



The Town Hall, 35, High Street, Thornbury, Bristol, BS35 2AR. Telephone 01454 413392

Email: mail@volunteer-thornbury.co.uk Website: www.volunteer-thornbury.co.uk

Facebook: [thornburyvolunteers](https://www.facebook.com/thornburyvolunteers) Twitter: [@thornburyvc](https://twitter.com/thornburyvc)

Formerly known as Thornbury & District Volunteer Link - Member of NCVO – Registered Charity No1180775

Annual Report 2024-2025

For the year ending 31 March 2025



Monday 2 – Sunday 8 June 2025

Volunteers are the backbone of our community, driving countless activities and initiatives. That's why Volunteers' Week is dedicated to honouring and recognising their hard work and invaluable contributions each year.

Thornbury Volunteer Centre aims to build support from all members of the Thornbury and district community by showcasing volunteering opportunities and inspiring positive change.

As part of Volunteers' Week celebrations, we will be outside W H Smith on Wednesday 4 June 9am – 12.30pm with a display of opportunities. Pop along and see us.

As well as helping others, volunteering has been shown to improve volunteers' wellbeing. It's human nature to feel good after helping someone out. Volunteering can also help you gain valuable new skills and experiences, and boost your confidence.

Want to volunteer but don't know where to start? Chat with Thornbury Volunteer Centre and let us know what you're interested in. We have volunteering opportunities to suit all levels of commitment, experience & time availability, whatever your circumstances you could help many different causes. So, to all the new volunteers who have come forward this past year and to all those who volunteer regularly please accept our very grateful and massive thanks, you are the people who make our communities strong. To those of you who are thinking of volunteering we look forward to hearing from you this Volunteers' Week.

To contact Thornbury Volunteer Centre; call in to our offices in Thornbury Town Hall, open 10.30am – 12 noon weekdays, no appointment necessary; visit our website at www.volunteer-thornbury.co.uk and search our database of volunteering opportunities; follow us on Facebook or X; email us at mail@volunteer-thornbury.co.uk

REDUCED SUMMER OPENING

Our offices will be open Monday and Wednesday mornings only from Monday 21 July until Friday 29 August. Normal hours of Monday-Friday 10.30am - 12 noon resume on Monday 1 September.

Thornbury Volunteer Centre is run by a team of volunteers and a part time employee with the aim of promoting all aspects of voluntary work in Thornbury and district. A registered charity, we comply with the Charity Commission's aim of ensuring that all charities are of benefit to the public and the communities which they serve.

The Accounts

Copies of our annual accounts are available on request. The Centre's reserves policy is to maintain its reserves at such a level as to ensure that as at the 1 April each year sufficient funds are available to maintain at least two years' activity broadly at the level of 2024 - 2025, thereby enabling, if necessary, an orderly winding up of the charity to be achieved. In setting the level of reserves the costs of any statutory redundancy payments or other legal payments for which the Centre might be liable will be taken into account.

Volunteer Co-ordinators

The Centre operates with a team of Volunteer Co-ordinators who attend the office daily on a rota. The co-ordinators are the backbone of the Centre and donate their time on a regular basis. This year two long standing co-ordinators, Di Hancock and Carol Truman retired and Benedict O'Donohoe also left us from the Monday team. We send grateful thanks for their time and dedication to the Volunteer Centre and wish them well.

We have welcomed Haydn Stock to our Monday morning team and we hope he enjoys his time with us. To all past and current volunteers, thank you.

Trustees

This year two long serving trustees, Carol Truman and Pamela Grundell, have stepped down, although Pamela is staying with us as a Thursday co-ordinator. Between them they have served the Volunteer Centre for over 40 years so they will be greatly missed. Frank Tustin has also left our board and we thank him for his time and help whilst he was with us. We have welcomed Haydn Stock as a trustee and are confident that his ideas and expertise will be of great benefit in the coming years. Our trustees ensure that we operate within the guidelines set by our Constitution, the Charity Commission and the National Council of Voluntary Organisations.

The Centre

The office is open to the public between 10.30am - 12 noon Monday to Friday. We have a large database of current volunteering opportunities, both locally, regionally and nationally.

