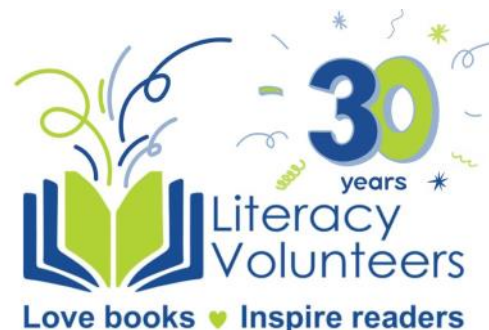


# Newsletter

## For Volunteers and Schools

Literacy Volunteers 1996-2026

Issue: May 2026



Supporting children with literacy and communication in primary schools and communities

In this issue we are celebrating a huge milestone as our Schools Lead Sue Marriott retires after 25 remarkable years with Literacy Volunteers. I first met Sue a few years ago when I was asked to help to restructure the Charity. This was in the aftermath of the Covid crisis when the Charity had to deal with falling Volunteer numbers, changes in senior management team and the need to recruit a new board of trustees. There is no doubt that without Sue's unflappable determination to save Literacy Volunteers and implement the changes that needed to be made, we would not be where we are today with a thriving organization providing such important and valued services to the communities we support. While Sue's retirement will be a great loss to the Charity, I am delighted that she will join the board as a new trustee. In a minor deviation to the famous song, Sue might be checking out but she definitely is not leaving.

It was great to see Lorna represent

## Hello Everyone

Literacy Volunteers at the recent 1001 Critical Days event at the Houses of Parliament. We still must remind ourselves what an incredible achievement it was for the team to secure this funding over the next five years and the level of competition we were able to overcome to secure the award.

You'll see that we are hosting another Bromley House event for our Volunteers who were not able to attend the tour last year. Feedback from our attendees from the last event was overwhelmingly positive. I could not recommend the tour highly enough to anyone who has an interest in Nottingham's history and the development of this unique library in the heart of the city.

It is disappointing that Literacy Volunteers has been asked, for reasons outside of our control, to relocate from its present headquarters at Woodthorpe

Grange to a new facility which will incur lease and other overhead costs. On a positive note, the new offices identified will be larger and provide a more suitable environment for our staff to work in. The main drawback is the additional financial cost which serves as a reminder to us all to continue to do what we can to help in the Charity's fund-raising activities.

Finally, we are excited as we approach our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration event being held at the Trent Vineyard venue on 15 July. We are pleased that our amazing patron Jacob Dunne will be attending and presenting on the day alongside a rostrum of other great speakers. I have no doubt this will be an enjoyable and extra special day for Literacy Volunteers. The event is going to be well attended, and my advice would be to not leave it too late to book one of the few remaining seats if you are minded to join us.

**Mike Collis**  
**Chair of Board of Trustees**

## Sue's Retirement!

25

After an incredible 25 years at Literacy Volunteers we are celebrating the retirement at the end of this school year of our amazing School Lead Sue Marriott. The staff team and Board of Trustees would like to extend a heartfelt and massive "Thank you!" to Sue for her dedication to her team, her Volunteers and the Charity over so many years. Although she is looking forward to spending more time with her husband Kev and their dog Toby, she has said it is going to be a big wrench to leave the staff team and the amazing Volunteers. We are happy to announce that it is not completely goodbye for Sue though. The plan is for Sue to become a Trustee. Literacy Volunteers has been such a big part of her life, and more than a job, so the chance to make a valuable contribution on our Board of Trustees was a perfect fit.

Sue has said: "I have so many memories of countless wonderful Volunteers, lovely colleagues, fantastic visits to schools seeing the amazing difference the Volunteers make and enjoying playing games. The difference every Volunteer has made over these years is too large to quantify but the headline is 'life changing'. I have loved working with my many schools and would like to thank all the school staff I have had the pleasure of working with over many years. Plus my working with a dedicated, hardworking staff team who I have the greatest of respect for.

Although there have been some difficult times over the years, one especially when a colleague Heather Brooksbank passed away. There have been so many positives such as the



changes we made to our training programme which gave us an excellent foundation for the professional training run for Volunteers today.

It is hard to believe that we didn't have a website or emails, as before we sent out letters to confirm meetings and training. I am so proud of our website and our management system Volunteero, and all the professional processes we have which ensure that schools benefit from our amazing service. This has all resulted in our brilliant Volunteers being professional, equipped and able to deliver a great service to our schools. I am also really happy that we now have our first Patron, Jacob Dunne, and the benefits he has already brought to the Charity – even getting us on BBC TV and live on Radio Nottingham.

