



Volunteer Centre
Swindon



Swindon Employees in
the Community Network

The Clivey Requires Fundraising Assistance for a Day-Trip

A team of six are required to organise a fundraising event for The Clivey user group - an organisation that provides a range of services for young people in Swindon including a clinic and drop in youth centre. Ideally there should be some input and support from young people.

The principal aims of the challenge are to raise as much money as possible and at the same time increase the profile of the organisation. The funds raised should then be used to pay for a day trip out of Swindon for the young people who drop into the Clivey to encourage them to think about the world outside of Swindon and raise their horizons.

Premises and facilities can be provided for planning the event and activity. The Manager or Trustees of The Clivey will spend as much or as little time as the team undertaking the challenge would like.

South Marston Infants School – Murals

This small village school has a very active school council (made up of the pupils) who would like to have their very clean and nicely decorated (but very plain) loos brightened up with some murals. They would love to see an under the sea experience in both toilets. Maybe a mermaid scene in the girl's and a pirates treasure chest, fish and a shark scene in the boy's. This would take probably six volunteers a day to do – three in each loo. Paint can be obtained from Scrapstore, or acrylics could be used, but they would have to be sealed with clear varnish to fix, as the walls must be washable.

Chippenham Scout Hall

This thriving Scout Hall is in desperate need of decorating – it was last done 15 years ago. Unfortunately, due to the height of the ceiling in the main hall, this part is not suitable for a team challenge, however, the toilets, entrance lobby and two smaller rooms would be suitable for a team of about 6 to do in one day. Paint is available for this challenge, but volunteers would need to bring their own rollers, brushes and trays.

Christchurch Cemetery

The cemetery around Christchurch is often used by members of the public as a tranquil and beautiful place to sit. The area is looked after by volunteers who would appreciate extra help in keeping the weeds at bay and maybe doing some hedge clipping and general tidying around the graves and paths. The facilities in the Community Centre next to the church will be available for the volunteers' use. A small team of four up to about ten would be able to make a difference in a few hours or a whole day.

Music Alive – Auction of promises

Music Alive, a charity assisting disabled young people to make music, have a challenge for a small team of volunteers to arrange and organise an auction of promises. Volunteers are needed to acquire promises to auction in order to raise funds to help the charity to continue its work. With the need to move soon and core costs rising all the time, the challenge would be for a team of people to organise, collect, collate and finally help to auction promises. Volunteers would go out in the community as well as directly to businesses and the public asking for promises that they can auction.

Abbeyfield Home (Bradford Upon Avon)

This Sheltered Housing Scheme which accommodates 10 elderly residents would like to have some funds raised for their 'social activities' (to spend on outings or treats). They thought a team of about six could organise a garden tea party at the home or even an 'African Afternoon' with drums and food to invite the general public to, with the aim of raising funds. This challenge would suit a team who likes to organise things with attention to detail, and with a small budget for publicity and basic outlay.

Wilts & Berks Canal

The Canal which is undergoing restoration at various sites around Swindon is in need of weed clearance both in the water and at the banks to keep the water running. The Restoration organiser would welcome a team of up to 30 to spend the day concentrating on one particular area. Refreshments will be provided, volunteers will be covered by insurance, and the area will be risk assessed prior to arrival. (This project is used to having teams of volunteers to help). Volunteers are asked to bring their own rakes and gloves and wear strong protective footwear, Wellington boots or waders. This can be hard work, but the results will be rewarding, especially knowing you have contributed to the canal restoration for the benefit of wildlife and all who might enjoy the canal.

Swindon & Cricklade Steam Railway, a registered charity run by volunteers has applied for funding from the National Lottery and now need volunteers to put some of the development plans into action.

a - Cleaning and painting and polishing. Trains are too big to go through the car wash, and need to be cleaned using buckets of soapy water. A number of steam and diesel locos and carriages need to be cleaned; some need to be sanded down and repainted; at least 12 track side signals need cleaning and repainting as does the station building and signage. There is enough cleaning and painting to suit whatever size your team is and you will be proud to know you have helped in the preservation of Swindon's history.

b - Track laying. The track has been extended towards Cricklade and is currently being worked on towards Moulden Hill. In addition, some of the wooden sleepers have rotted and need to be replaced with concrete ones. Track laying is very labour intensive and heavy work, and relies on team work in both lifting and positioning the sleepers and making sure the anchorage points are correctly placed. This would suit a small and very fit team of up to eight.

c - Shrub clearance and ditching. The trees, grass and wild flowers/weeds either side of the rails needs to be trimmed back the length of the line, and the ditches either side of the line also need digging out. There are two culverts that have silted up and need clearing out. A team of 20 (10 either side of the track) could make a tremendous difference in one day with loppers, rakes, petrol trimmers if you have them and gloved hands.

