

# Community Action: Bedfordshire Central Beds Volunteering Newsletter

22 July 2020

## Included in this newsletter:

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- New/current volunteering opportunities
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**Community Action Bedfordshire is the accredited Volunteer Centre for Central Bedfordshire and Luton.**

*You are receiving this newsletter because you have registered on our online volunteering platform, Volunteer Connect, and opted-in to be part of the Volunteer Bank.*

[www.cabeds.org.uk](http://www.cabeds.org.uk) | [volunteer@cabeds.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@cabeds.org.uk) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [@CABedfordshire](#)

## Volunteering – what can I do?

Volunteering has been valued more than ever during the past few months, with local, national and international recognition of just how valuable volunteers can be to support their communities. Whether you were volunteering prior to the pandemic or have recently started volunteering over the past few months and want to continue volunteering in some capacity moving forward, we want to provide an overview of the huge variety of volunteering opportunities that are available.

**Whatever your motivation, interests, skills, experience, or passion there is a volunteering opportunity to suit everyone!**

**We are here to help if you don't know what to do or where to start your search!**

Admin **advice & guidance** animals **befriending & buddying** campaigning **cooking** community work **customer service** driving **environment & conservation** events & stewarding **finance & accounting** first aid & emergency services **fundraising** gardening **general & helping** governance & trusteeships **heritage** hospitals & hospices **IT, technology & websites** languages & translation **marketing** mentoring **practical & DIY** research **retail & charity shops** sport & coaching **supporting children/young people/families/vulnerable adults/offenders/women/older people** teaching & training **volunteer management** youth work

[Click here](#) to search current volunteering opportunities in Central Bedfordshire and Luton on our online volunteering platform, Volunteer Connect. To express an interest in an opportunity, you will need to [register](#) and create a profile on Volunteer Connect.

When you register, tick the "Volunteer Bank" option to receive regular our volunteering e-newsletters. Contact Kay and Karen on [volunteer@cabeds.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@cabeds.org.uk) for support.

## Covid-19 volunteering update

See below current volunteering opportunities from a variety of organisations across Bedfordshire. Some roles below may be temporary to support organisations or individuals during the current COVID-19 crisis, whilst other opportunities may be ongoing, and therefore may require a regular commitment.

### Organisations currently recruiting volunteers:

- Age Concern Luton
- Sight Concern Bedfordshire
- Level Trust
- Barnardo's
- Charity Shops
- Greensand Trust – Rushmere Park
- South Beds Friends of the Earth

Please scroll down to find out more!

## Bedfordshire volunteering opportunities

### Age Concern Luton

Age Concern Luton is Luton's largest charity working with older people and has been helping older people and their carers get the services they need, improve their overall quality of life, receive timely practical help, make their voices heard and make a contribution to their communities for 20 years!



During the COVID-19 outbreak, Age Concern Luton's staff and volunteers are working hard to provide practical support and also emotional support to older people in Luton by keeping older people connected to others through weekly phone calls helping to reduce people's feeling of isolation and showing them there are people who care about them.

**Telephone Befriending Volunteers:** Volunteers are needed to provide company to older people. We all know how lonely this time can be, so if you like to talk or like to listen, please get in touch! This is a home-based volunteer role (therefore you don't have to live in the Luton area) which can be tailored around your schedule and other commitments! If you are interested in this role please email: [volunteering@ageconcernluton.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ageconcernluton.org.uk)

### Sight Concern Bedfordshire

Do you want to make a purposeful contribution to your community and prove a real life line to isolated visually impaired people? An estimated 6,400 people living in Bedfordshire and Luton are affected by moderate to severe sight loss. Sight Concern Bedfordshire support people of all ages, backgrounds, cultures and communities through a wide range of tailored services and support.



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If you have an hour or so to spare every week they would love to hear from you. They have a variety of volunteer roles however, due to the current pandemic, their face to face services aren't operating at present and only their telephone befriending service is actively recruiting volunteers.

### **[Telephone Befriender](#)**

Volunteers provide a telephone based befriending service with a scheduled weekly call to chat about life, the universe and everything providing much needed company, connectedness, and information to people who are often isolated and alone. Calls which can be done from home, last for approximately 20 mins so you may speak to 3 or 4 people in one session. Volunteers will receive full visual awareness training before starting and the recruitment process and training is currently taking place on-line using Zoom technology. So, if you are patient, a good listener with an interest in the circumstance and lives of others we would love to hear from you!

