



IN MY CASE:

‘Everyone should have access to books’

Hilary Vickers, 55, volunteers to help keep her local library in Haddenham, Bucks, open for the community

Books have always played a huge part in my life. As a child, there was a library by the school bus stop and I went in regularly. As I worked my way up from Enid Blyton through my teenage years, I must have borrowed every title!

I went on to work in publishing and bookselling, and although I now run a management consultancy agency from home with my husband, Adrian, I’ve never lost the thrill of escaping into a good book. So when I heard that our local library was threatened with closure due to cuts, I had to get involved.

I started in 2014, serving customers at the counter and managing book club orders. Being among the physical books that shaped my life felt the natural place for me to be, and I was delighted to meet more members of my local community and make new friends; volunteering works both ways.

The library is a big part of our locality and our team of around 30 volunteers are a community in themselves – we’re friends, we’re colleagues and it doesn’t matter how old we are or what background we have because we are all enthusiastic about the same thing.

Haddenham Community Library is now an independent charity, and I’m also a trustee, as well as managing the website, so spend time working on administration at home, too.

Libraries may seem an old-fashioned concept to some, but there are still so many people that love what they offer. We see people of all ages, from young children to elderly residents whose visits are their weekly contact with the outside world. The environment is all about sharing – from the books themselves to recommendations.

I’d recommend volunteering to anyone, it’s an extraordinary opportunity to be part of a very big picture.’

haddenhamcommunitylibrary.org.uk

THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

However much time you have, you can get back more than you give

IT’S GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

A 2013 study* found that 76% of people who’d volunteered in the past 12 months felt healthier, 94% said volunteering had improved their mood, and 78% found it had lowered their stress levels.

CAREER-BOOSTER

Volunteering makes you more desirable to potential employers. In *Adweek’s* article

on recruitment in 2015, they found that recruiters rank volunteer participation more favourably than things such as personal presentation.

GAIN SELF-ESTEEM

Doing good for others gives you a sense of accomplishment. The better you feel about yourself, the more likely you are to have a positive outlook and achieve future goals.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Your actions alone, no matter how big or small, can change someone’s life for the better. Need we say more?

INCREASES SOCIALISING

Social interaction improves mental and physical health. The benefits of regular socialising include better brain function and lower risk of depression.