



AWARDS 2023 PROGRAMME



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Tuesday 3 October | 6pm - 8pm

Accxel Training Centre, Whimsey Industrial Estate, Steam Mills Rd, Cinderford GL14 3JA



★ WELCOME ★



Welcome to the Forest Voluntary Action Forum (FVAF) Forest Volunteer Awards 2023.

These awards recognise and celebrate the amazing efforts of volunteers in the Forest of Dean.

We asked the local community to nominate their local heroes and tonight we will reward these amazing volunteers and organisations in the following categories:

- New Voluntary Group of the Year
- Young Volunteer of the Year
- Grassroots Award - Voluntary Group of the Year
- Community Organisation of the Year
- Business in the Community
- FoD Dementia Action Alliance Inclusion Award
- Your Volunteer of the Year - People's Champion

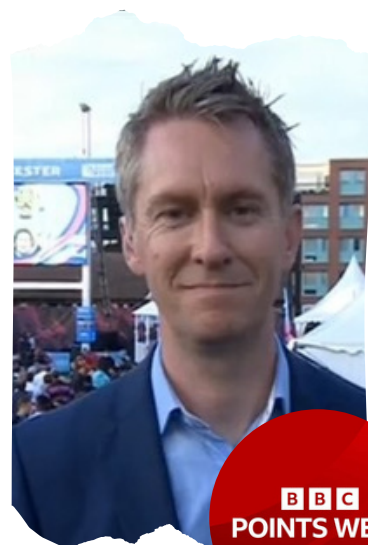


OUR HOST

Steve Knibbs

Gloucestershire Presenter for BBC Points West

Steve Knibbs is a Gloucestershire reporter for BBC Points West & BBC Midlands Today. Honorary Fellow University of Gloucestershire and Honorary President of Gloucestershire Scouts, Steve is also a Dad, tech geek and annoying optimist!



NEW VOLUNTARY GROUP OF THE YEAR

This award recognises the contribution of either an individual or organisation who are doing something new in the voluntary sector. This category is for those who have made an outstanding contribution to the community through voluntary action within the past 12 months. It aims to recognise the significant difference that volunteers can make in a short time.

SHORTLISTED NOMINEES:



Since re-opening its doors, The George in Newnham on Severn has fast become an uplifting social hub where people of all ages can relax, work, volunteer, learn skills, socialise, and be supported. When the much-loved former George Café closed its doors, the villagers were galvanised into action and, thanks to their determination, tenacity and vision, they successfully raised the funding needed to purchase this beautiful, historic building, and bring it back to its best, under community ownership. Local volunteers dedicated a colossal amount of their time and energy to lovingly transform the building into a thing of beauty! Already a hugely popular destination for villagers, the wider community are quickly flocking to this little gem for a warm welcome from the volunteer team and to enjoy delicious food, in a stunning setting.

“There is a real sense of joy and teamwork among those involved and a genuine passion to create something special, accessible and positive for the community, which is able to strengthen the whole village.”



Established in Sept 2021, and with stiff competition from other Cadet groups in Lydney, this group has worked extremely hard and over the past year has gone from strength to strength. Embedding themselves in the local community, the Cadets volunteer with energy and enthusiasm at as many community events as possible. They take on any and every task they are asked to do with a hugely positive attitude. Across the local area you will see them offering carpark marshalling, erecting marquees and charity fundraising for many community events and groups. Their efforts are already being recognised with two adult volunteers winning the National Community Service Award in 2022. In addition, thanks to the first aid training he had received at Lydney ACF, one inspiring young Cadet has been nominated for a national First Aid Award (award pending), for administering CPR to his Mum. Alongside parade nights, this group also runs a successful homework club and is working hard to establish a greener environment for Cadets.



PRESENTED BY

Emma Snell, Go Volunteer Glos Manager

Emma began volunteering as a teenager and has either worked or volunteered in the sector for most of her career. As the Go Volunteer Glos Manager she has the privilege of working with volunteers and organisations across Gloucestershire, that no matter their size, are making Gloucestershire a better place to be in. Emma believes that being a volunteer enables you to make a difference to a cause that matters to you.



