



VOLITION™



ANNUAL REPORT 2021



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We started 2021 still in the grip of the global pandemic with Covid-19. Provision started up in April with our first intake, however, with the constant up and down with the pandemic, recruiting volunteers to attend open days was very problematic.

The data contained within this annual report is based on a reduced intake during 2021 of 36 volunteers, two more than in 2020. Demographics continued to reflect many historical barriers to employment and learning, with 50% of volunteers unemployed for over 3 years (33% over 5 years) and 92% from households with no one in paid work.

Despite organising good quality online content early and during the pandemic, referrals and uptake to Volition remained low for remote access. This highlights the very positive need for face-to-face delivery and support in this context. This may also be an indication of a broader digital skills gap and deepening inequalities our candidates face in the wake of the pandemic.

Mental and physical health issues were widely evident, with 67% disclosing mental health concerns and 53% a physical health issue. July 2021 saw the main return to face-to-face delivery, and we were able to resume the vital social and emotional support to our volunteers, after months of being deprived of physical learning and work experiences.

Employability is not the same as specific qualifications and the generic transferable skills and experiences that Volition offers are designed to facilitate progression to paid employment through increasing social interaction, personal confidence and intrinsic motivation.

I am pleased to announce that 42% of the 2021 cohort achieved paid work during the year, with a further 30% still accessing volunteering at Manchester Cathedral today. Reflecting on the social and emotional starting points of many volunteers, these outcomes are worth celebrating loudly.

The other major highlight of the year for Volition was the visit of HM The Queen to Manchester Cathedral to mark the 600th Anniversary of the Collegiate Church. I must take this opportunity to thank all the Volition staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to make sure the gardens of the cathedral were fit for the Royal visit and to Maria our gardener and Cath our beekeeper came together with a group of volunteers to transform the grounds. They both worked very hard to create a bee feature for the Queen. You will be able to read more on this in the other sections of the report.



OVERVIEW

2021 has been an amazing year full of change, fabulous volunteers and astonishing highlights. Despite the year starting with a downbeat and Covid putting everyone back into lockdown our commitment, planning and funder support has enabled us to quickly reopen and get back to assisting people into employment.

Volition has always supported people through a variety of means including: face to face provision, telephone calls and text but this year, more than any, has needed us to keep in touch with our client group. As restrictions began to kick in for a second year some people became ever more isolated. Many of our participants live alone and do not have the support of family and colleagues. Volition opened up as quickly as possible to outdoor and instructor led activities to provide focus, routine and support.

One of the first activities to get underway this year, was gardening. The Cathedral sits in the middle of the City surrounded by herbaceous borders and is looked after by a team of volunteers. This spring Marie came to Volition in support of her partner but she too was unemployed. Despite being RHS trained she was missing out on suitable posts due to lack of experience and the downturn in the economy. Marie was motivated to volunteer with us and worked on a planting scheme to make them more bee friendly. She entered the Cathedral into the Manchester Flower Show and continued to develop the beds with a team of volunteers to showcase them for a Royal visit in July. Volition was further able to support Marie with a small, part time, paid role. Marie has now left us having secured a gardening contract on a large private estate in Northumberland. The Cathedral gardens continue to provide opportunities for volunteers and Volition has once again supported one of its participants with a paid position. Well done Jimmy.

The next activity to get underway was our Get Crafty sessions. These are weekly art and craft classes generously funded by the WEA. One of the best ways to reduce isolation and improve self-worth is by having fun, changing expectations and enabling individuals to set their own personal goals. The art classes did this by re-establishing a pattern of working and encouraging participants to build on their skills each week. These classes lead to a real sense of achievement and some of our volunteers secured paid employment for the first time in several years.

The Cathedral's famous Heavenly Honey apiary was also able to reopen early in the pandemic. It too provided an outside activity for volunteers. Under the guidance of our head Bee Keeper, Catherine, volunteers were able to learn new skills and add real value to their CV at a time when it was otherwise difficult to do so. Later in the year, volunteers were also able to add retail experience to their list of skills as Cath and her team expanded their activities to include selling honey at large scale Christmas events



Possibly the highlight of 2021 was the Royal visit by Her Majesty, The Queen, to Manchester Cathedral to commemorate its 600th anniversary. It was a super day, blessed by warm weather and the gardens, art work and a gift of honey all showcased the skills of Volition volunteers.

There were more celebrations to come in 2021 and another highlight was undoubtedly an art exhibition at Manchester Central Library led by volunteer, Andy Redmond “Reds” on his “Reds and K1000”. Andy worked with Volition’s Artist in Residence Karin Albinsson, on a photography project. ‘Reds’ told Karin of the 1000 photos he had taken and lost six years ago as he went into prison. It was this loss that started the project ‘Reds & K 1000’ culminating in an exhibition of 2500 photos of street art and graffiti created into 9 collages. The exhibition was opened by the Mayor of Manchester and was attended by local dignitaries. Andy is extremely proud of his achievements and is excited to be leading other volunteers in the New Year

Throughout 2021 Volition has continued to support people to achieve their goals. Information days are held at regular intervals to make referrals easy and timely. Our employability programme supports people with a wide range of issues. Some are long term unemployed, others are new to the UK and some have found themselves returning to work after caring for loved ones. Here at Volition we support people to gain skills and build themselves up through volunteering.

