

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY (IVD) 5TH December 2023

'VOLUNTEERING WEEK' UK 1st – 7th July 2023

What are these events all about? They are held every year in recognition of all the contribution that volunteers do in all areas of the community to improve people's life, and to say a big thank you to the volunteers.

The International Volunteer Day was designated by the United Nations in 1985 as an international observance day *to celebrate the power and potential of volunteering*. The UK's Volunteer Week in 2023 is in its 39th year and generally has themes e.g. awareness of volunteering, the power of youth and its influence in the voluntary sector.

People from all walks of life in the UK volunteer on all levels to improve and help communities in many different ways. This *volunteering is invaluable* as many would go without and life would be a lot more difficult for many others if volunteer assistance was not available.

Volunteering not only helps others but also can be beneficial to the volunteer's wellbeing also. It is human nature to feel good after helping someone out. New skills can be learnt by the volunteers and improvements in their confidence also.



It is quoted that over 16 million people in the UK did some form of volunteering in 2020/2021 and that most people have volunteered in one form or another at some point in their lives.

In the UK also there are many small charitable organisations and groups that operate in the voluntary sector, the majority of personnel in these organisations are volunteers. There is even an organisation, The National Council of Voluntary Organisation that looks after the interests of many of these smaller groups giving guidance on their operation.

These smaller organisations however operate in many areas of the community such as care for the vulnerable, help for those struggling to cope with or unable to afford civil and legal advice. Groups that help the elderly with transport and meals and other groups helping those less fortunate than ourselves, who have fallen on hard times and are living rough.

There are many volunteers operating in even larger organisations such as the National Health Service and some larger companies operate volunteer days making community improvements as part of their community involvement.

There are groups improving our environment such as the community 'In Bloom' groups striving to improve the aesthetics of the local environment for the wellbeing of the community. The list is endless.

The UK's very own National Allotment Society is mainly operated by volunteers with the vast majority of members being volunteers in one form or another. Many allotment sites in the UK are also managed, maintained, and improved by volunteers, protecting, and improving the nations

allotment stock for the benefit of future generations. Not only that they are improving the environment, providing fresh locally produced food, benefitting Climate Change, improving Biodiversity, well-being of many in the community and the list goes on.

It all boils down to that instinct and desire to help others and a will to improve what we already have.

Well done to all volunteers your work is invaluable and very much appreciated.