



The many rewards of volunteering

VOLUNTEER



just want an opportunity to meet people. Here are a few ideas:

Almost all youth activities are organised by volunteers. You can help run the activities or you could join the management or the fund-raising committee. The reward is seeing youngsters enjoying themselves and, hopefully, growing up better people who know how to socialise.

There is a satisfaction in feeling that you are doing some good for other people. Sometimes this can be combined with a new hobby, such as ringing the church bells on Sunday. Or maybe you have skills or knowledge which will help an organisation, such as book-keeping (you don't have to be a

Chartered Accountant for most treasurers' jobs. Being an amateur doesn't mean that you won't be 'professional' in what you do). Most schools these days have a role for parent-governors. Here is a chance to help the people who are educating your children.

A lot of people give physical help to charities by collecting or distributing things or running activities but don't forget these organisations usually need volunteers to manage what goes on. Join the Committee! It is surprising how people have talents that not even they, themselves, recognise.

A recent trend of legislating for every eventuality has put some people off volunteering. Even those of us with nothing

to hide can be put off with the intrusiveness of the dreaded CRB check (now 'disclosure and barring'). Or what about suddenly finding that you are a 'Trustee'. What does that mean? Or your offer to help meant that, out of the blue, you become a Company Director. But we have always had responsibilities towards other people, whatever we do. That is just part of living in a society. It is not really such a big deal. You can do it!

Finally, how do you give up? This might well be the most difficult part of volunteering. You know you will be letting people down. They relied on you. Harden your heart. Give due warning that you are leaving. But none of us are indispensable. Just go!

(After 30 years, Nigel Friswell is standing down from the Committee of The Horsham Society at the forthcoming AGM)

The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces. Membership of the Horsham Society is open to anyone who shares these concerns. For more information, visit the website www.horshamsociety.org or phone 01403 261905.

In Horsham there are dozens, perhaps hundreds, of voluntary organisations. Some are local sections of national organisations but they are all run, locally at least, by volunteers. Whatever the work, all voluntary organisations seem to suffer from the same problems; a lack of volunteers!

Some see this as a recent phenomenon but, having been a volunteer with various organisations for over 50 years, it does not seem much different. Even the excuses are much the same; usually, "I don't have time".

Yes, we all lead busy lives. But we always have. There has always been the children to get ready for school or the need to prepare meals. There has always been time spent travelling to and from work. In some ways it should have got better, labour-saving devices and cultural changes should have made it easier, not more difficult.

There are people who, for one reason or another, find their lives unfulfilling. Some find the solution in volunteering. What are you interested in? What would you like to change about your life or the environment in which you live? Not all organisations want to change the world. Some volunteers