So how have some of our other volunteers lives changed in 2021? Here is a snapshot.

There is Dave, who after being unemployed for 5 years has started working at a Covid testing centre. Eight months on he is still working 12 hour shifts, has paid off his debts and has enjoyed a break away with friends and family.

Gill has been unemployed for 4 years, she has health issues and struggled to fit in her studies. She accessed NHS volunteering, completed a work trial and has now been offered paid employment by the NHS.

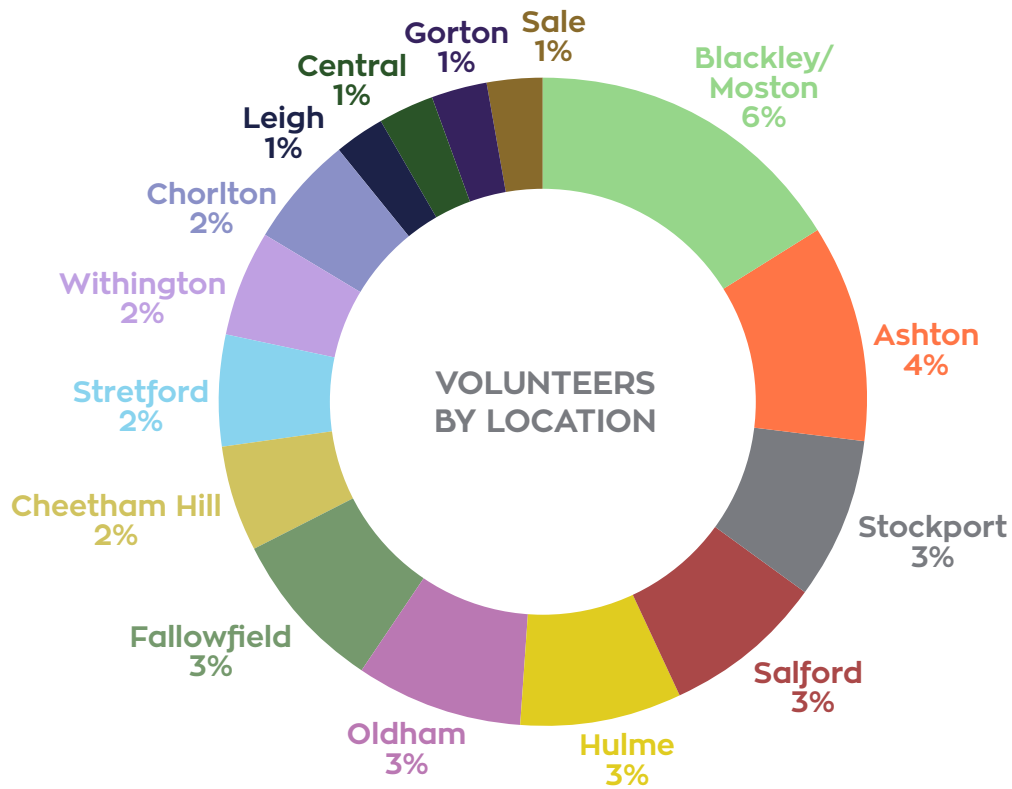
Jack has gained temporary work at Royal Mail but spurred on by the success of others around him at Volition has applied for covid test site jobs. His goal is to continue working after his temporary contract expires and continue working in 2022.

Does 2022 hold anything new for Volition? It certainly does! Volition will be expanding its work to Salford Cathedral. We are delighted to be working with Fr. Michael and Maura Pasini to be able to offer the Volition ethos and support to those living in the Salford area and beyond.

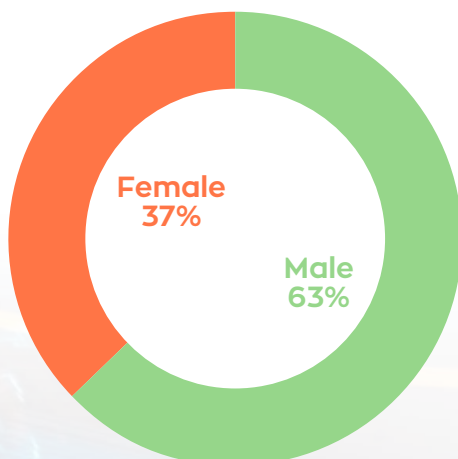
2021 has had its challenges. We thank all our supporters for offering their time and resources to Volition. We could not do our work without you.