YOUNG VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Split into two age ranges (16 years & under and 17-25 years), this category recognises a young person who has shown a commitment to their volunteering and/or overcome serious problems and made a positive difference in their own life or other peoples'. It celebrates the work carried out by young people who give up their time to help their community; in school, at clubs or a voluntary organisation.

SHORTLISTED NOMINEES - 16 years & under:



EVIE HARRIS

Community volunteer & fundraiser for TIC

An inspirational young charity fundraiser, Evie has used her initiative to raise an impressive amount of money for Teens in Crisis (TIC). A pupil at Five Acres High School, Evie jumped at the opportunity to undertake a Business Enterprise project. Deciding to raise money for Teens in Crisis (TIC), with just £10 investment, Evie created and sold handmade Christmas decorations at Christmas fayres and online, raising a total of £550, a record for a Five Acres Business Enterprise project. Not stopping there, Evie went on to raise over £1000 by organising a Virtual London Marathon at Five Acres School, in conjunction with TIC, and with a number of churches around the Forest of Dean. In the wider community, Evie has supported the Coleford Christmas Lights team and at her church she is also a volunteer worker in both the Kids Church Sunday School, and in the primary age group, leading activities and helping to provide a fun and safe environment for up to 50 children and young people. All of these activities have taught her so much about herself and how she can overcome the challenges she has faced, but importantly about how she can help others at the same time, and she does not intend to stop any time soon!



EBONY POWELL

Volunteer & fundraiser at Forest of Dean Dog Rescue

Come rain or shine, Ebony is a young volunteer whose dedication and commitment to volunteering is truly inspiring. A happy, smiley, and fun person to have around, nothing is too much trouble and Ebony gives up her days, evenings, and time with her friends to help at Forest of Dean Dog Rescue. A committed fundraiser, Ebony is also a huge part of the fundraising team and has organised some fantastic events this year, raising lots of money for the dogs. She is always willing to help out at many local events including Cinderford Coronation dog parades, fayres and music festivals, Christmas events and many more. The team at FoD Dog rescue say that Ebony has a very caring soul, she never complains at any task she is asked to do. A much loved and vital member of the team, Ebony is a delight to talk to, and without people like her the dogs wouldn't get the care that they deserve.



"Ebony has a heart of gold and will go far with the attitude and enthusiasm she puts into her work."



SHORTLISTED NOMINEES - 17 - 25 years:



LEANNE HENDRIX

Volunteer at Coleford Youth Club

After moving into the area last year, Leanne was keen to get out and about in the community. A chat with FVAF's community team led to Leanne volunteering at Coleford Youth Club (CYC). Leanne has now become a regular volunteer at CYC and is always happy to pitch in and support the Forest Youth Association team. Thanks to her talent for arts and crafts, she has taken charge of setting up a fantastic array of activities, enjoyed by all the young people who come along to the youth club. Leanne has also attended and supported a social trip with a group of young people and she has gone on to secure work with student nurses to grow their understanding of learning disabilities through performing arts, which is where her passion lies. Volunteering has been a hugely positive experience for Leanne, it has helped her make new friends, get to know her community and has really increased her confidence.



"Leanne has grown, flourished and developed in so many ways during this time and it is an absolute pleasure to have her supporting Coleford Youth Club."



DAISY HOOLE

Volunteer at C.A.N.D.I.

An integral part of C.A.N.D.I. – that is how the team at the Cinderford based youth group see Daisy. Utterly dependable and consistent in her attendance and her attitude, Daisy is always willing to go that extra mile to make sure that the young people who attend the group's activities, and all the other volunteers, are getting the very best they can from C.A.N.D.I. A calming and empathetic person, young people identify very well with Daisy, and see her as a trusted person who can offer guidance and a sense of balance. Daisy is also very competent and reliable with the practical aspects of the running of this much loved and well used youth space. Wise beyond her years, Daisy is always conscious of the duty to be aware of any safeguarding issues she may identify and has the confidence to report any concerns she has.



"Daisy is a very important part of the organisation and we, the team, would love for her to be recognised for all she brings to C.A.N.D.I."