There are facilities to have a BBQ or use the buffet carriages for a social event after the challenge. For a reasonable charge hot lunches can be prepared and served (with kitchen volunteers). In some cases there will be materials and tools available, but depending on the numbers in the team and the challenge chosen, some tools/brushes/paint may need to be purchased or brought from home. In any event, stout shoes and overalls/old clothes will be required!

Cruise Bereavement Counseling Rooms (Chippenham)

Cruise Bereavement has three small (10' x 8') counseling rooms and an admin office which all look a bit worn and tired. A team of 8 could spruce these up with a coat of magnolia emulsion to the walls and some light sanding, primer/undercoat and gloss to the small window frames. No tools or materials or funds are available for this project, but paint could be obtained from Swindon or Wiltshire Scrapstores at a minimal cost, and brushes, trays and rollers purchased from the 99p shop. Care will need to be taken to protect the furniture and carpets from paint spillage/drips.

Riding for the Disabled

You will need to dress to get in a mess for this challenge! South Cerney Riding School have at least ten stables and the office/tackroom/kitchen area which all requires white-washing. There is something here to suit a small team of six, up to a larger team of 20 to make an immediate difference in one day. All the paint and rollers will be provided, however a donation towards the materials would be appreciated. Having their surroundings spruced up would make such a difference to the disabled riders who use the centre and their volunteer assistants.

Mountain Bike Trail building

This project will have enough to keep self supervised teams of up to 50+ volunteers busy in one day. Plans are in place and funding secured for materials to create this Mountain Bike Trail through some woods on the edge of Swindon on behalf of the Swindon Mountain Bike Club. This ultimately will be for use by the community and the club providing a venue for play and enthusiasts alike. Activities for volunteers will include digging out and laying the path way, building obstacles, building a board walk over a boggy area and helping make this path a great place for the community to use to keep fit, enjoy the environment and give everyone who is into cycling (not just young people!) a local park to use. There is scope here for the team to design and build their own section of path if they want to, or to follow on with the plan that is already in progress. Volunteers would need to bring their own hand tools, wear gloves and protective clothing. Please note that teams would have to supervise themselves and there are no loos on site!

Coleshill Estate – National Trust

This village near Highworth has a number of buildings owned by the National Trust. The challenge is to remove ivy from railings and walls, rub over the railings with a wire brush and then paint the ironwork with metal paint. This would suit a small team of 4 up to a larger team of 30. National Trust staff would be available to assist with this so long as enough notice is given. Some tools and materials will be available, but volunteers are asked to bring their own gloves and safety goggles. This is a wonderful way to contribute to the upkeep of our heritage, benefiting the local community and visitors to the village. Additional challenges are available here such as thistle pulling around the White Horse, pond dredging etc depending on the time of year and availability of staff.

Lyneham Scout Hut

The 1st Lyneham Scout and Guide Hall is in desperate need of being painted, gloss and emulsion inside. A team of up to 15 could do this in one day. Paint could be obtained from Scrapstore making this a low cost project if the team bring their own rollers and paintbrushes. Having their hall, kitchen, lobby and loos painted out would make such a difference to the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts, Brownies and Guides who use the premises on a weekly basis. This hall is owned by the Scouts.

Greatwood – Home for Retired Racehorses

Greatwood are establishing an orchard, pond area and vegetable patch as part of the Down to Earth project, which gets underway this Autumn. The area is being cleared and once this is complete, would like a team to help erect the poly tunnel.

As you can see from the dimensions below it is quite large, 14ft by 30 ft long and will take a large team of about 10 people between one and two days to complete. The area is being cleared and prepared this summer and we would ideally like this to be done in the autumn.

Details of the poly tunnel

- 14' (4.27m) wide
- 30' long
- 7'6" (2.28m) high in middle of structure,
- 3' (0.91m) straight sides - enabling staging & benching to fit easily down either side.
- Hoops - spaced every 6' (1.83m), made from 1¼" (32mm) O.D. galvanised steel with 1.5mm wall, heavily galvanised inside & out to prevent corrosion. Made in two sections with a central swaged joint for easy assembly & to prevent twisting.
- Ground Tubes - strong, heavily galvanised tubes to give firm anchorage. Also used for levelling the structure & tensioning the polythene cover.
- Cover - high quality UV stabilised 720 gauge polythene, with light transmittance of approx. 90%. Stretched over the hoops of the tunnel & anchored down by burying in a trench dug around the tunnel.
- Anti-Hot Spot Tape - long lasting, self-adhesive foam tape to apply to the hoops before covering. Provides an insulating layer between the steel & polythene preventing hot spots, which cause the cover to stretch & weaken. Helps prolong cover life by approx. 1 year.
- Door - 33" (0.83m) wide by 6' (1.83m) high single hinged timber doors at one end. Made from tanalised timber, ideal for water/ground contact providing protection against fungal & insect attack.

