

Ron, volunteer

In 2023, Ron began volunteering with Hebden Bridge Arts for the environmental project *Open Space 70*. His involvement continued into 2024 with the project *The Man Who Planted Trees*, and he looks forward to exploring new opportunities in 2025.

Ron had several motivations for becoming a volunteer with Hebden Bridge Arts. First, he has a deep love for the arts in all forms, with a particular passion for photography. Since retiring, he has had more time and wanted to contribute actively to supporting the arts. Additionally, he sought to apply his interest in photography with greater purpose and felt that serving as a Media Assistant would provide an ideal opportunity to do so.

Reflecting on his experience, Ron believes Hebden Bridge Arts has fully met his expectations for volunteering. "Emphatically yes," he stated. He shared how *Open Space 70* featured some of his photographs in its legacy book, which gave him a sense of validation in his photography for the first time.

For Ron, a meaningful volunteer opportunity involves "understanding the big picture." He appreciated the clarity of Hebden Bridge Arts' mission, which gave him a clear purpose for why he wanted to volunteer. He also emphasized the quality of communication from the Volunteer Coordinator, Lisa, which helped him know what to expect from his role and feel prepared. He remarked on the welcoming atmosphere at Hebden Bridge Arts, saying, "It feels like a family."

Since retiring six or seven years ago, Ron's primary interest has been developing his photography skills. His confidence and abilities in photography have grown through his volunteer work with Hebden Bridge Arts. By interacting with people at events, Ron has become more comfortable asking if he can photograph them.

His involvement with Hebden Bridge Arts has also deepened his connection to the Calder Valley, from its people to its industrial heritage. Ron noted that his experiences have helped him become more familiar with the area. In particular, photographing walks for the charity has "opened his eyes to seeing landscapes in a different way."

Volunteering fits easily into Ron's life, as the projects he participates in at Hebden Bridge Arts are flexible and accommodate his availability. He finds joy in contributing and feels that the organisation offers meaningful and fulfilling opportunities.

When asked what he enjoys most about volunteering with Hebden Bridge Arts, Ron cited "a sense of inclusion, the diversity of projects each year, and the way the organisation involves the community". He also values seeing people express their creativity, particularly through themes that resonate with the Calder Valley.

In addition to his work with Hebden Bridge Arts, Ron also volunteers as a music photographer, with some of his work recently being featured on an album cover.