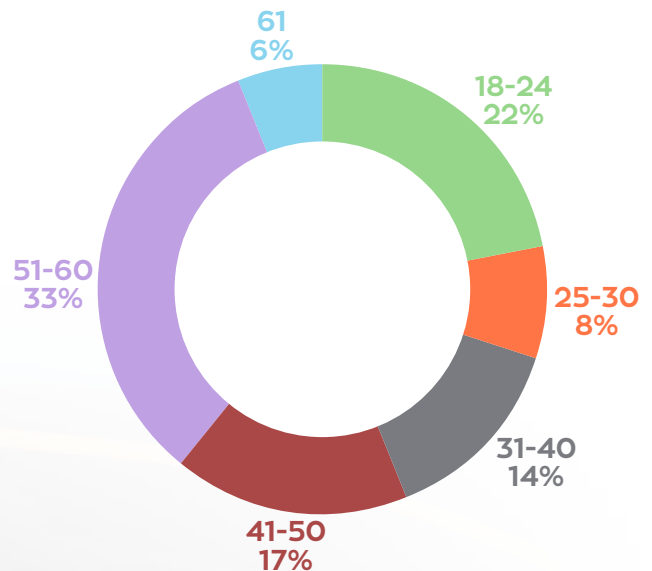
2021 VISUAL DATA SUMMARY



VOLUNTEERS BY GENDER

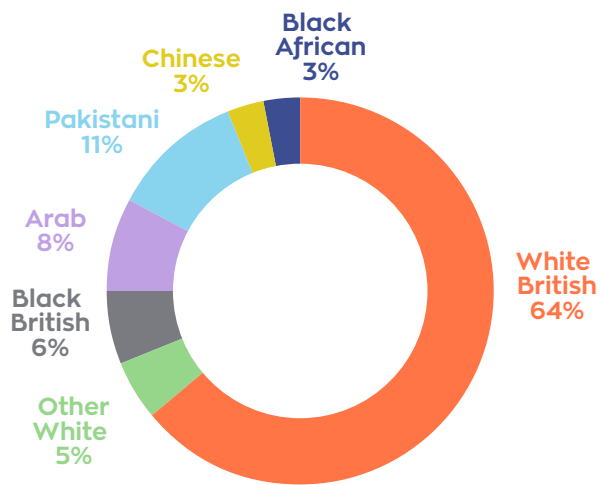


VOLUNTEERS BY AGE

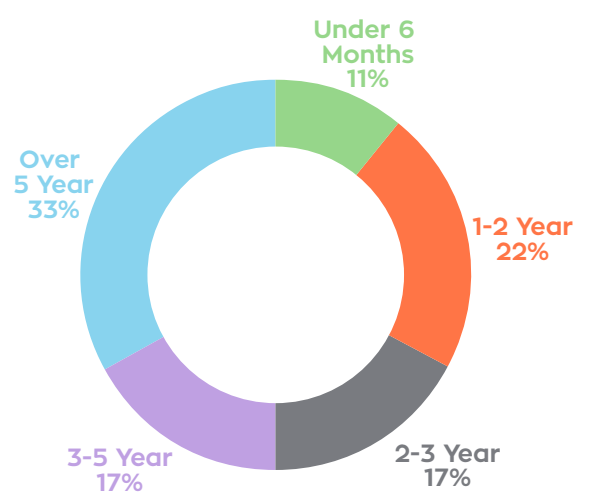




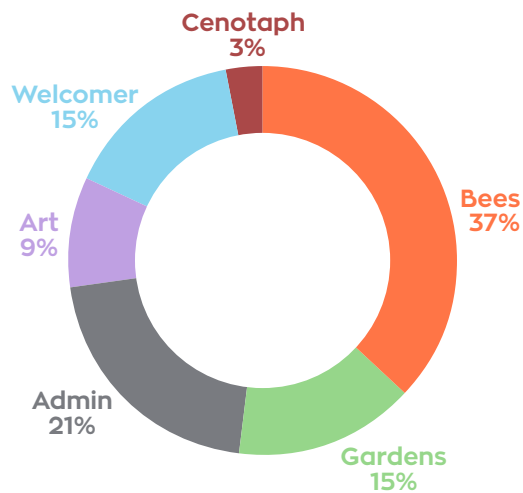
ETHNIC DIVERSITY



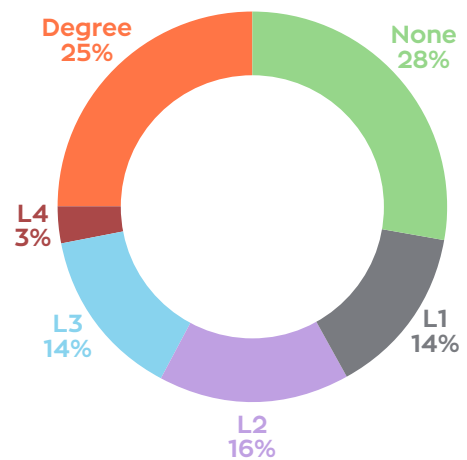
LENGTH OF UNEMPLOYMENT



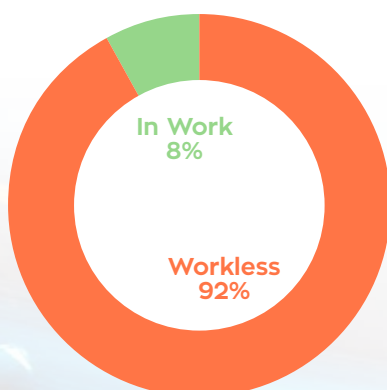
VOLUNTEERING



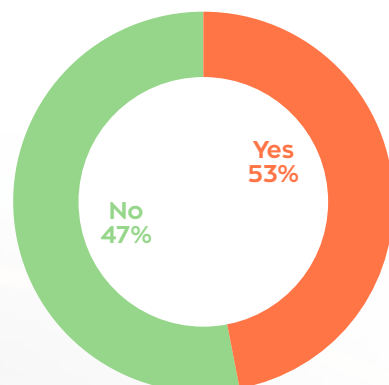
PRIOR ATTAINMENT



WORKLESS HOUSEHOLDS



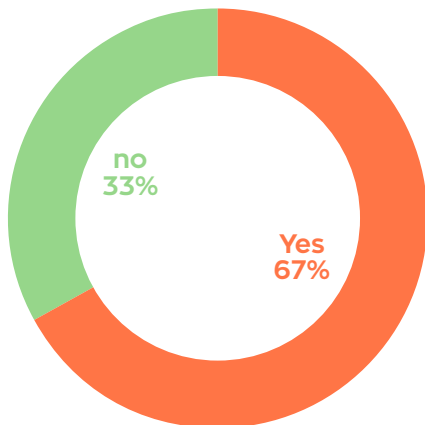
PHYSICAL HEALTH OR LEARNING NEEDS



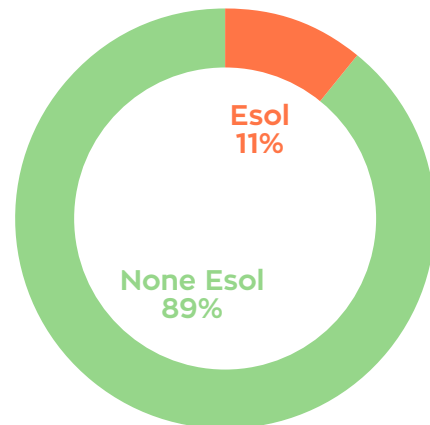


2021 VISUAL DATA SUMMARY

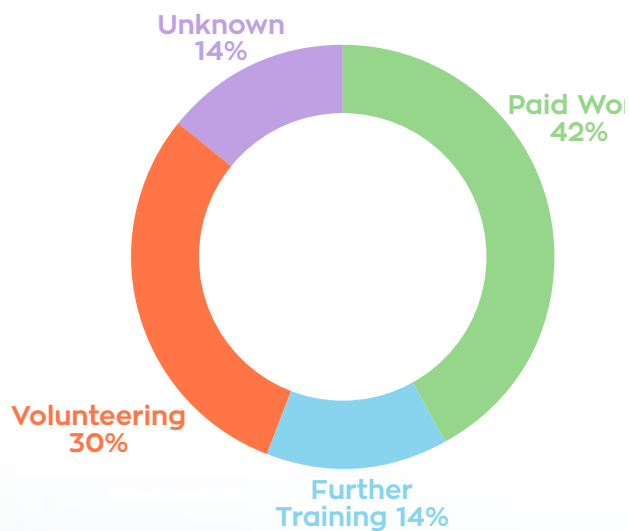
MENTAL HEALTH
DISCLOSURE



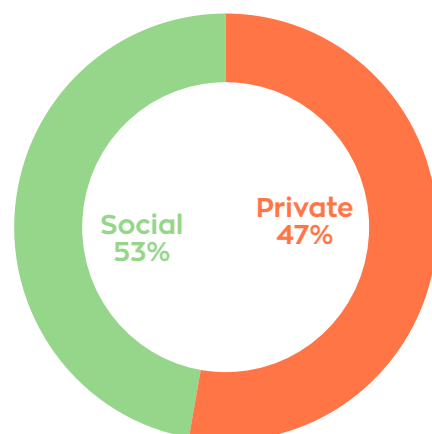
ENGLISH AS A
SECOND LANGUAGE



PROGRESSION



HOUSING
STATUS (RENTED)





VOLITION BEEKEEPING REPORT



VOLITION AT MANCHESTER CATHEDRAL

With the easing of Covid the beekeeping got back into full swing we took 35 volunteers through the beekeeping programme this year. We currently have a growing Monday group of 6 volunteers. They are busy making and cleaning kit when they are not working to make sure the colonies are supported in their winter mode.

Paul has stayed with us most of the year and seen the bees through the range of seasons, he supports the new volunteers and is expert with a hammer and flat pack hive. We were back to the Cathedral kitchen for our honey extraction and all volunteers were able to experience this. Jarring was also allowed in small groups and we soon had our harvest ready for sale. Volunteers were invited to sell our Heavenly Honey at Christmas time in the Cathedral to the public. This was a really enjoyable experience and gave us a chance to showcase our volunteers, honey, and what our Volition values are.

The benefits to our Volition Volunteers are apparent in their demeanour, smiling faces, ability to find work and in producing our 600-year anniversary honey which was given to the HRH Queen Elizabeth on her recent visit to our Cathedral.





