to each other and the communities they serve is humbling.

We want to thank everyone who took time to check on a friends or neighbours, especially those who are vulnerable or facing challenges. It might not be labelled 'volunteering' but without these human connections and compassion many more people living within our towns and villages would have struggled. These support networks have also enabled more people to connect with their neighbours and communities including people unable to formally volunteer.

Whether it is joining a litter pick or taking someone to an appointment, volunteering offers innumerable opportunities to help people and to also learn from each other, to build bonds and connections. There are so many ways to get involved in volunteering with people and communities to improve lives.



**We want to capture all the volunteering that is happening within our area with testimonials of why you volunteer and how a volunteer has helped you past or present. We would also like any volunteering photos we can share at our Cheering Volunteering Thank You Event on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022.**

**Please email all testimonials and photos to the Partnerships Community & Engagement Team**  
[Partnerships.CommunityEngagementTeam@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Partnerships.CommunityEngagementTeam@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk)

## Cheering Volunteering Event

Please see the poster below to share with all volunteers within Central Bedfordshire, we want to thank our volunteers with a free afternoon tea celebration event. This will include stalls with information. Come along and celebrate with other volunteers, to let us know you wish to attend please email the

[Community Engagement Team](#)



## Inspiring Volunteering Grants.

Local volunteering groups and organisations are being encouraged to apply for an 'Inspiring Volunteering Grant' from Central Bedfordshire Council. A pot of £5,000 is available as small grants to support voluntary and community sector projects. Funds should be used to inspire volunteering through the purchase of equipment or one-off costs that could encourage or kickstart new activities. Grant awards will be made from a minimum of £100 to a maximum of £1,000. Applications for grants can be made by any group or organisation, if the money is spent on a project within Central Bedfordshire and will support residents.

The scheme closes 20 May. [Details here.](#)

## Healthwatch Hunt

Healthwatch Central Bedfordshire have organised a healthwatch Hunt to celebrate Volunteers week, please see the poster below if you are interested in joining in the fun.



## UK National Databank

They say there's no such thing as a free lunch. But there IS a UK National Databank, offering free sims and data vouchers to those who might otherwise be unable to afford them.

Are you involved in helping the digitally vulnerable to get online?

If so, you may be able to access free sims and mobile data vouchers to help those in your community who are experiencing digital poverty. The pandemic has shone a spotlight on those who don't have adequate access to data, preventing them from accessing jobs and training, public services, information on health and wellbeing and the best deals on goods and services, not to mention keeping in touch with friends and family.

The Good Things Foundation, through its Online Centres Network, is working with Virgin Media O2, Vodafone and Three to distribute the sims and vouchers to help at least 200,000 people get connected by the end of 2023.

Community Organisations wishing to access the databank should be members of the Online Centres Network. It's easy to join, membership is free, and members get access to digital inclusion support and resources. To qualify for membership, your group should help at least three people per month to improve their digital skills, employability and/or health and wellbeing.

Members of the Online Centres Network range from community centres and public libraries through to pubs, clubs, bingo halls and even a fish and chip shop!

For more information, visit the [Good Things Foundation](#) website.



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## Beds RCC

**Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity** offers a range of volunteering and work experience opportunities, whether you are looking to get involved in your local community or seeking a way into employment. For information about volunteering opportunities visit their website [Volunteering - Beds RCC](#)



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## Community Voluntary Service

**Community Voluntary Service** host and support volunteers and voluntary organisations in Central Bedfordshire. You can register, search, and apply for volunteering opportunities, putting you directly in touch with the organisation. The Volunteer Centres can offer advice on the different volunteering opportunities that are currently available and may be of interest to you. To find out more, and investigate local volunteering opportunities, visit their websites: [Community and Voluntary Service](#)



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## Funding Opportunities

### Dementia Awareness Week

McCarthy Stone Foundation is pledging £10,000 of funding to support independent dementia cafes and clubs across the country. They are to award 20 unrestricted grants of £500 each to independently run dementia clubs/memory cafes, as part of Dementia Awareness Week in May. Priority will be given to those organisations

with annual income under £50,000 .

[Further details.](#)

**The Thomas Wall Trust:** The Trust offer grants of up to £5,000 to specific projects or core activities that develop critical life skills for people from disadvantaged groups. They will fund registered charities that equip disadvantaged people. Deadline: 19 September. [Details here.](#)

**Armed Forced Covenant Fund: Force for Change programme** the programme offers an opportunity for charities and Community Interest Companies with recent experience of supporting Armed Forces communities to apply for up to £10,000. Funding is for projects which make a real difference to those communities, helping them with needs that may not have been addressed in the past. Grants are being awarded for projects that reduce isolation and promote integration; Deadlines: 30 May; 8 August; 14 November. [Details here.](#)

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## CVS training workshops/Useful Information

**Carbon monoxide awareness workshops:** Dates in May, June and September **the Gas Safe Charity** continues to offer more of their popular and free carbon monoxide awareness workshops. Aimed at front line staff and volunteers, they help people who work in the homes of vulnerable people be more aware of the risks and to help prevent poisoning taking place. The interactive workshop lasts an hour [Details here.](#)

**Managing the risks to Volunteers HSE:** has guidance on how to manage the risks to volunteers which explains how health and safety law applies to volunteering and provides details on when to report incidents involving volunteers. There is also advice on including volunteers in your risk assessments as well as some specific advice for volunteers who manage non-domestic premises such as village and community halls. [HSE Guidance](#)

**Hiring Community Spaces: Community Matters** is undertaking some research to look at the costs of hiring community spaces across the country. It would be very helpful to them if you could spend a few minutes completing a survey, and all your information will be kept confidential. They plan to produce some comparisons about the capacity of spaces that are available, and also hire costs broken down by government region. [Community Building Hire Charges Survey.](#)

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## Supporting Ukraine

Central Bedfordshire is a place that welcomes refugees, and we stand ready to support and help families fleeing the country. [For further information please click this link](#)

<https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/ukraine>



## Share your stories

Every day we are hearing more and more stories of truly wonderful acts of kindness and goodwill gestures across our communities from individuals, groups, or organisations. Tell us who your heroes are and share your stories with us so we can share with others - let's spread the positivity!



Contact the [Community Engagement Team](#) or share stories with us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#)