PRESENTED BY

Forest Youth Association

Established 4 years ago, the Forest Youth Association has developed a strong infrastructure across the district by; supporting existing organisations and groups to be sustainable; introducing new activities; supporting new organisations to establish; running workshops and consultations with young people to help others (County Council, Police Commission and local charities) grow a better understanding of young people in the area; organising and running a programme of work skills opportunities; running Holiday programmes; and carrying out outreach youth work to engage with young people and support them to participate and enjoy their community.



GRASSROOTS VOLUNTARY GROUP OF THE YEAR

This category celebrates and honours those small grassroots organisations who are making a real difference in the community. These inspirational groups, run predominately by dedicated volunteers, will have had a positive impact on the people living in the Forest of Dean.

SHORTLISTED NOMINEES:



Sedbury Space is a shining example of local people coming together and developing a welcoming and inclusive hub at the heart of the village. A once neglected community space, a group of likeminded residents got together to create a new multi-use space for the wider community to enjoy. Over 18 months they raised over £55,000 through grant applications, a crowdfunding campaign and a series of private donations to fund the building works to refurbish the space. The refurb was successfully completed thanks to the many hours volunteers gave. With a focus on encouraging community participation and well-being, there is something on offer for everyone to enjoy including; One Stop Cafe, Memory Cafe, exercise classes, crafting, reading and many other regular activities. Run by a not-for-profit community group, made up of local residents in Sedbury and surrounding area, this thriving community hub continues to go from strength to strength.



FOREST COMMUNITY SHED

It's been a transformative 12 months for Forest Community Shed! After 5 years looking for a permanent home, including battling a stop notice from planning enforcement, thanks to the group's determination and hard work, they secured a partnership with the Orchard Trust to open a new workshop on their site. On 2nd August the doors opened on this exciting social partnership located in the fully accessible grounds of the Orchard Trust's 7-acre smallholding. Forest Community Shed provides a safe and supportive place for adults of all abilities to socialise, work together, learn and share skills or just have a chat and a cuppa. This friendly, welcoming group takes health service referrals and will never turn anyone away.



PRESENTED BY

Penny Hulbert, Chair of Trustees at Forest Voluntary Action Forum

Penny has worked in communities across the Forest of Dean for the last 20 years. She is particularly interested in developing the resources which allow people and communities to realise their ambitions and make positive change happen. Her recent work has been focused on accessibility, inclusion, and making spaces welcoming for everyone. Penny is the current chair of Forest Voluntary Action Forum and is looking forward to working with FVAF to support their grassroot projects.

COMMUNITY ORGANISATION OF THE YEAR

This award recognises the outstanding contribution of larger organisations in the Forest of Dean who have made significant impact through delivering community projects, and/or positive change in the district. These could be any community or voluntary sector organisation including charities, community organisations such as CIC's or CIO's, or larger groups who have a mix of staff and volunteers.

SHORTLISTED NOMINEES:



Over the past year SkillZONE has undertaken significant fire intervention initiatives and educational programmes in response to fire setting. With an objective to create a "fire-safe" environment, SkillZone, supported by a dedicated team of volunteers, has delivered a range of educational activities to encourage young people to take responsibility for their actions and consider the consequences for themselves, their families, and the wider community. These activities included a 3-day Fired Up Course, focusing on teamwork, practical fire training sessions, first aid, knife crime, hate crime, and safer road choices; Choices and Consequences Assemblies at secondary schools related to arson and hoax calls; and One-to-One tailored interventions carried out at the young person's home, SkillZONE, or a fire station. A multi-agency approach, the work was made possible through funding from the Community Safety Partnership and involved collaboration with Gloucestershire Constabulary and other stakeholders. This has had a significant influence in decreasing the number of fire setting incidents and in supporting behavioural change.



FOREST OF DEAN SCOUTS

One of the oldest volunteering groups in the UK, the scouting movement is growing, and the Forest of Dean is no exception. Thanks to the thousands of hours that the over 200 adult volunteers give, the Forest of Dean now has 10 Scout Groups, 6 Explorer Scout Units and a Scout Network Unit for members aged 18-25 years old. Every week amazing leaders deliver a range of inspiring programmes to over 600 young people, helping them to connect with their community and build skills for life. Year on year the Forest of Dean Scouts is growing more inclusive and, shaped by young people, is making a hugely positive impact across the Forest of Dean.



