



During October 2011 as assessor from Investing in Volunteers visited MertonVision.

These are some of the comments extracted from the report.

All volunteers, staff and the trustee interviewed could clearly and in many cases passionately articulate the benefits of involving volunteers. As the chief executive, trustee and staff all testified: "We use their experience, their joy of giving, and we couldn't do all of the work we do without them"; "Volunteers are very, very necessary, MertonVision wouldn't survive without them"; "MertonVision couldn't run without them. Just about everything we do involves volunteers... they inject a sense of life to the place, they are multi-talented".

Volunteers were also clear about the benefits to them of their involvement "I do get a buzz out of giving something back to the community"; "It's very rewarding. I like to help other people"; "It's become a nice part of my life, nothing to do with my work, it's satisfying." "It's been a real experience working here. There are so many characters, I enjoy talking to people of different ages"; "I just love the company here, love the people and love to help". "It's important to give something back, especially in an ageing community. It's not a huge demand on my time." "It's been more rewarding than I expected, I have made two new friends."

Roles can be adapted or even created to meet specific volunteer interests. An example being a former home visitor who was interested in gardening being invited to take part in gardening project, in which she designed a garden plan and herb garden for the centre. Another volunteer described how she had been able to bring in her baby daughter whilst volunteering at the centre, this had both allowed her to be involved whilst caring for her child, and brought pleasure to the clients. Some volunteers indicated they have been building up useful work experience as a result of their volunteering.

Without exception, the volunteers interviewed said that they felt appreciated by MertonVision and that they were regularly thanked for their work. "It's very friendly - a community feel. I don't ever feel taken for granted". Several volunteers mentioned the positive feedback they received from clients, either directly or via staff: "The positive feedback from clients as well is very gratifying".

Our thanks to our team of volunteers for taking part in the assessment and, of course, for their commitment to helping MertonVision provide the best possible services for Blind and Partially Sighted People in Merton

Fran Hibbert
Chief Officer/Company Secretary