



## Welcome to our community newsletter

We hope you find this useful, as well as entertaining!

Ashfield Voluntary Action (AVA) is a local charity, providing groups and activities throughout the district. We also act as a broker; providing volunteering opportunities for other local charities, and through the services and activities we run for the community.

We also work with people on an individual basis, helping them to access the support they need when they need it.

AVA supports local community-minded individuals and groups too. So, if there is any news you think needs to be shared, we'd love to hear from you.

In our newsletter, we want to highlight some local projects and key community moments. We also want to thank the people involved and recognise their achievements. Get in touch if you have a group or person in mind!

In this edition, we're launching our photography competition, see page 6 for more details.

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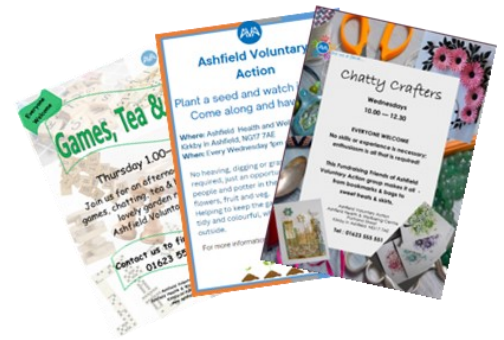
# Spotlight on the community

## What's Happening Locally...

We're so excited to let you know what's going on, but we can't cram in all the wonderful things that are happening in Ashfield. So, in this edition, we will highlight some of the projects and amazing people in our area. We would love to hear about what you're doing locally.

### Do you run or take part in a group or activity in Ashfield?

If so, we would want to hear about the difference this makes to local people. Let us know about what's going on and we can help you to promote the fabulous work you are doing in our community.



Did you know that we produce a directory of activities and groups in the area? Make sure we know all about yours! If you run a local group, or activity, and you want us to help you to get the word out, these are the steps to take...

- **Contact us** by email at: [info@ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk](mailto:info@ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk) or call: **01623 555 551**.
- **Promote your activity or group with us** - we will send you a link to our Google form (a simple online form) for you to fill out with the information about the group or person you would like to be included in the newsletter. We will contact you when your group or activity will be featured.
- **Information we'll need** - Send any posters/images you would like us to include in our next newsletter, and contact information for your group.
- **No internet access or email?** - We can help. Call the number above to make an appointment with us.



We would love to help promote all the fantastic things that are happening around the Ashfield area, and any activity to bring the community together!



# Volunteering

Have you ever wanted to volunteer, but felt you don't have time? Do you love the idea of putting something back into your community, but in a way that fits your family, or other commitments? Well now you can! Ashfield Voluntary Action has a bold and flexible approach to volunteering.



AVA believes that volunteering should be for everyone. We don't want people to feel like they're 'too busy', or be worried about making a big commitment. With our way of getting involved, you can support our community through 'bite-size' amounts of volunteering that suits your lifestyle.

## What's volunteering all about?

Volunteering is the giving of time and energy to help other people or good causes. You benefit by supporting the community, helping yourself, and supporting individuals or groups.

Although you're not paid to volunteer, we will pay your expenses so you are not out of pocket, and with volunteering you'll gain something priceless. Volunteering is a way for you to learn, meet new people, and gain confidence through supporting others. Volunteering could also lead to potential job opportunities by strengthening your CV, all while you make a difference to your community.

## What can you do?

At AVA we welcome volunteers for our gardens, kiosk and a wide range of activities, including befriending and group facilitation.

## Scams – 4 of the most common of 2023

To find out more about the four most **common and convincing** scams on the internet. Follow this link: [bit.ly/3Pv8peV](https://bit.ly/3Pv8peV)

Every month online scammers get more sophisticated and go to greater lengths to get our cash.

So, please read this article, learn from the tips provided and share with your family and friends.





# Supporting people living with dementia.



Ashfield Voluntary Action is passionately committed to supporting people living with dementia and their carers. We also recognise the importance of raising awareness and reducing stigma, as a more understanding community helps to improve the lives of people living with dementia and their families.

People with dementia can sometimes have restless hands and using twiddle mitts can help to keep them occupied. These are simple knitted cuffs which have a range of items sewn on to them and they provide a calming activity for people living with dementia.