VOLITION BEEKEEPING REPORT



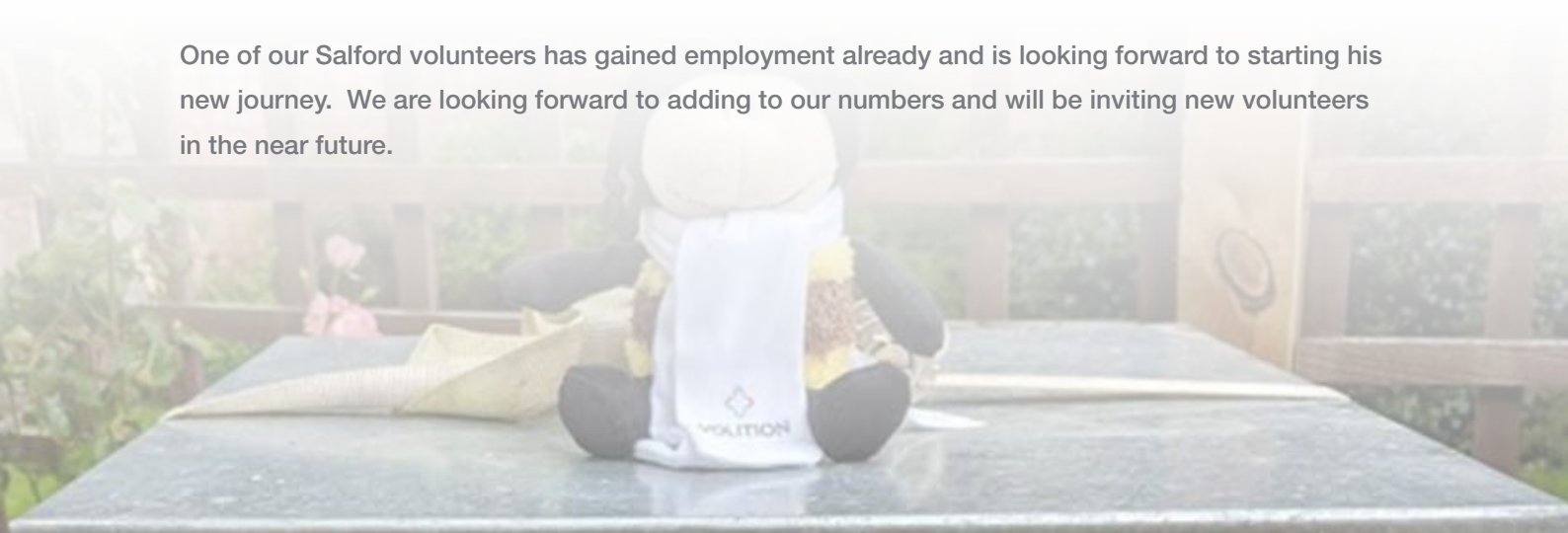
VOLITION AT SALFORD CATHEDRAL

Our first volunteers joined us at Salford Cathedral this year and we were able to welcome them with a jarring workshop. We have been very busy working on the apriay cutting back the bushing and making space for more colonies. The current four colonies are progressing well and we would like to add more to the site.

Our volunteers took part in a lip balm making workshop they were able to take some home and give some to the Cathedral staff that had show great interest.

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One of our Salford volunteers has gained employment already and is looking forward to starting his new journey. We are looking forward to adding to our numbers and will be inviting new volunteers in the near future.





ARTS & CRAFTS - GET CRAFTY



INTRODUCTION

The 'Get Crafty' art classes were created through Volition to give long-term unemployed adults the opportunity to learn a variety of skills through creativity.

Arts and crafts can be viewed as a therapeutic hobby, beneficial for supporting mental health but there are so many other benefits such as building skills to prepare for employment. Learning new art techniques focuses the mind, it builds strong observational and listening skills, helps with problem solving, improves attention to detail, co-ordination and dexterity. It also teaches discipline for example working to deadlines on commissions. Some of the art projects involved working in a group so good communication skills, patience and teamwork were essential when working together.

Long-term unemployment leads to low confidence and low-self esteem. The art classes were designed to increase confidence through challenge and achievement. 'Get Crafty' became a safe space where individuals could be themselves without fear or judgement. Throughout the year, members of the 'Get Crafty' group returned consistently week after week to the art classes. It has been clear to see that the members of the group have grown in confidence both on a personal level and artistically.

The pandemic in 2021 has affected many people but for some it has been extremely difficult. For those people who live alone, it was a very isolating and lonely time. The class was run in a safe way, following government guidance, which meant that the members of the group could feel relaxed and safe but also part of a community, which was welcoming and fun.



EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS STORIES

Helen was a member of the group from the beginning of the course. She struggled with her anxiety but found the art projects relaxing. Attending the art classes before her medical exams had a positive affect on her as it calmed her nerves. She achieved distinctions in her exams and has since been accepted full-time working for the NHS.

“I find enjoyment in being creative and the classes have helped build my confidence and calm my anxiety” Helen

Sheena regularly attended the weekly art classes. She was surprised by the variety of art techniques the workshops offered. Sheena volunteers at a homeless charity in Manchester. Over the weeks her confidence has grown in her creative abilities and she now shares her new art skills with the charity, helping homeless people to tell their own stories through art.

“I am doing things I could only have dreamed of. Learning new art skills and meeting new people has been fantastic” Sheena

During the pandemic, Margaret was sadly made redundant after forty-five years working in the same factory. The weekly art class gave her a structure, routine, friendship and support, which for her was lifeline until she returned to full-time work.

