



**Welcome to the Spring 2018 edition of 'evolving'.** If you work for Zurich and are considering volunteering (whether after retiring, or by taking advantage of Zurich's volunteer policy) or, of course, if you have already retired - this newsletter is for you! We hope you enjoy it...

As we move away from the cold of an extended Winter, we hope you, like us, are looking forward to warmer days and milder evenings to enjoy the great outdoors; the garden, green spaces, countryside and coast.

Our annual team volunteering programme 'Challenge' kicks off shortly. Always a popular initiative with employees, groups get together to complete a one-off task or project for a local charity. It could be a garden makeover, painting job, or organising a day trip or party for service users.

If you have left Zurich, you needn't feel left out of Challenge! Get in touch and we can look to pull together a team of like-minded folk to take on your own team project.

One major project undertaken by all charities in the UK is to meet the stipulation of the General Data Protection Regulation. This is an EU ruling that governs the safeguarding of people's privacy and information. You may have already received communications from other organisations asking you to confirm that you'd like to stay in touch through email, or telephone.

As a recipient of this newsletter you have kindly opted in to receiving news from us, thank you. Hopefully, when the time is right, we can chat with you about your own volunteering plans.

These longer days we are looking forward to, are an ideal time to take up volunteering; an evening here and there, a weekday if you're not working, or finding spare

time at the weekend. Learn a new skill, dust off your existing knowledge and prowess, meet new people; make new friends. Make a difference!

If you are still working at Zurich, but retirement is within sight, don't forget the volunteering policy allows those who have given formal notice of retirement, one paid half-day per week (pro-rated if you are part-time) during your last six months of employment, to volunteer in the community. So you don't have to wait for retirement to get involved. As you'll read on, our current Evolvees are making a difference with a range of organisations. This could be you soon!

**I'd love to hear from you.**  
**Call me on 07799 656812 or email [wendy.martin@zct.org.uk](mailto:wendy.martin@zct.org.uk)**

**Wendy Martin**  
Evolving Manager, ZCT



### **Anne all-important Skillshare for Anne!**

Anne Fernandez, Project Manager in Swindon, left Zurich after 31 years last June. Keen to take up work in the Autumn, after a short break, Anne wanted to volunteer with a people-based charity for a couple of months over Summer. We matched Anne to James Hopkins Trust in Gloucester who were in

desperate need of project managing assistance with a massive Data Protection project.

Anne spent 2 days a week over 6 weeks at the charity which helps life limited children and their families by giving them respite. At the end of her time there she had compiled a presentation, workbook and comprehensive plan for the charity to manage the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The Trust were so impressed with Anne's work and professionalism. Anne also shared her work with another local charity - Winston's Wish, who again were delighted.

Whilst Anne took up paid work over the Autumn, she continues to support both JHT and Winston's Wish with the GDPR roll out activity before

the all-important implementation date of the 25th May. Anne also kindly offered to run a GDPR workshop for any of the local charities Zurich Community Trust could promote this to. We were thrilled that Anne hosted a session in April and this proved incredibly helpful to the attendees. Anne says 'I have enjoyed the challenge immensely and will mix paid work with voluntary work in the future and it is so rewarding'. Anne's experience since leaving Zurich is a great example of how a combination of going back into the paid workforce, but also spending time volunteering business skills can work well in pastures new.

Thank you Anne, a wonderful Skillshare undertaken and completed with flying colours



### **Oxfam books up retiree Derek Page**

Derek Page, Market Underwriter in Cardiff, retired at the start of 2015. Having turned 70 recently, Derek keeps very busy; enjoying walking, books and music. He has been able to combine all three in taking up volunteering at the local Oxfam bookshop, a 30 minute walk away. Derek's role at Oxfam keeps him busy for 3 days a week. He supports Oxfam's online business where he catalogues donations of books, coins, stamps. Derek says 'We get donations, mostly from house clearances. We sort, price and put them on our online shop. Then orders come in and we pack and despatch them. Nothing is wasted as what we don't use,

goes to our shops or is recycled. Apart from helping people, I have learnt a lot by looking at values. Plus, it keeps the brain working! One of the best things is finding a 'jewel' for example, a set of Jane Austen books sold for £450. Some old Hornsby trains fetched over £200'. The volunteers I meet are very friendly. We also get a few French students in the Summer. As part of their course they have to spend time in the UK to practise their English. In return, I have re-learnt a lot of my schoolboy French!