We do not charge for twiddle mitts, but welcome donations from those who can afford a contribution. We aim to provide twiddle mitts to anyone living in Ashfield or Mansfield, and so really need your help. If you can knit, crochet, sew or embroider, **please get in touch!**

AVA has also been running a 'Mitts for Men' campaign, as twiddle mitts are often quite feminine. We would like our wonderful team of crafters to also make mitts which are more likely to appeal to men; so mitts with a fishing, gardening, or military focus are welcome. We also ask our crafters to make mitts in the colours of our local football teams; Mansfield Town Football Club (blue and gold), Notts County (black & white stripes) and Nottingham Forest (red & white). Please contact Sarah Taylor on **01623 555 551** to find out more.



## Be a wise owl don't get caught out by scams

Citizens Advice reports that **parcel delivery scams** are the most common type of scam in 2023. These can involve texts or emails that look like they're from delivery companies. The sender might say they need to reschedule a delivery or that you need to pay a shipping, or delivery fee. Remember, you can report any suspicious **SMS messages to 7726** and **emails to [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk)**.



For information and advice go to: <https://bitly.ws/UvZq>

# Groups at AVA

At AVA, we currently run nine groups for the local community, but are always open to new suggestions for groups and activities.

Our sessions provide a welcoming environment for you to learn new skills, whilst making friends. All groups are supported by our wonderful team of volunteers.

## Our Groups are:

**In Touch** - Mondays from 10am till 12noon and 1pm till 3pm. Informal and friendly drop-in sessions where you can learn how to use a laptop, tablet, smart phone, or the internet at your own pace.



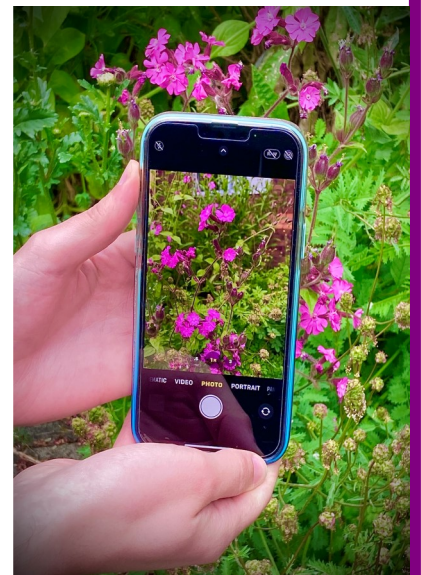
**LGBTQ+** - Mondays from 1pm till 3pm in our garden room. This is a relaxing, respectful and welcoming space to chat with other people from the LGBTQ+ community.

**Talking Tuesdays** - this group is on Tuesdays as the title suggests, 1:30pm till 3:30pm in our lovely garden room. A welcoming place to chat, and enjoy a cuppa amongst new friends.

**Grief & Loss Group** – first Tuesday of the month, at 10am till 12noon, people gather to share memories about people they have lost within a supportive environment.

**Chatty Crafters** - every Wednesday at 10am till 12:30pm, in our Garden Room. Let your creative side come out to play!

**Photography Group** - every Thursday from 10am till 12 noon. Come along and learn about the practical side of taking a good photograph. Be creative and enjoy our gardens as your perfect outside studio.



# Groups at AVA

**Women's Wellbeing Group** - every Thursday, 11am till 12 noon, the women's group welcomes local women to come, make new friends and enjoy a good natter, all in a social environment.

**Men's Chatting Together** - on Thursdays from 1pm till 2pm every two weeks. This hour long session gives men the chance to chat to others about shared interests and meet new people.

**Garden, Game and Chat Group** - every Thursday 1pm till 3pm. Come along and enjoy boardgames, puzzles, a friendly chat and enjoy our lovely garden.

We also run occasional sessions and groups in response to requests by the community. One recently was a Hanging Basket group. Tracey from [Wild Jasmine florist](#) taught the group how to make beautiful hanging baskets. Everyone who attended enjoyed and learned so much, we had 3 sessions over 3 weeks so that people didn't miss out. At AVA, we want to facilitate and inspire more groups like this; community led and community loved.



## Photography Competition

Show us what you can do...

We would love to see any photos you've taken of your garden, community moments, wildlife, or local scenery. We'll add them to the next edition of the newsletter and invite the community to pick their favourite!

Email your 'Top Two' to us at: [info@ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk](mailto:info@ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk)

If you don't see your photo in an up-and-coming newsletter, don't be discouraged. Come along to our photography group and learn a few tricks, so you can look out to see if your next photo features in a future newsletter.



# Trip on the Trent

Staff, volunteers and service users went on our annual river cruise on the 13th July - and a great time was had by all! The weather was perfect, and the group really enjoyed seeing Nottingham from a different perspective. Nineteen people of all ages went on the trip with Trent River Cruises which provides accessible, wheelchair friendly trips and includes lunch and refreshments.