**[Click here](#)** to go to Volunteer Connect and search "Sight Concern."

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### **Level Trust (Luton)**



Level Trust's annual **SMASH** summer programme is running from 20<sup>th</sup> July – 28<sup>th</sup> August offering 240 free places for children aged 8-12 to take part in the SMASH 2020 summer programme. SMASH is going '**remote**' this year, using a series of activity packs, food hampers, handwritten letters through the post, art displays and competitions to engage children in meaningful activity. If you would like to volunteer and help to make a real difference to children, young people and their families who are experiencing financial hardship and the many challenges of Covid-19 then read on to find out how you can support this amazing programme!

**Delivery Volunteer** - It all starts with you! We need to deliver 240 packs to family homes 20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> July ready for SMASH to start on 27<sup>th</sup> July. Each delivery will involve saying a brief hello to the parent/carer whose child is taking part, giving them their packs and a quick run through about what is inside and answering any questions they may have. There will be a couple of forms for the parent to sign.

**Competition Judge** - You will have the joy and hard job of judging all the amazing entries to the SMASH competition. There will be a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> prize and all children will receive a £30 voucher to spend on something that supports their learning.

**Letter Writing Volunteer** - You will be our ears, eyes and mouth, sending and receiving letters, there will be competition entries and post cards from children that tell us how their SMASH activities are going. Your first letter will welcome them to SMASH and remind them you are looking forward to receiving their first envelope. After receiving each envelope from them you will be writing back to, encourage, praise and acknowledge their competition entries and what they have told us about on their postcards. **This role would suit someone with experience of working with children ideally in an educational capacity (e.g. teachers, youth workers, teaching assistants with DBS and Safeguarding training).**

**Administration** – A volunteer is needed to work alongside the SMASH project manager to support with administration, such as sorting out mail received from children and sending this out to Letter Writing Volunteers.

If you are interested in any of the above roles, please contact Phyl Rainey ASAP on 07921 687178 or by email: [phyl.rainey@leveltrust.org](mailto:phyl.rainey@leveltrust.org)

## Central Bedfordshire volunteering opportunities

### Barnardo's

#### [Volunteer Gardener – Houghton Regis](#)

Barnardo's is a national children's charity that provides a range of services to protect and support the UK's most vulnerable children and young people. In Houghton Regis Barnardo's run a centre where families can connect with the support from trained professionals. They urgently need volunteers who can offer their time, skills, and/or knowledge to help with any of the following tasks to maintain the garden at the centre so that it is a welcoming and pleasant space for families to use, particularly during the current climate. The centre is open Monday - Saturdays and days and times can be flexible/negotiable to fit around the business needs and your availability.



- Grass cutting (using a petrol mower)
- Strimming
- Digging
- Planting
- Creating borders
- Tending plants

[Click here](#) to register your interest on Volunteer Connect.

### Could you volunteer to support your local charity shops?

With some of the lockdown restrictions beginning to ease, several charity shops have now re-opened and are welcoming new volunteers who would like to help in either the short or longer term. The Charity shops are following Government guidelines on social distancing – limiting the number of customers, staff, and volunteers in the shop at any one time and taking precautions to help keep everyone safe. Read on to find out which shops welcome your support as a volunteer!

Charity shop volunteering is fun, friendly and sociable. It is flexible so you could help for just a few hours a week, or more regularly if you decide you want more! There are a huge variety of tasks for volunteers, depending on your preferences and you can feel good knowing you are supporting a worthy cause.

We have contacted the following shops in Leighton Buzzard, but know that many are opening across Bedfordshire. The best way to find out whether the shops in your area are looking for volunteers is to give the shop a call and have a chat about volunteering.

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## Oxfam

Oxfam is a global movement of people working together to build a future where everybody enjoys equal rights and has enough to eat every day. The Oxfam Shop in Leighton Buzzard have opportunities for volunteer Retail Assistants to help in the shop with the processing and selling of donated items. During COVID-19, Oxfam's online sales have increased, and they would be grateful for volunteers to support in the shop as Volunteer Online Specialists. This role involves taking photos of items, writing descriptive text, listing items online and packaging sold items ready for dispatch. All volunteers will receive training for the role.



**For the Leighton Buzzard shop, please phone: 01525 854083 or go to: <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/get-involved>**

## The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army works with some of the most disadvantaged people in our communities, including homeless people, older people, unemployed people and those suffering from drug and alcohol addiction. The Salvation Army Shop in Leighton Buzzard are looking for volunteers to join their friendly team to help with all aspects of stock processing, there are also some temporary roles available to support over the next few weeks. No previous experience is necessary, and training and support is provided.