I will always be grateful to my wonderful colleagues, especially during Covid and the difficult period following. It is comforting to know all my team have the same love and passion for our wonderful Charity. I am also very thankful to the Volunteers, supporters and the Trustees who helped us fight to keep the Charity going.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the 30-year event but would like to take this opportunity to thank you all in the Literacy Volunteer family and hope that in the future the Charity grows so more children in the City and County can benefit from our wonderful service."



The Queen's Award for  
Voluntary Service 2006



We were delighted to attend the 1001 Critical Days Foundation's first anniversary event in Parliament, celebrating a year of progress in championing the needs of babies and families.



The event brought together leaders and partners from across the sector, united by a shared commitment to improving outcomes in the earliest stages of life.

We were inspired to hear from speakers including **Dame Andrea Leadsom, Lord Blunkett, Sharon Hodgson MP, and Will Quince, CEO of the 1001 Critical Days Foundation** who highlighted both the progress made and the work still to be done to ensure every baby gets the best start in life.

We are especially proud to have received five years of funding from the Foundation's first tranche of grants to support our early years programme. This investment reflects a shared belief in what families need most: trusted information, accessible support for all, and 'one stop shop' services through family hubs and community initiatives. Together, we are working to deliver meaningful, long-term impact and ensure every baby has the best possible start in life.

## What Fun and Games!

Our recent Volunteer Network Meetings (VNMs) focused on the benefits of games in Literacy Volunteer sessions and launched our new KS1 and KS2 Games Packs, which Volunteer/Schools Co-ordinators will be bringing to future school visits for any volunteers who could not attend. The meetings in Mansfield, Worksop, Arnold and Beeston were all well attended with a real 'buzz' at all of them and lots of fantastic ideas being discussed amongst volunteers.

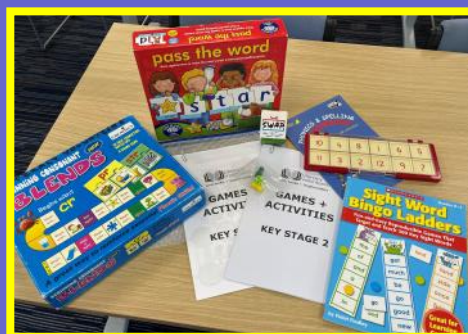
In Bassetlaw we have now grown from 1 volunteer to 14 volunteers. At the VNM it was wonderful to see the instant rapport between all 9 volunteers who attended and how the 6 new volunteers gained valuable insights from the 3 volunteers who have been in schools a little longer. New volunteer, Jane said, "What a lovely session! It was so good to meet other volunteers and get some additional strategies and hints and tips for helping the children."

At the other three Network Meetings there were also some new volunteers and individuals who are still training. All attendees felt the information and



resources shared were beneficial to their Literacy Volunteer role and feedback from one of the volunteers at the Arnold meeting was: "Thank you for organising the session - very useful to learn from more experienced volunteers."

All V/SCs would like to say a huge thank you to Volunteers for attending and participating so enthusiastically in the meetings.



## Invitation for our Volunteers



You're Invited!  
Fundraising Evening  
with Literacy Volunteers

Monday, 15th June 2026 6-8pm  
Exclusive Bromley House Library Event

Join us for a special evening  
in one of Nottingham's hidden treasures.

What's included:

A private tour of the historic Bromley House Library  
An engaging talk on its rich history and collections  
Drinks, nibbles & light refreshments in a relaxed setting

This is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy a unique evening out while supporting the vital work of **Literacy Volunteers** – helping children develop a lifelong love of reading.

All proceeds go directly to supporting our work in local schools.

Spaces are limited – please book early!  
Guests with Volunteers are very welcome.

Tickets £15. Please purchase via Give as you Live address below.

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/charity/literacyvolunteers/event/www.literacyvolunteers.org>



## Thank you Anne

Literacy Volunteers would like to say a big thank you to **Anne Cowley** for her 7 years of service volunteering at Abbey Road Primary. We wish her all the best as she steps back from her volunteering role. We would like to thank her for her dedication to the role and also her fantastic support to the children she worked with in school. The staff team and children at Abbey Road knew her well and loved having her visit each week and the head commented: "We really valued Anne's work". Thank you for all your time and making a difference to so many children's reading over the years Anne.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS

We are really looking forward to seeing everyone in the next half term for our **Literacy Volunteers' 30th Anniversary**

**Celebration** on **15 July 2026** at Trent Vineyard 11:00am-2.30pm. If you haven't already, please contact your V/SC if you would like to attend.