“The classes have been something to look forward to every week and focus on. It’s always a great atmosphere” Margaret

Mathew found the ‘Get Crafty’ classes motivational and has inspired him to pursue a creative profession. Although Mathew found part-time, temporary work this year he still managed to attend the art workshops. Having previously owned his own shop, he has now combined his knowledge and experience of business and retail with his new found passion for creativity by setting up his own Floristry shop.

“The art classes have enabled new hobbies to flourish. It has also helped with achieving my goals and it has been socially invigorating” Mathew



Examples of some of the art techniques taught at the ‘Get Crafty’ workshops



EXAMPLES OF SUCCESS STORIES

ART WORKSHOPS

Throughout the duration of the course, the group has had the opportunity to learn and explore many arts and crafts techniques including drawing, painting, printmaking, collage, textiles and sculpture.

The group found sculpting in particular a favourite activity as they found that it was tactile, therapeutic and relaxing. As well as doing individual artwork, the group were encouraged to participate in some group art projects, some of which included working with recycled materials to create large-scale artwork.

GROUP ART PROJECT

This project involved working independently on their own personal artwork and later working collaboratively to collage the pieces of art in the form of a banner. The group wanted to reflect the areas of the Volition Community such as bee-keeping, gardening and the cathedral building.

They worked positively as a group, making decisions together. A great mix of art skills have been learnt over the year.

SITE SPECIFIC ARTWORK

The group were asked by the Volition gardening team to paint and decorate a large, old, unused beehive to be used as a planter for the Manchester Cathedral garden. A decision was made by the group to use a nature theme incorporating flowers, bees and butterflies.

Whilst some took the lead and felt more confident, some were more reluctant to take part as they found it intimidating making a piece of art for public display. However, with support and encouragement from each other they all took part and managed to produce a fantastic finished result. The group were proud of their achievement especially since it was seen during the Royal visit to the cathedral by Her Majesty the Queen.



Examples of some group art projects



EXHIBITION

REDS & K 1000 - EXHIBITION

After a life in and out of institutions, 'Reds' Andrew Redmond, a member of Volition Community, met documentary photographer Karin Albinsson. When 'Reds' told Karin of the 1,000 photos he had taken and lost six years ago, this project was born. During the last couple of years, they have met up regularly to retake the photos lost. During the project he has rebuilt his life. While Reds rediscover Manchester through connecting to graffiti and street art, Karin captures his stories.

The work was exhibited July-September 2021 in Manchester Central Library and included nine collages with 2,400 photos of graffiti and street art with a storyline under each collage.

The Exhibition was opened by the Lord Mayor of Manchester Thomas Judge and the Dean from Manchester Cathedral, Rogers Govender.

The story of 'Reds' recovery through the photography project was turned into a Documentary Drama called 'Andrew and Karin', broadcast on BBC Radio 4 Drama in a series of 5 programs during November – December 2020.

CENOTAPH

Volition has had a constant presence at the Cenotaph for the past 5 years. Each weekday Andy, along with a team of volunteers, provide information and help to visitors and locals visiting the City. The team provide directions, maps and information on local attractions and the project provides an excellent volunteering opportunity for participants to gain customer service skills and improve confidence levels. In 2021, however, the pandemic dramatically reduced footfall to the City and the service had to be suspended. Andy switched to providing a telephone service to his volunteers to keep them motivated and in touch. He also did a sterling job putting his practical skills to good use by decorating our new office space. As things got back to normal Andy restarted the sessions and the team were in full strength for Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day. From 2022 Andy and the information volunteers will relocate to the Halo of Light.



GARDENING

The gardening team were back working in the borders by February. Lockdown had given grasses and weeds an enormous advantage and were beginning to obscure the view of the Cathedral.



One of our volunteers Marie, who was RHS trained, began to take a growing role to lead the team. She developed a bee friendly planting scheme to commemorate the 600 anniversary of the Cathedral and our art group began to produce pieces to add to the display.

New plants for the pollinator-friendly planting scheme were sourced and volunteers enjoyed releasing ladybird larvae onto the rose bushes around the Cathedral. These would control the aphids organically without the use of pesticides that are known to be harmful to bee populations.

Volunteers enjoyed learning about new plants and were encouraged by the tangible and visible difference they were making. An extra volunteering day was scheduled as regular volunteers wanted to spend more time in the garden. By mid-summer, geum, salvias, lavender and other plants were encouraged to bloom by a burst of sunny weather and visitors to the area enjoyed the display everyone had worked so hard on.



Volition was able to offer Marie a small paid post and the gardening team went from strength to strength.



GARDENING



After the Flower show the news came that the Cathedral would receive a royal visit. The garden needed to look its best, Hundreds of colourful bedding plants were added and volunteers worked hard again weeding, planting, watering and deadheading. Towards the end of summer Marie secured a fulltime post working on an estate in Northumberland. We were delighted that her dreams had come true but we needed a new person to fill her boots!

Volition advertised the vacant role and was delighted to recruit from its team of volunteers.