PRESENTED BY

Jonathan Lane, Cabinet Member for Economy at Forest of Dean District Council

With 17 years of teaching experience, including overseeing a sixth form, Jonathan has dedicated his career to education. Today, he devotes his time to empowering students facing social and emotional challenges through mentoring. As a district councillor, Jonathan holds a cabinet position focused on bolstering the local economy and celebrating all that the Forest has to offer. Jonathan is always amazed by the devotion and energy of our local volunteers and is delighted to recognise and promote these endeavours through the Forest Volunteer Awards.

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY

This award is a chance to acknowledge the positive social impact local businesses have had in the local community. It recognises those organisations who have created community run businesses and/or have proactively committed to supporting and encouraging their workforce to volunteer for one-off projects or regular time to work with local charities or community projects.

SHORTLISTED NOMINEES:



After almost ten years and an extraordinary community effort, The Rising Sun is finally open for business. With a vision to create a hub to reconnect local people, since 2013 the community has been hard at work to gain support to buy and bring back in to use the vacant village pub. After forming a committee, members set up a Community Benefit Society (CBS) and a Community Share Offer. Fundraising efforts closed in October 2021, with 223 community investors on board, helping to reach £350k investment. In 2020/21, the CBS applied to the Government's Community Ownership Fund and were delighted to receive a total of £175k. This funding, along with the significant community investment, enabled the acquisition, refurbishment and management of this community pub. With the refurbishment now complete The Rising Sun has a live-in Manager and a motivated team providing a temporary escape and a warm, welcoming space for everyone to meet up and enjoy good food, drink and top entertainment.



Thanks to hard work by two volunteer groups from EDF Energy, Camphill Village Trust is on its way to opening a beautiful new sensory garden at their Taurus Crafts location. Twice this year volunteers from the EDF Energy team got stuck in and supported with development of the sensory garden which when complete, will be of benefit to Severnside Skills trainees, staff and the public. An amazing amount of work was achieved, including digging over the soil, clearing existing growth, pruning trees, cutting back hedges, and installing a trellis. Once complete, the garden will also provide opportunities for volunteers to be involved in looking after the flower beds and to grow vegetables to be used by catering trainees and Severnside Kitchen.



"We really enjoyed hosting the group and want to nominate them for this award as we want them to know how much we appreciate their help."



PRESENTED BY:

Kirsty Downie, John Lewis Partnership & Waitrose (Monmouth)

Based in the Monmouth store, Kirsty is a Partnership Councillor and Partner at the JLP & Waitrose. Currently a Team Leader on the Partner Operations Team, Kirsty is a Forum Representative and is the community lead.



FOD DEMENTIA ACTION ALLIANCE INCLUSION AWARD

NEW AWARD - recognising groups who are making admirable efforts towards being welcoming and inclusive to all. This award celebrates a commitment to enhancing accessibility and removing barriers. This might be by making physical improvements, creating clear and accessible communications, or building volunteering projects/programmes that help people to make a difference to their local community, regardless of the challenges they face, their age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, race, faith, or religion.

SHORTLISTED NOMINEES:



CINDERFORD BOWLS CLUB

Cinderford Bowls Club were one of the first activity groups to join the FODDAA (Forest of Dean Dementia Action Alliance). Realising that some people may not be able to 'keep up' with traditional bowls, they developed a game so people could still enjoy playing and be included. Using a community grant they were awarded, Cinderford Bowls Club installed a new access step to make it safer and easier for those players needing support to get on and off the bowling green. The club also actively welcomes and supports other groups like Crossroads Gloucestershire Friendship Group who love to visit for a warm welcome and fun! In addition they have support members with other disabilities, for instance accommodating a player with a visual impairment. They also have a passion for connecting to children and have worked with the Scouts to organise a tournament. With an audit recently carried out, Cinderford Bowls Club continue to constantly strive to be inclusive.