**For the Leighton Buzzard shop, please phone the shop on 01525 375669.**

## Age UK

Age UK have been working in the community to support older people, their families and carers for over 30 years. The Age UK charity shop in Leighton Buzzard urgently need more volunteers to help them with all aspect of stock processing particularly over the next few weeks whilst many of their regular volunteers are shielding. The shop is currently open Tuesday to Saturday.



**For the Leighton Buzzard shop, please phone: 01525 850289.**

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## Greensand Trust

The Greensand Trust is an independent environmental charity that works with local communities and landowners to conserve and enhance the distinctive landscape, wildlife and history of the Greensand Ridge and wider area, improving access, understanding and enjoyment for the benefit of everyone.



Volunteers are an essential part of their team helping to secure the future of many habitats and species and making wildlife and green spaces more accessible. If you want 'to put something back' or 'make a difference' then volunteering for The Greensand Trust is for you.

With the easing of lock down restrictions, The Greensand Trust are now resuming the delivery of services and considering how to involve volunteers at Rushmere Park in the 'new normal'. A risk assessment has been produced and a planning process is underway. There will be a phased return to volunteering at Rushmere Park with some roles starting sooner than others. Below are just some of the volunteering opportunities available:

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### Leighton Buzzard opportunities

[Education Volunteer](#) – The Greensand Trust is looking for volunteers to assist with our education work throughout the year. Join our friendly team of volunteers and support the delivery of fun, creative and inspiring outdoor sessions to children. This is an excellent opportunity for someone with a background or interest in education and who is comfortable dealing with children.

[Warden Volunteer](#) – Help to create a better nature reserve for people and wildlife by assisting Rangers to patrol and maintain Greensand Trust Sites and reporting relevant incidents.

[Practical & Conservation Volunteer](#) - Join our regular working parties led by a Greensand Countryside Ranger and be part of a team carrying out a wide range of habitat management and estate works on Greensand Trust sites across the Greensand Ridge.

[Visitor Information Volunteer](#) – Help to provide information for visitors, deal with face-to-face queries, sell items in the retail area and litter pick around the Visitor Centre.

[Heron Watch Volunteers](#) - Help raise awareness of the heronry in Rushmere Country Park, February to June when the Grey Herons are breeding, laying eggs and raising their young. Includes talking to visitors and recording nest activity and chick numbers, etc.

### Houghton Regis opportunities

[Houghton Hall Practical & Conservation Volunteer](#) - Join our regular working parties led by a Greensand Countryside Ranger and be part of a team carrying out a wide range of habitat management and estate works at Houghton Hall Park, Houghton Regis.

[Click here](#) to go to Volunteer Connect and search “Greensand Trust.”

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### South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth

South Bedfordshire Friends of the Earth (SBFOE) currently have 17 Bee-friendly areas around Leighton Buzzard and involve volunteers to help maintain these sites. The group are looking for volunteers with a keen interest in conservation, the environment and wildlife. Volunteers don't need to have any previous knowledge or experience, but expertise in these areas is extremely welcome! The group have now started to carry out some tasks and are incredibly careful with social distancing, with group numbers restricted in line with the current government guidance. Typical tasks include:

- delicate weeding
- maintaining established sites
- carrying out wildlife surveys

Further information about Friends of the Earth can be found here:

<http://southbedsfoe.co.uk/>

<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/groups/southbeds>

<https://www.facebook.com/southbedsfriendsofearth/>

If you are interested in volunteering to maintain the Bee-friendly sites around Leighton Buzzard please contact us on: [volunteer@cabeds.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@cabeds.org.uk)



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## Free volunteer training

**Alzheimer Society – Free Dementia Friends Information Sessions**

**Living with dementia** at any time brings challenges for those with the condition and the people close to them. Many face stigma and isolation in everyday life and the coronavirus pandemic is making things much harder.



Now more than ever, it is important that individuals get the help and support they need. If you are already volunteering and coming into contact with people with dementia then it's important to have an understanding of how it can affect someone and the challenges they and their carers might face, in order to know how to best support them.

Becoming a Dementia Friend simply means finding out more about how dementia affects a person – and then, armed with this understanding, doing small everyday things that help. Anyone can become a Dementia friend so if you would like a better understanding of dementia then you can book onto one of the new Alzheimer's Society free Dementia Friends online webinar or livestream sessions by [clicking here](#).

For more information please contact Annlouise at: [annlouise.taylor@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:annlouise.taylor@alzheimers.org.uk)

## Keeping in touch

### Keeping in touch

Please let us know if you have continued volunteering during Covid-19, or whether you have taken on any additional volunteering relating to Covid-19 over the past few months.