Paid Staff

Our paid employee, Kim Webb works 15 hours a week, part funded by South Gloucestershire Council.

Website and IT

Michael Quinion, our long-standing IT Manager, announced his retirement after almost 15 years creating, maintaining and improving our website. Michael stepped back on 31 March but is still volunteering for the Centre in an advisory role. You can read more about Michael on page 6 of this report.

Social Media

Our social media accounts help to keep us in touch with all members of the community. Volunteer, Pauline Szeiler, is responsible for all of our social media and does a marvellous job promoting volunteering across South Gloucestershire.

Publicity

We enjoy a good relationship with the local media, with ongoing articles appearing consistently in The Gazette, Thornbury Voice, local Community Magazines, local websites and e-bulletins. We have had regular displays in the St Mary Centre and we have a Community Spotlight advert on Thornbury Radio.

A Retrospective of 2024 - 2025

April: Spring sale

Our Spring Table Top Sale took place on Saturday 27 April in Thornbury Methodist Church Hall. We were joined by local charities, groups and individuals selling crafts, jewellery, cards, vintage items, bric-a-brac and much more. We held a raffle with a top prize of a Dee's Cake Shop voucher and tea and coffee were served throughout the morning with delicious home-made cakes. We raised more than £250 for Centre funds.



Carol Clark, one of our Volunteer Co-ordinators, selling raffle tickets.

June: Summer Award Lunch

As part of our celebrations for Volunteers' Week, on 11 June we welcomed more than 80 volunteers and representatives from 26 volunteer-involving organisations to a Celebration Lunch in Turnberrie's Community Centre.



This lovely summer event allowed us to say thank you for the hard work and commitment this section of the community has given, and continues to give, to Thornbury and district. It was lovely to welcome guests and treat them to a delicious lunch very generously prepared and donated by

Sandra at The Swan. It also provided guests with the opportunity to meet other volunteers and organisations and share experiences.

We were joined by guest speaker John Barnett, Chair of the Wotton and Thornbury branch of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. The RNLI was celebrating its 200th anniversary and John gave a highly informative talk on its history with some humorous and interesting facts thrown in.

The event also gave us the opportunity to make awards to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of volunteers in our community.

The annual **Alan Hudson Award for Volunteering Achievement** was awarded to the Over 60s Tearoom. The Tearoom was opened to the public in the newly-renovated Thornbury Town Hall in June 1994 by a group of town councillors led by Cllr Clare Fardell, to be an informal café providing refreshments at reasonable prices as a place for older people to meet and chat.

In recent years the Committee, led by their Chair Julie Hughes, have branched out and now regularly hold social events for their customers. They organise quizzes, fish and chip dinners and afternoon teas. Their customers visit regularly and are welcomed by the volunteers who happily negotiate the minefield of making tea and coffee to everyone's preferences.

We are more than pleased to be able to further mark the significant anniversary by making this award.

We also presented the **Clare Fardell Young Volunteer Award** to two young volunteers.

Riley Rees

Riley is a member of the young volunteer and youth empowerment groups at JIGSAW Thornbury. Through these groups he has been involved in volunteering, fundraising and raising awareness of JIGSAW's cause in the local community. He has achieved this through participating in the rotary swimathon, sponsored walks, golf days, helping in the JIGSAW community café, attending the launch of the Thornbury Town Council youth survey on behalf of JIGSAW and filming impact videos for JIGSAW's stakeholders and funders. He has also been awarded the Lions young leader in service bronze award for his commitment of over 30 hours of volunteering in the local community.

JIGSAW is immensely proud of Riley, seeing him develop into a conscientious, thoughtful and caring young man. His confidence has gone from strength to strength as he continues to advocate and empower other young people with additional needs or disabilities. Thornbury Volunteer Centre thank him for being an amazing support and fierce friend of JIGSAW Thornbury.

Lucy-Anne Nelmes

Every month since she started volunteering at the age of 15, Lucy-Anne has been baking for the Over 60s Tearoom. It came about when the Tearoom chairperson was seated with Lucy-Anne's family at a wedding reception. Her love for baking came up but how it was hard for the family to eat all the cakes. When she learnt that homemade cakes went down well in the Tearoom the association was born.

