

Our volunteer, Nicky, tells you what it's like to support Hebden Bridge Arts



How long have you been a volunteer with Hebden Bridge Arts?

About 5 years. I really enjoy it as there is always something that appeals to me and something that's fun and it's always interesting.

Why were you drawn to volunteering with an arts organisation?

To get in behind the scenes and work with professional artists. And it's great being in and amongst the community and being able to help. It's good fun.

I like working with the Hebden Bridge Arts team because they have great expertise, and make volunteers feel very welcome. There is a lot of support.

How does volunteering fit into your life?

Well, I'm busy with work and family but I'm given plenty of notice for shifts, so it gives me time to fit things in around what I want to do, and it's possible to be flexible. Volunteering provides me with a lovely change of scene.

Currently, I can do it at weekends and evenings. Also working over the Summer Holidays fits in well with me. At the moment I am not volunteering that much because I decided to go back to university. Come next July I'll have finished my course, so I'll have more time to get involved with things that are passionate to me, so I'll give more time to volunteering.

Which volunteer roles have you got involved with?

Event Stewarding where I get to do 'meet and greets', because once I put on the volunteer t-shirt, I am the 'go to' person, which I enjoy. I've been involved with exhibitions and art installations making sure people are ok and giving explanations about the events.

I've also helped as a Workshop Volunteer at a printing workshop assisting a professional artist working with members of the public.

Sometimes in these roles you get involved with health & safety when checking audiences are ok or dealing with anything that gets broken. When I'm volunteering, I'm always working with someone else which is a great comfort.

What tasks / events are your favourites?

Each role comes with its own skills. I'm good at arty things so being a Workshop Volunteer and learning how to do a new technique and working with other people is always good. But then again, I'm a people person, so I can meet and greet as an Event Steward and help people out. I love being able to share the information.

What do you most enjoy about volunteering with Hebden Bridge Arts? What keeps you coming back?

I love being a little cog in all the work that takes place.

I'm amazed at the preparation and effort that goes on behind the scenes, and all the love and dedicated work that goes into the community projects. Starting with the seeds of ideas, the organising team, sourcing and winning funding bids, the recruiting of artists, then arranging community workshops, then producing and displaying an exhibition or production. And finally, my small but important part is to walk in and introduce the work and help explain to the public from far and near as to what it's all about - it's just wonderful. I like the linking and coordinating between Hebden Bridge Arts and the audience. The networking that goes on is very pleasing – I enjoy that bit.

What advice would you give to anyone thinking about volunteering?

Connect with what you want to explore, and the talents you've got. Choose a volunteer role where you can have fun and joy and be part of a wonderful community in ways that you don't expect.

It's always unexpected with Hebden Bridge Arts. There can be an excitement and anticipation for what's new and unexpected around the corner.

Be up for having some fun, transfer your skills. Plan in advance for shifts. Be realistic. Ask lots of questions. Ask what you can contribute and what you can receive – it's a two-way street.