For more information on Oxfam visit this site: <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/shop>

## Nick (and Oscar) lap up life after Zurich



Nick Hoyle, our ZCT colleague and friend, retired in July 2016. In addition to walking his lovely dog, Oscar, and taking long countryside walks with his golf club, Nick soon took up volunteering at Bewdley Primary School on Friday afternoons. No stranger to supporting children with their literacy, Nick had already volunteered whilst at Zurich, as a lunchtime reader. Nick says 'This year I'm with Year 1 children (aged 5 and 6) and I spend about 10 minutes with each child listening to them read and helping them as appropriate. I go because I enjoyed my previous volunteering and I wanted to help my local community. I've really enjoyed it and it's been great to get to know the children

and see their enthusiasm. It's also good fun, for example, one afternoon the children came back in from break looking like they had spent the whole time jumping in puddles. One of them was especially mud splattered so I said to her "Look at you, mud on your face, big disgrace". One of the boys heard me and sang "We will, we will rock you". Now, that's pretty impressive for a 5 year old!

Nick also volunteers on Monday afternoons at Twigs, the horticultural project for the Emily Jordan Foundation in Worcestershire. The Foundation supports adults with learning difficulties. Nick takes up the tale, 'Through Better Things in Manchester, in particular, I had some experience of charities supporting adults with learning difficulties and it was an area I was keen to be involved in again once I retired. Despite my previous experience with ZCT, it has been an eye opener to see the range and very individual nature of the conditions the trainees live with. It certainly

took me out of my little bubble and comfort zone'.

Last but not least, Nick has continued his role as a Dementia Friends Champion, a passion he developed over 4 years ago, and he runs awareness raising sessions on an ad hoc basis.

'My mum had dementia, so it's close to my heart and it has been cathartic and rewarding to help increase awareness and understanding. The session is very well designed and explains things in easily understandable non-medical terms. I'd encourage anybody to attend a session as, sadly, virtually everybody will be touched by dementia at some stage in their lives'.

Keeping very busy doing a variety of activities and using different skills, Nick was keen to help people directly without targets and objectives. He loves being 'able to go in, be nice to people, see the difference it makes and go home'.

Picture above shows Nick (left) and Oscar (right) - the handsome one.

### **Social Connections improve wellbeing, the evidence is here!**

Here's an interesting article from The Guardian highlighting Somerset town Frome, which has seen a transformation in the wellbeing of their residents. As you'll read, when isolated people who have health problems are supported by community groups and volunteers, the number of emergency admissions to hospital falls. The town started establishing community groups to fill gaps in provision of advice and support. The aim was to break a familiar cycle of misery: illness reduces people's ability to socialise, which leads in turn to isolation and loneliness, which then exacerbates illness. It's a relatively 'easy' solution to adopt and also demonstrates that volunteering can not only help the volunteer keep a good frame of mind and enjoy better wellbeing, but also benefits the members of the wider community enormously.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/21/town-cure-illness-community-frome-somerset-isolation>

### The Name is Graham, John Graham



One of our most prolific Evolvees, John Graham, in Shropshire, has recently extended his volunteering portfolio even further! No job is too big for John who now visits his local Hospice on a Monday morning where he checks and cleans their 3 patient vehicles; 2 small van sized Peugeots that are adapted to take a wheelchair and a larger minibus that can take a number of wheelchairs and passengers. John checks to make sure that everything including lights, ramps, tyres, fuel, oil etc are all in good working order and he also washes and re-fuels them if needed. This normally takes him around 3 hours, but if any vehicles are out carrying patients then he returns on

Tuesday to complete the task.



Monday afternoon, John then heads to the Roy Fletcher Centre to continue his longer-standing commitment on the afternoon shift at the local IT help centre which helps those not so IT familiar learn the basics. He also does this on Wednesday afternoons.

Using his Engineering skills, John has chaired ReMap Shropshire for a few years, following on from his volunteering role devising both practical and ingenious solutions to assist the less mobile in getting tasks done. Once a month now, he chairs the panel meeting but in between times he may also attend events to demonstrate to the public what is available to help them. John also does a number of talks to local groups to raise awareness of Remap and they we can help people. These have generated a number of jobs.

Then, finally, when he's not masquerading as 007 (top picture), or visiting the Kremlin (above), he has continued to do some consultancy work for Zurich Engineering from home!

**Well done and thank you to all our volunteers; you are doing a splendid job and we salute you and the organisations you support.**



#### Keep in touch!

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Visit [www.zct.org.uk](http://www.zct.org.uk) for more details

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