Lucy-Anne has since stopped her baking for the Tearoom due to other commitments but the Over 60's Tearoom are extremely grateful for all the time she has devoted to it and to her family who have supported her with volunteering.

Pictured right are Riley and Lucy-Anne with their awards.



Thornbury Town Mayor Cllr James Murray presents the award to Julie Hughes (left) and Sue Tustin of the Over 60s Tearoom.



June: Volunteer Fair

On a cold but sunny day, we hosted our annual Volunteer Fair in the St Mary Centre. Ten local charitable and community groups took stalls with the aim of recruiting volunteers, promoting their organisations and in most cases raising funds. Thornbury Radio played throughout the morning and Town Mayor Councillor James Murray visited and spoke to all the stallholders.



It was a very sociable and successful morning which attracted many visitors, resulting in more than £130 being raised and at least 33 potential volunteers coming forward, with many more people taking away information.

Our thanks to the St Mary Centre management team and South Gloucestershire Council for their support of this event.

Our stall at the fair, with volunteers ready for visitors.

November: Christmas Tabletop Sale

On Saturday 2 November we held a highly successful Christmas sale at Thornbury Methodist Church Hall.

We were blessed with good weather which ensured a great turnout of customers for the local charitable groups and individuals who were present. They sold a wide range of goods, including cards, Christmas crafts, and vintage bric-a-brac while also raising awareness of their work in the local community.



We served tea and cake to the visitors and held a giant Christmas raffle with donations from Tesco, St Mary Centre, Tesoro Lounge, Aldi, the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and many more.

Altogether, it was a hugely enjoyable event. Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who made it a success. We raised more than £450 for our own funds.

November: Christmas Lights Switch-on

On Saturday 18 November we attended the Thornbury Christmas Lights Switch-on. It was a lovely afternoon and evening, the weather was kind and Thornbury was buzzing with families enjoying themselves. We held a tombola stall and raised over £100 for our funds. We also had a visit from our new MP Claire Young.

Pictured right is our stall, with tombola and volunteers Carol and Penny ready for action.



Focus on Michael Quinion

Michael Quinion has been a volunteer with Thornbury Volunteer Centre for 15 years. In that time he has dragged us into the 21st Century by giving us an interactive, person friendly website that has allowed us to reach all members of the community which we serve. Michael retired officially from the post of Webmaster with the Volunteer Centre at the end of March 2025. He is however, still involved and is helping us greatly with the transition to our new system. We send grateful thanks to Michael for all that he has done for us and wish him a long and happy retirement.

I've never had a career, Michael Quinion recalls, just a series of interesting occupations, including helping to start BBC local radio in the 1960s, developing heritage-based tourism destinations and writing books on aspects of English language. The transition from one to the next seemed to make sense at the time. My rather expensive degree had been in pure science, which hasn't been entirely wasted.



I came to computer programming around 1979 through using one of the newly invented personal computers to run a public lottery for the Hereford Cider Museum, for which I was then curator. Much later I partly earned my living for a while through creating and selling shareware programs. When the World Wide Web arrived — I was then a freelance researcher for the *Oxford English Dictionary* — I grasped it with glee and started a successful website on the history and curiosities of English.

This led to my helping, as a volunteer, to build and maintain websites for local organisations. In 2012, Kim asked me if I could brush up the one for the Volunteer Centre. While doing this, it became clear that the Centre could benefit through computerising its paper-based systems. I built a web-based customer management system as well as mailing-list and document-sharing programs. It was pleasant to discover that in my mid-seventies I was able to learn two new computer languages to do the job.

I've officially retired now (at 82 it seemed about time) and the Volunteer Centre has moved to a new system with a wider range of resources and facilities. But the last decade has been hugely rewarding, working as a volunteer with other enthusiastic volunteers. Thank you, Volunteer Centre.



Safeguarding Our Digital Generation

Free online workshops on gaming and gambling harms.