## Early Years Update

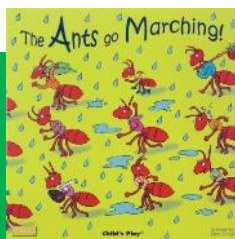


In our **Learning To Love Books** sessions we have read some wonderful books recently and the families have really enjoyed doing some craft activities which link in with the story.

Families had a great time making hats

and puppet ants.

We also had a very busy session in Hyson Green Library outdoor garden space using our parachute, scarves and drums.



## OFFICE MOVE



Due to Nottingham City Council Green Spaces team expanding we are having to relocate out of Woodthorpe Grange and move into a new rental office facility. We are close to finalising suitable premises not far away. We are planning to move during the Summer to have everything set up ready for the new school year.

If anyone would like to offer some time to assist with the relocation that would be appreciated. We are also looking into options for moving everything, if you have any contacts/ideas please let us know.

## NEW STAFF MEMBER

We have now appointed a new Volunteer/Schools Co-ordinator to cover the Mansfield and Ashfield Districts. We are looking forward to welcoming Julie Mo who will be starting on 1 June 2026. Sue Marriott will be training Julie and handing over the area for her to take over fully from September. Julie is married with 2 children, and she lives in Skegby.



SAFEGUARDING

After a low-level incident in a school a Volunteer had spoken to their Volunteer/Schools Co-ordinator about, the V/SC followed this up the following week during a visit to the school. The Head thanked her for doing this. The Head also expressed how impressed she was that the V/SC had done this. We would like to ask Volunteers that they do not leave school with anything that does not 'feel right'. Schools will never think you are wasting their time by sharing any concern. We

would like to remind our member schools that as part of our safeguarding procedure we would follow up on any safeguarding incidents reported by their Volunteer and that safeguarding is at the heart of everything Literacy Volunteers does. This is from Safer Recruitment right through to each child's session with the Volunteer.

Safeguarding incidents since last newsletter in January 2026 - 3 Safeguarding

**Sue Marriott:** Lead Volunteer/Schools Co-ordinator (City North, Ashfield, Mansfield)

**Emma Collis:** Literacy Volunteers Trainer

**Emma Trowbridge:** Fundraiser and Volunteer/Schools Co-ordinator (City West, Broxtowe, Derbyshire)

**Karen Plant:** Volunteer/Schools Co-ordinator (Bassetlaw)

**Kirsten McConnell:** Volunteer/Schools Co-ordinator (East, South Notts)

**Lorna Jaggard:** Lead Early Years Team, **Marie Ainsworth:** Early Years Co-ordinator

**Literacy Volunteers, Woodthorpe Grange, Woodthorpe Drive, Nottingham NG5 4HA**  
**T: 0115 876 5474 (Voicemail) E: contact@literacyvolunteers.org.uk**

## THANK YOU!

We would like to say thank you to the following people and organisations:

Nottinghamshire County Council  
 Nottingham City Council  
 Small Steps Big Changes  
 1001 Critical Days Foundation  
 Jacob Dunne

Nottingham Community & Voluntary Service

Bassetlaw Community & Voluntary Service  
 Your CVS

Elizabeth Greeley – NTU  
 Andrew Tucker

Fiona Mitchell-Inness  
 Mel Cope

Graham Stamper  
 Maven Capital Partners

Charles Littlewood Hill Trust

Sir John Eastwood Foundation

Thoresby Charitable Trust

Brian O'Neill

The Cumberland Trust

The Duke of Portland Charitable Trust

Forman Hardy Charitable Trust

Alison Anderson

Councillor Steve Carr

Councillor Dawn Justice

Kate Scott

Alison Fowler

Abbey – our student

Everyone who has donated to us or shopped via Give as You Live

Our Board of Trustees

And, once again, a huge **Thank You** to our amazing Literacy Volunteers!

## A FEW EXTRA THANK YOUS!

Three of our Nottinghamshire County Councillors have donated money from their Councillors' Divisional Fund to provide funding for Literacy Volunteers schools in their areas:

**Councillor Steve Carr – Bramcote C of E Primary School**

**Councillor Dawn Justice – Jacksdale Primary School**

**Councillor Cathy Mason - Skegby Junior Academy**

Also, Alison Anderson, a Volunteer, ran a Birthday Fundraiser through Give as You Live, to celebrate her birthday and raised money for our Charity. **Thank you Alison!**