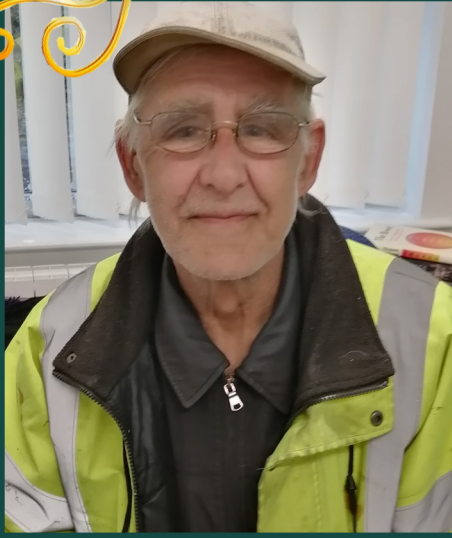
The group had a lovely time laughing and chatting, and also enjoyed a sing-song. One of the members of the group commented that they had really enjoyed the trip. They said, *"...it was lovely to be able to join in again with social activities with in a group that was supportive of people with mobility issues."*

AVA also runs other trips including: going to the theatre at Christmas, days out to garden centres, and walks around the local reservoir to enjoy the outdoors. These are community led, and asked for by our service users. Do you have any ideas or suggestions of things you'd like to do?

To find out more about the river cruise, or any of our social groups, please contact us on **01623 555 551**, email [info@ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk](mailto:info@ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk) or check out our website: [www.ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk](http://www.ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk)



# A tribute to our lovely Len



Len was one of our wonderful volunteers at Ashfield Community Enterprise (the part of AVA which helps us to raise money to run groups and activities). Very sadly, Len passed away in May this year following a short illness. He was a very special part of our Stanton Hill team and ran the woodworking sessions, with good humour, whilst sharing his amazing breadth of knowledge and experience. Len taught literally hundreds of people woodworking through his time; first at Untapped Resource and then Ashfield Community Enterprise.

Len designed and made an incredible range of items which were sold to raise funds for AVA. These items included; garden furniture, planters, bird tables, and bird boxes, all from reclaimed pallets. Len also refurbished old furniture; preventing it from going into landfill, and passing on these items to people in need.

Len was a highly valued and much-appreciated volunteer. He was deeply committed to the community, the service users he taught, the contribution he made to AVA was an example to us all.

We want to acknowledge Len's tremendous dedication and also hope to pass on the baton of his work. This is to ensure that Len's wonderful gift of time and knowledge continues to benefit others.



If you would like to find out more about volunteering for Ashfield Community Enterprise, or would like to talk through the possibility of facilitating the woodworking group at Stanton Hill please contact Teresa Jackson on **01623 555 551**.





# Does your community group need volunteers or help with funding?

Everyone wins with volunteering; the volunteer has the opportunity to build experience, knowledge, skills and confidence, community groups benefit from the work the volunteer does for them, and the wider community benefits from better local services and vibrant local landscape.



AVA is proud to support volunteering locally. Our Manager, Teresa Jackson said, “AVA works in close partnership with Ashfield District Council who have been very supportive of our work. Nottingham County Council continue to support our work with community and voluntary groups in Ashfield. We

appreciate these partnerships and it has allowed us to increase our capacity, strengthen our community involvement, and support voluntary groups throughout the Ashfield area”.



If you would like to find out more about how AVA can support your group, please contact us on **01623 555 551**. Alternatively, look on our website for information sheets on funding at [www.ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk](http://www.ashfieldvoluntaryaction.org.uk)

## Volunteer Interview - Karen's Story

I was new to the area and didn't know anyone, I thought it would be a really good way of getting to know my way around and hopefully making some new friends at the same time. I also like the idea of giving something back to the community.

I looked online and came across AVA. I rang up and talked through the options. I was particularly interested in doing something around health and wellbeing. When I first started four years ago, it was during the pandemic, so everything was on hold, or happening over the phone, rather than face-to-face. Once the buddy walks ended, I focused on befriending and have really been enjoying getting the chance to meet new people. As well as that, everyone at AVA has been really welcoming and I feel that I have made new friends and got to know people locally, which is what I wanted.

# FAVA Kiosk



## FAVA stands for Friends of Ashfield Voluntary Action.

The FAVA initiative is our way to allow volunteers to participate even if they have other commitments, or responsibilities. FAVA takes a flexible approach, welcoming people with differing abilities and challenges. AVA believes that **volunteering should be open to everyone!**



We know that many people have busy lives and less spare time. Others may need additional support to enable them to participate in volunteering. FAVA lets everyone get involved in volunteering in a way that suits them best.