Open to all volunteers supporting young people (11-25)

We're offering City & Guilds Assured training during Volunteers' Week.

Our training is designed to help you spot the signs of gaming and gambling harm, and know how to respond when it matters most ... and it's **FREE!**

When: 2 June - 12 June Online

For more information and to book your free place email training@ygam.org

Join us at a
Volunteer Fair
Wednesday 10 September 9am-1pm
in St Mary Shopping Centre

Visit the information stands of local organisations who are seeking volunteers, ask questions and find out how you can help.

To reserve a table at the Fair please contact the Volunteer Centre:

01454 413392 or
mail@volunteer-thornbury.co.uk

There is no charge but places are limited and will be allocated on a strictly first come first served basis

Our grateful thanks to the St Mary Centre Management team for their sponsorship and support of this event.

Stronger Starts

In partnership with



Award from Tesco Stronger Starts scheme

We received £1000 from this scheme after an in-store vote between July-September 2024. This will help us to serve the Thornbury community by promoting, developing and supporting volunteering.

Development Co-ordinator Kim Webb said "for a small charity like us, grants like this allow us to create a volunteering infrastructure which in turn builds a stronger, more resilient community. A massive thank you to everyone who voted for us".

Tesco Stronger Starts applications now open

Tesco are encouraging community groups, schools and their PTAs and children and young people (CYP) groups to apply for Tesco Stronger Starts grants across South Gloucestershire.

The grant could be used for a range of activities that support young people's physical health and mental wellbeing.

Applying for the grant is easy, you just need to fill out an online application form, tell them about your group, school or PTA organisation and what you need the grant for, Tesco will then assess and put your application in the pipeline.

CURRENT VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

Wednesday Volunteer Co-ordinator: you will help people start their volunteering journey and help organisations find volunteers. You will volunteer with another team member on Wednesday mornings between 10am - 12 noon. Must enjoy talking on telephone/in person to people from all walks of life and be computer literate.

Handyperson/Gardener: Thornbury Pre-School is seeking someone who can help with the maintenance of their outdoor space. No specific skills required.

Beaver/Cub/Scout Leaders & Assistants: will be responsible for planning and running the weekly meetings. Full training and support. Must be enthusiastic and have a love of the outdoors. Tuesday, Thursday and Friday evenings.

Female Befrienders: Female befrienders needed to support and encourage women who may have faced difficulties such as trauma, sexual and domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence and who may be experiencing mental health issues and social isolation.

Walking Group volunteer: assisting on short walks supporting older people experiencing barriers preventing them from keeping active.

Parkrun volunteers: Saturday mornings throughout the year. Marshals, stewards, tail walkers, time keepers. No experience needed.

Woodland/Grassland Management: A local woodlands group is looking for volunteers to undertake management jobs such as coppicing, scything, path building, hedge laying and bramble clearing. No experience is needed, just a willingness to work outdoors and learn new skills within a supportive team.

Drivers: You will drive members of a stroke group to and from events using your own vehicle, picking up within five-mile radius of Thornbury. You will offer a steady arm and may need to lift wheelchairs in and out of your vehicle. Days and times flexible. Expenses paid.

Conservation/Gardening: a variety of differing roles including; light gardening, historic garden maintenance, wildlife cataloguer, orchard maintenance and woodland management.

School Governor: School governor to support the leadership team & help the school to function effectively & smoothly. Basic IT skills needed, 6 full meetings per year on Monday evenings starting at 5pm.

Events Helpers: a small group of volunteers run events throughout the year to promote Thornbury, they need volunteers to help at these events, before, during, after. Could involve putting up/taking down banners, tables, gazebos, stewarding etc

Charity Shop Assistants: volunteers will sort, check and prepare donated clothing for display and sale. Good eye for detail. Couple of hours per week.

Engineering/Carpentry volunteers: local Railway Trust needs experienced carpenters or metal-workers to work in its fully equipped machine shop & carpentry workshop. Will be able to bring your own design skills to bear on repair/conservation issues that arise when repairing historic railway artefacts.

Contact mail@volunteer-thornbury.co.uk for further information.
These are only a very small sample of the opportunities currently available.