Colerne Parish Hall (in a tiny village near Box)

This is a huge challenge in doing up a hall, adjoining kitchen and another large room so that the local youth have somewhere to go, an internet café can be set up for community use (computers have already been donated), and the local Neighbourhood Link Scheme has somewhere to operate from. This challenge involves a lot of painting and decorating, and a lot of sorting out and organising as the contents of the local flea market is housed there and all the saleable items need to be better organised into glass, linens, ornaments, china, toys etc - and there is loads of the stuff! The kitchen wants gutting and the walls made good - new units will be available from the store manager at the local Wickes who has said he will donate them, and the floor needs carpet tiling. This will then be able to house the small library which is currently inaccessible through the flea market stuff! The big hall is currently used for Scouts and Guides, WI and any other community function needing a hall and needs some remedial sanding, filling and painting. This whole project could be done in a day - typical Anika Rice Challenge - if it is well thought out and logistics of who does what and how and when before hand! (Alternatively, smaller teams could just do a part of the old school building to make it more habitable.) Let me know if you want to see the photos of what it looks like now.

TWIGS/DASH office portacabin

TWIGS is a special place of peace and healing for people with mental health issues. At the end of TWIGS' pollytunnels is a portacabin which is used as an office by TWIGS and DASH (a group supporting autistic spectrum disorders). It is in a poor state of decoration both inside and out and would benefit greatly by a team of about 15 who could use their own brushes and rollers to give it a facelift! The walls inside have been stained by a leaky roof which will need to be resealed prior to any other decorating taking place. This would be a job for a roofer and funds to pay for this would need to be raised as part of the challenge. The outside of the portacabin is a dull grey and would benefit from being painted a nice green to blend in with the rest of the garden, (and perhaps have a tasteful trailing plant mural painted over it if a team had some artistic members). Scrapstore (which is just down the road) may be able to provide the paint at minimal cost. The biggest outlay for this challenge will be for the roof repair which is necessary before the painting can be done.

Stratton Education Centre provides schooling for teenagers with special educational needs that cannot be met through main stream schooling. The corridors and class rooms are in a poor state of repair and would greatly benefit from repainting, both the gloss work on the doors, frames and skirting, and also emulsion on the walls. Some of the walls will need filling in before painting (the holes are disguised at present by fixing coloured paper to the walls!). There is something here for a small team of four up to a larger team of up to 25 to make a big difference in one day. The children (and staff) at the centre will be much more motivated if they can work in pleasant surroundings. There is a height issue in this building, however, if the walls can be painted up to a nice line say about 6'6" from the floor, this would be good enough. Paint can be obtained from Scrapstore making this a low budget project.

Arundel Close (Chippenham)

This challenge is at a residential house which is home to about five people with mental and physical disabilities. The home is run by a charity, United Response, who provides long term care for these residents. Whilst the inside of the house has already been adapted to their needs, the garden outside is inaccessible due to the poor layout and the step down from the patio doors and the back door. The challenge would be to build a ramp out of decking materials or even paving (depending on your team's skills), remove the low raised flower beds made of Cotswold stone from across the middle of the garden (they are not high enough to be managed from a wheel chair and are too low making a trip hazard for other residents), lift the turf and remove about 6" of soil from the top half of the garden and replace the turf so that the whole of the grassed area is at the same height. You would need to bring your own tools and hire a skip for the Cotswold stone. You would also need to purchase the materials for the ramps. There are some walls which lend themselves to having a mural painted on as well if you have any budding artists willing to give it a go - this would be an 'optional extra'! 20 volunteers should be able to do this in a day.

If you have a team interested in doing any of these challenges, or would like to see photos of what the projects look like now, please contact Volunteer Centre Swindon on 01793 420557 or email heidi@swindonvolunteers.org.uk

Find out more about employee supported volunteering by joining Swindon Employees in the Community Network, or look on www.swindonvolunteers.org.uk at 'employee volunteering'. A Challenge Guide advising considerations and good practice in carrying out a challenge is available to download from this site.