Artspace Cinderford are an arts and education based charity, specialising in offering fully inclusive, accessible creative opportunities for people of any age or ability. Over the past 12 months this charity has worked hard towards realising the aspirations identified in audits from Accessible Gloucestershire and FODDAA. With an everchanging programme of inclusive opportunities, examples include; mindSCAPE sessions for people with dementia and their carers; Tutors working with learners in care homes; Thinking differently about diversity' project; and Home is where the ART is project, part of the Arts Council England Celebrating Age programme, to inspire and promote all forms of creativity by over-50s. Artspace are continually developing and finding new and innovative ways to bring inclusive art and creative opportunities for everyone in the Forest of Dean to enjoy.



PRESENTED BY:

Andrea Harman, Concept Developer Healthcare at Gobain Ecophon (sponsor)

Andrea is a sensory accessibility and room acoustics specialist with over 25 years' experience. Active in developing links between the sound environment and health and well-being, with a MSc. in the study of dementia and contributions to design standards around neurodiversity, from this framework Andrea researches, informs, writes, and presents to a variety of audiences and bodies on promoting realistic, positive and inclusive sensory design, particularly in relation to sound. Andrea volunteers by taking a lead role in this area with the FODDAA as a member of the Steering Group, encouraging inclusion. She has developed resources, and delivers free workshops which enables both alliance members, the wider community and countywide organisations, to review their accessibility.



THE PEOPLE'S CHAMPION YOUR VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

This is an unsung hero who has gone above and beyond for their community or has an inspiring story. The award is for volunteers who give their time and input to provide valuable services to communities in the Forest of Dean. Without these volunteers' significant contribution, organisations might not be able to sustain the work they do or maybe they have brought transformative change to other people or their own personal story by volunteering.

The final winner is picked via an online public vote - this year we received almost 1,500 votes!

SHORTLISTED NOMINEES:



Chris Brain

Chairman & Coach of Broadwell Youth Football

For the past 15 years Chris has dedicated a huge amount of his time, energy and passion into grassroots sports. A constant supporter and instrumental in the ongoing success of Broadwell Football Club, Chris has served as the Chairman of the club and more recently two and half years as the First Team Manager. The pinnacle of his successful coaching term came last year when Chris led his side to Les James Cup victory. Going out on a high, Chris has just retired and deserves recognition for his dedication and commitment which has provided the opportunity for 100's of children to play football and helped to create the thriving community football club Broadwell FC has become.



Melanie Getgood

Chairperson at Friends of Worcester Walk

Melanie has been the inspirational driving force of Friends of Worcester Walk (FoWW). Her steadfast commitment to Worcester Walk has seen it develop into a unique richly diverse habitat in the Forest of Dean. Melanie goes the extra mile to share the experience of being in nature, through events with school groups, volunteers, and local people. With her generous inclusive way, she has built a solid and diverse group of volunteers for FoWW and ensures that everyone is welcome, and their work appreciated. Melanie's community work doesn't end there! She is also a co-opted member of the Environmental Committee of Coleford Town Council, helps run a local Morris Dancing group, has organised clean ups in the Coleford Cemetery, King George Playing Field and Bells Field. Melanie works tirelessly for community but is always friendly, approachable, kind and generous with everyone she meets.





Jando Greco

Volunteer helper at St Stephen's Church Cinderford

Jando is a fantastic example of the impact volunteering can have for community, and in growing as a person. For the past twelve years, Jando has supported St Stephen's Church through his involvement with many projects, services, events and prayer groups. Jando is often found setting up and tidying after events or keeping the church tidy midweek between services. He helps with the Fairtrade Stall and Fairtrade Friday coffee afternoons, and is a leader at Messy Church. Usually the first to put his hand up to help, like many volunteers, much of what Jando does is 'behind the scenes' and unseen. But that doesn't bother him at all, he just loves volunteering his time, feeling part of a community and growing his skills as well as sharing his talents with others.