Jimmy took over the role in October and says: Firstly I would like to thank Volition for taking me on as a paid worker. I could not be more pleased. When I started at Volition in April 2018 I took to the place right away. As I started my volunteer work in the garden I knew this is where I wanted to be. Since I have been here I have met some really interesting people from Manchester and overseas. To be told by members of the public that you are doing a good job is so gratifying. It gives a real sense of achievement.



As we've come to the end of 2021 the team have planted lots of bulbs. Gardening is very much about the present and future.

Jimmy says: This garden is at its best when there is a good team working on. I'm really looking forward to meeting lots of new volunteers in 2022.



VOLITION AT SALFORD CATHEDRAL



Despite the adverse effects of the Global Pandemic, the Partnership between both Manchester and Salford Cathedrals has been strengthened throughout 2021.

We are pleased to announce the Official Launch of Volition at Salford Cathedral, scheduled to take place on 10th of March 2022 with the aim of expanding the Programme across the Local Area.

The foundations for the Volition programme at Salford Cathedral were established during the summer of 2021 when we saw Volunteers/Students from Manchester Cathedral attend training sessions and guided tours at Salford Cathedral, the aim of which was to increase knowledge and interest whilst introducing a different perspective to Cathedral life: n. 2 Volition Volunteers applied for permanent roles within the traditional volunteer Programme at Salford.

By the end of September 2021, we saw Salford host its first pilot Information Day, although attendance was lower than we wished for, we had the pleasure of meeting a lady called Kahman. Kahman had only recently moved to the UK that summer. Despite not being able to join Volition at Salford at that time, her enthusiasm led her to commence the Programme at Manchester Cathedral and continued to support us through the traditional volunteer Programme.

This ability to interact between both facilities has created a most unique and flexible environment which allows Volition to be delivered at its very best.

Through the joint efforts of both Cathedrals, we have been introduced to some amazing people: David was originally volunteering in beekeeping, he recently expressed a wish to become involved with supporting the Estates Team at Salford Cathedral, through maintaining the environment.

Week by week, David became a key member of the Team, he helped pick crab apples from our garden which we turned into jam with our traditional volunteer steward Co-ordinator, Filippa.



We have also had a session led by the Director of the Music at Salford Cathedral, Alex, encouraging volunteers for the Choir.

On the 7th December we had a very successful activity with the help of Cath, the Beekeeper: for the first time with the help of Volunteers and Members of staff we jarred 116 units of honey at Salford Cathedral.

With our shared commitment and enthusiasm, we strive to expand the Programme with 60 new Volunteers for 2022!



OPEN FOR BUSINESS

The first half of the 2021 was mid pandemic and the time mostly spent contacting volunteers, checking on peoples' wellbeing and maintaining communications with partnerships. Many of our hospitality partners had temporarily closed, as were job centres, and are only now just coming back to life.

Since returning to the office in the summer of 2021 it's been really positive to see the volunteers returning and feel that Volition is coming to back to life again. The WEA contract involved new levels of administration and processes were put in place to make sure this was completed in a timely fashion along with all the Cathedral safeguarding information.

15 returning volunteers had their documents refreshed and review meetings took place. It was obvious that people had been adversely affected by being at home for a year but equally how quickly they started to come out of themselves again.

As the Job Centre network reopened its doors for face to face appointments I have been in constant contact with numerous work coaches to let them know that Volition is open for business. This continues to involve advertising the programme and working to improve referral numbers after a challenging 12 months.



PATRONS & DONORS

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Manchester City Council, the Workers Educational Association for supporting Volition in 2021, without such support it would be very difficult to keep this charity going. I am also very grateful for the financial donations we received from the following during 2021:

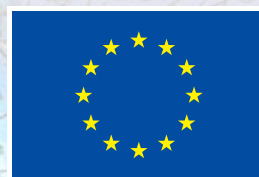
- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| ✦ Manchester College | ✦ Ninevah Trust |
| ✦ Procure Plus | ✦ Mr & Mrs Matthews |
| ✦ European Social Fund | ✦ Dove Tail Bars |
| ✦ Altered Café | ✦ Glue Creative Ltd |
| ✦ Rob Ferguson Fund | ✦ Diocese of Manchester |
| ✦ Swann Kitchens | ✦ Just Bee Honey Ltd |
| ✦ Mr & Mrs L Rudd | ✦ Chapman Holmes Ltd |

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the whole of the Volition team for the ongoing dedication in delivering this charity during the last 12 months and I hope you get a great sense of achievement in reading the individual reports contained in this year's annual report.

AND FINALLY, OUR PATRONS:

- ✦ Sir David Richards, Life Vice President of the Football Association
- ✦ Ronald D Painter, CEO, National Association of Workforce Boards, United States of America