One of FAVA's recent successes is the FAVA kiosk. The kiosk is located in the reception of the Ashfield Health and Wellbeing Centre on Portland Street in Kirkby-in-Ashfield (the old community hospital). At the kiosk, we sell sandwiches and hot food including jacket potatoes and soup. There are also a wide range of hot and cold drinks including tea, coffee, hot chocolate, fizzy drinks, and bottled water.

AVA uses the kiosk to train our volunteers and support their development, teaching them practical and transferable skills that they can then take with them in the future. Our volunteers give between 2 and 8 hours to the kiosk throughout the week. They have all been supported with a high level of kitchen safety and food hygiene training.

We are very proud of the work our volunteers do in the kiosk, the high standards in place and the level of training they have receive. This has resulted in AVA being awarded a **5 star rating** for food hygiene. The Kiosk is appreciated in the Wellbeing Centre by the community and staff alike.



# GARDENING

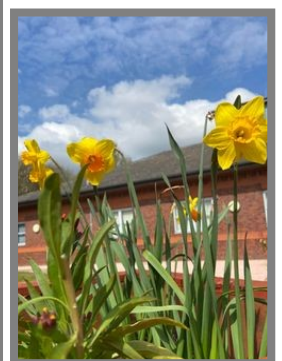
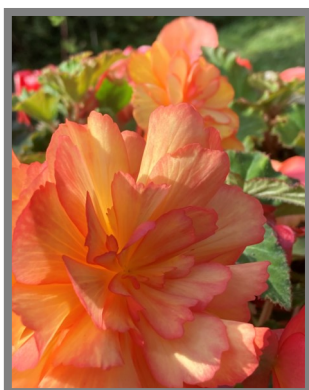
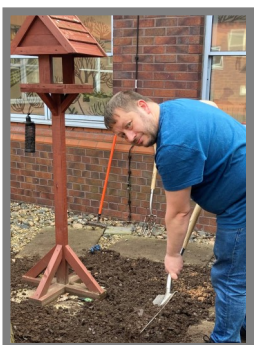
We have four lovely gardens:

- 🌻 **Garden Room** - our lovely, private, and secluded garden for our service users or visitors near our main office.
- 🌻 **Corridor** - an enclosed garden that attracts birds and provides beautiful colours with different flowers all year around.
- 🌻 **Reception** - here we have planters with fruits and veg growing, and an area with benches for any visitors or service users that come to the centre to sit and enjoy the wildlife.
- 🌻 **Hidden Gardens** - has a wonderful tree with benches surrounding it and is a quiet place to sit and relax.

We grow fruits and vegetables in raised beds in the reception garden. This is a great way for the staff and visitors to the centre to enjoy any produce or blossoming flowers. In the 'Garden room' garden we grow cucumbers which we use to make the sandwiches for the kiosk. Flowers are planted seasonally; providing beautiful colours and variety throughout the year. These are tidied up, re-organised and replenished to keep the gardens looking inviting. (Photos below).

Our Garden and Chat group is well attended and people come to either sit outside and admire the gardens while interacting with others, enjoying conversations, or take part in some kind of gardening task such as; pruning, weeding, watering or general tidying and organising. This is all done within their own skill set, or physical ability.

Please contact Ashfield Voluntary Action on: **01623 555 551** if you feel you would grow from joining either the group, or our volunteering team. We are always ready to welcome you. Any amount of time you can give will be greatly appreciated.



# Our Volunteers

Our volunteers are an integral part of our charity, and without them the work we do wouldn't be possible. We are always looking for more volunteers as we love to involve the community. Training and support is provided to each individual role.

Some people spend between 2 and 4 hours a day volunteering in our kiosk. Providing a friendly smile and serving food or drinks to the community.



Many volunteers work behind the scenes as trustees for our charity. Also an administration role which requires; answering the phones and door, being a friendly face to incoming visitors, as well as updating information into our databases.

You can volunteer to help in our gardens for an hour or two throughout the week; looking after fruits, veg and seasonal flowers. Current volunteers alternate between our four gardens cleaning and freshening up the pathways, planters, and benches.



Become a befriender to help members of the community with shopping or isolation. Encourage people to join groups or meet for coffee.

We also have volunteers to facilitate our groups, so people from the community can come to enjoy social, interactive and creative sessions in a welcoming environment.



One big thank you to all of our volunteers past and present.

Thank you to those have helped to create this newsletter and the amazing work you continue to do on a daily basis at AVA.