His nominator said that: *"We so appreciate him, he is such a thoughtful, caring person and will do anything for anyone – Jando is so worthy of receiving this award and we would love for him to be recognised for his service!"*



Edna Husbands

Lydcare Community Transport Co-ordinator at Lydcare

An essential member of the team, Edna is responsible for organising Lydcare Community Transport Service. A complex and demanding role, on average Edna deals with over 120 calls from people who request transport and, with drivers to arrange journeys. Edna's role requires a massive commitment both in time and energy and requires a high degree of patience and diplomacy dealing with last minute medical appointments, cancellations and reschedules. Thanks to her tireless work over 4,000 journeys are completed every year, helping over 2,700 people get to hospital, medical appointments and social events which, due to the lack of public transport, would be impossible. Lydcare was the only community transport service running through the pandemic and this was down to Edna's determination and commitment to ensure patients, particularly those who usually received home visits, were able to get to important medical appointments. Edna also works as a voluntary driver and is an outstanding volunteer working for the benefit of those in need within the community.



Barbara Jenkins

Organiser of the 'Over Sixties Group' at 'The Hut'

It would be hard to find a volunteer in the Forest with a longer commitment to volunteering in the community than Barbara! For over 50 years, Barbara has been the lead organiser of the 'Over Sixties Group' at the 'The Hut' Berryhill Memorial Institute. This popular group has been providing social activities to help combat isolation for the older community for decades. Collecting community memories for a recent memory capsule, created as part of The Hut's centenary celebrations, revealed that Barbara had been quietly managing this group since 1971. But Barbara's involvement with The Hut goes even further back to her childhood when her father was resident caretaker, and her mother was involved in organising activities. A wonderful and unique example of generations getting involved with the community to make it a better place, Barbara is an inspiration to us all and shows no sign of slowing down.





Albert Weager

Community representative & advocate for better healthcare in FoD

A more committed and dedicated community representative than Albert would be hard to find! For over a decade Albert has tirelessly advocated for better health provision in the Forest of Dean. With an incredibly long service on the FoD Health Forum, in 2014 he was appointed chair and has been instrumental in ensuring that everyone is listened to and given the opportunity to ask questions. At a county level, Albert chairs the People and Communities Reference Group for Urgent and Emergency Care and is the community representative on the Urgent and Emergency Care, Patient Flow Clinical Programme Group. Not stopping there, Albert also represents local people on the Ageing Well Care Programme Board and has been the patient representative on the Blood Transfusion Committee for over ten years. Everything Albert does is as a volunteer and we must congratulate him on his drive and passion.



Dave Young

Volunteer driver, cook, outreach at Forest Sensory Services & Samaritans

Over the past 2 years Dave has dedicated more and more of his time volunteering and going above and beyond to support other people. Starting as a volunteer driver for Forest Sensory Services (FSS), Dave now volunteers with FSS 3 times a week and even dons his chef's hat and cooks up a delicious feast, twice a month, for the service's clients. A fantastic supporter of all the work that FSS does, Dave plays an active role in outreach sessions to make visually impaired people aware of the support services offered and he also helps with fundraising. Along with his face-to-face volunteering, Dave volunteers with the Samaritans answering the phone a couple of times a week offering emotional support. Plus promoting Samaritans with outreach in the community.



His nominator said: "Dave is an inspiring person and an amazing volunteer who does so much for other people."



PRESENTED BY:

Mark Topping, Leader of Forest of Dean District Council

Mark studied theology at university. After a spell as a Franciscan novice, he worked as a journalist on local newspapers and radio, including a few years as a press officer for an overseas aid agency. For the last 25 years he's made his living as an actor. It was the climate emergency that spurred him to stand for election to the Forest of Dean District Council in 2019. He lives with his family near Lydney where he is a ward councillor.



CONGRATULATIONS!



**WINNERS
&
HIGHLY COMMENDED**





SHOUT OUT TO ALL OUR COMMUNITY STARS

We had an incredible number of nominations for people, groups and organisations who have made an amazing difference to individuals, and communities across the Forest of Dean this year.

The judging panel had a seriously tough task to shortlist and we want to congratulate, recognise and appreciate all those who were nominated.

KEEP DOING, WHAT YOU'RE DOING!

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**FOREST
VOLUNTEER
AWARDS**

Celebrating our amazing volunteers