Anthony O'Connor
Director
January 2022



EUROPEAN UNION
European Social Fund



MEET THE TEAM

A BIG THANK YOU TO THE VOLITION TEAM



Chairman
Rogers
Govender



Director
Anthony
O'Connor



Accountant
John
Atherden



Volunteer
Manager
Donna
Denston



Programme
Coordinator
John
Emsley



Admin
Assistant
Amie
Smith



Assistant
Coordinator
Andy
Pierce



Beekeeper
Catherine
Charnock



Artist in
Residence
Angela
Leigh



Artist in
Residence
Karin
Albinsson



Volition
Gardner
James
Redikin



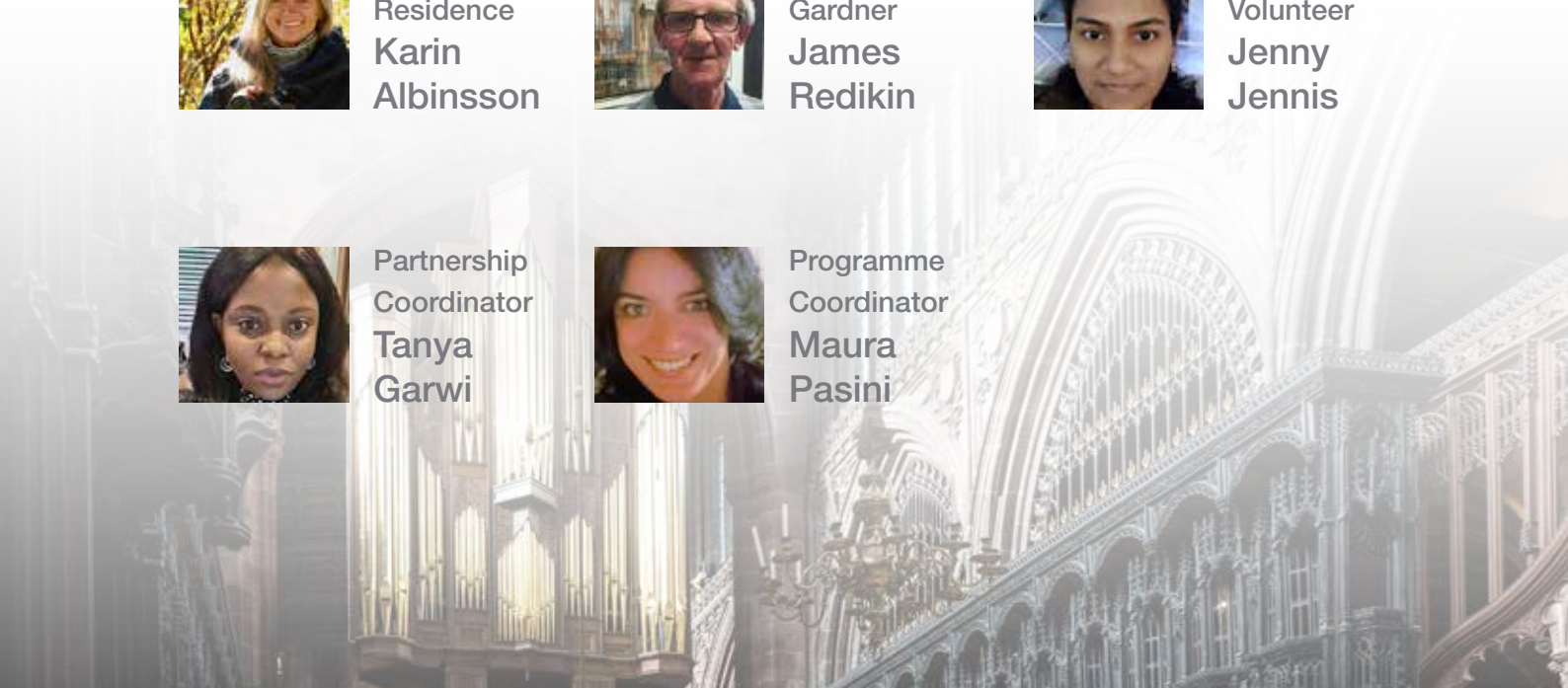
Volition
Volunteer
Jenny
Jennis



Partnership
Coordinator
Tanya
Garwi



Programme
Coordinator
Maura
Pasini



Remember

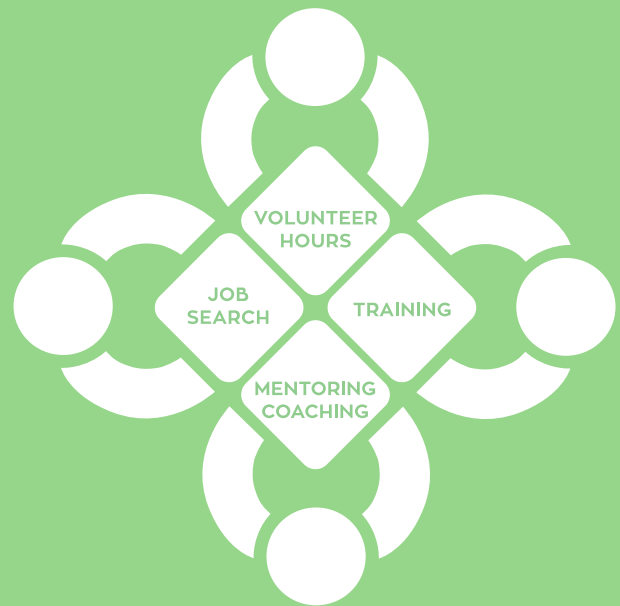
No goodbyes, we have time
for you no matter what

Choice and free will
achieves outcomes

Quality relationships not ticks
in boxes makes the difference

Constancy, we will always be here

Collaboration, people
helping people



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