The Volunteer Centre team are currently working remotely and providing support via phone and email. Please get in touch if you would like help or advice on any of the following:

- Using Volunteer Connect
- Volunteering during Covid-19
- Searching for volunteer opportunities
- Contacting an organisation for an update
- Any other volunteering-related questions!

*Using Volunteer Connect during Covid-19: Please note that during the current Covid-19 situation, some organisations may take longer to reply. Many organisations may have paused their volunteer recruitment due to working remotely and having to adapt their services. We are working with organisations to try to keep Volunteer Connect as up to date as possible but we thank you for your patience and understanding. If you have any queries, please contact us on [volunteer@cabeds.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@cabeds.org.uk).*

Contact us on: [volunteer@cabeds.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@cabeds.org.uk)

Kay Henderson – Volunteer Centre Manager | Karen Hall – Volunteering Adviser

## Staying safe

## Keeping Safe whilst Volunteering

Always follow the Government [stay alert and safe social distancing guidance](#) even when you are helping others or volunteering.

If you are returning to a volunteer role, always discuss the individual risks and talk to your volunteer manager about the measures that have been put in place to keep volunteers safe.

If you are helping those who are self-isolating, please remember to follow the government guidelines to ensure you are only spreading kindness and not anything else.

To help keep yourself and others safe, please act as if you are a potential carrier of the virus and take all practical measures to prevent passing it on to others more vulnerable.

### Please remember:

- Only volunteer if you feel well enough, and are not self-isolating
- Always follow [government social distancing guidelines](#)
- Do not place yourself in positions where you may feel unsafe
- Always adhere to the latest government advice - [click here for more details](#)

### Government - Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer travel guidance for passengers

If you are travelling to and from your volunteering then please ensure you are familiar with the latest [Government guidance](#) on how to travel safely during the outbreak including travelling by public transport and other means. Other guidance includes how to wear a face mask, how to make a face mask, who does/does not need to wear a face mask and what to take with you if you are walking or cycling. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-safer-travel-guidance-for-passengers#travel-safely-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

The British Red Cross have prepared [short video and quiz](#) to help you volunteer safely.

This newsletter was produced on 22/07/2020 and follows government recommendations correct at this time. Please keep checking the [GOV website](#) for official advice and the latest information.

Additional information

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## Voluntary and Community Sector Job Vacancies

**Level Trust - Delivery and Family Worker** - £10.50 per hour - Length: Six months, with scope for extension - location: Uniform Exchange, The Mall, Luton, and various locations around Luton. Level Trust is looking for an active and organised Delivery and Family Worker to ensure children receive school uniform and learning resources. The ideal candidate should be passionate about and committed to, making a positive difference to children living in poverty in Luton. We are looking for a friendly and empathetic person to join our team who is comfortable working with people from diverse backgrounds. The time that this post demands vary during the year. It is ideal for somebody with more time to give in the summer. It is anticipated that during August and September the role will require 40 hours per week after which demand will be gauged on a week by week basis. This post is ideal for somebody who is self-employed or considering taking up self-employed status to supplement their income. To apply please download an application form from [www.leveltrust.org/get-involved/careers](http://www.leveltrust.org/get-involved/careers) or, to request a paper copy of the application form, please email [husna.rasul@leveltrust.org](mailto:husna.rasul@leveltrust.org) or call 07480 753 905. Please send your completed application form to [husna.rasul@leveltrust.org](mailto:husna.rasul@leveltrust.org) The deadline for applications is Sunday 2nd August 2020.

**GreenHouse Mentoring – GreenHouse Mentoring Manager** – Salary Range £22,000 - £25,000. An opportunity has arisen for an organised and reliable individual, who is passionate about helping young people in Luton, to become the new full-time Manager of GreenHouse Mentoring. GreenHouse Mentoring is a service for our Community and a project of Stopsley Baptist Church. Piloted in 2000, and established in 2002, we supply quality, fully trained, and screened volunteers from diverse backgrounds who choose to consistently meet, mentor and help referred young people in Luton. Our aim is that the mentored young people learn to take responsibility for their actions, improve their social skills, and become more self-confident and resilient. We are looking for the successful candidate to begin during September 2020, working with the existing Managers, attend training sessions from October to December and take over in January 2021. If you are interested, please apply to: Adrian Nolloth, Executive Director, Stopsley Baptist Church, St Thomas's Road Luton, Bedfordshire. LU2 7XP Email: [adrian.nolloth@stopsley.net](mailto:adrian.nolloth@stopsley.net). Closing date 31st July 2020.

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**Community Action Bedfordshire - [www.cabeds.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.cabeds.org.uk/coronavirus) - [volunteer@cabeds.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@cabeds.org.uk)**

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