



Polesworth Abbey Volunteering



Welcome visitors to
Polesworth Abbey

Be involved with
Monks and Nuns
at Polesworth

Make use of your
special interests
and talents

Polesworth Abbey, High Street, Polesworth
www.polesworthabbey.co.uk

Dear Volunteer

Thank you for thinking of Polesworth Abbey. As you read this leaflet you will see the opportunities of volunteering at Polesworth Abbey. There are already many people who enjoy volunteering here. Everyone's contribution is appreciated and your help would be appreciated too.

The Abbey site is 1200 years old and our visitors are encouraged to know more about the history and heritage of the site, as well as seeing what happens here in the present day. Volunteers welcome visitors and help School Projects that take place in the Abbey Church and around the Abbey site. During the summer we have *Monks and Nuns at Polesworth* which has been running at Polesworth since 2006.

There are unique opportunities for local people and those further away to take part and enjoy welcoming the adults and children who come here. We will always reimburse expenses and hope that volunteers will travel to take part in the Polesworth Abbey projects. We hope that individual volunteers will enjoy what they do here. Especially we hope that volunteers might bring their own craft skills and offer these as part of *Monks and Nuns at Polesworth*.

Volunteering is all about giving and receiving. By volunteering we help to welcome people to the historic Abbey site and at the same time gain new friends and experience a sense of fulfilment and achievement. The volunteer opportunities at Polesworth Abbey are outlined here. Please let us give you an information pack with more ideas about the opportunities for volunteers at Polesworth.

Father Philip, Polesworth Abbey



At Polesworth Abbey there are a number of volunteering opportunities

1. To welcome visitors to Polesworth Abbey.

New facilities have been built at Polesworth abbey where visitors are welcomed. First impressions count! A good welcome to Polesworth is important! It contributes to visitors impression of the Abbey and the historic site.

2. To help provide refreshment and a welcome to School Staff bringing children to the Abbey site.

The Abbey runs a Schools Programme during the summer called Monks and Nuns at Polesworth, and before Christmas a programme called Baby Jesus at Polesworth. Schools visitors need a special welcome. Coaches need to be met. Children led to the Abbey. Refreshments made for the staff.

3. To be involved in Monks and Nuns at Polesworth.

Lead a small group of children, possibly giving a demonstration of a craft or skill that fits in with Monks and Nuns at Polesworth. Volunteers work closely with the professional staff who produce and co-ordinate the project. Volunteers have the opportunity to dress up and be 'in-role'.

4. To help with the Sensory Garden.

The Sensory Garden at Polesworth Abbey recreates the peace and calm of the monastery Cloister, and provides a place of reflection for Schools visitors and others. Volunteers: maintain and develop the garden; interpret the garden for Schools visitors; and create word trails.



To welcome people to Polesworth Abbey

There is a welcome area in the new Abbey entrance where visitors are welcomed and receive a free copy of the brief guide to the Abbey site. First impressions are important!

We seek volunteers to welcome people who come to visit the Abbey. We hope that Volunteers might commit to a two-hour 'session' based at the Welcome Desk in the new entrance to the Abbey. Morning and afternoon sessions are available and it is hoped that the Abbey and the historic site can be open in the summer months each morning from 11.00 am to 1.00pm and each afternoon from 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm.

In the summertime the Abbey receives visitors who are on Canal holidays. Publicity through Hidden Britain will make Polesworth Abbey a destination for other road-based visitors, as well as for local people. Local people visit the Abbey site, because of the Church and because of the village's rich history. Much of the history of the village is rooted in the abbey site.

Volunteers do not need to be knowledgeable about Polesworth's past! There is a free guide to the Abbey and the site to give to each visitor, and a full-colour Guidebook for those who want more or who would like a souvenir to take away.

There is a range of gifts as well as information about the locality. We hope that the Welcome Volunteers will ask people to sign the visitors book in the Church and visit the whole site using the free guide.

Often it will be possible for people to get a drink in the Refectory. The Welcome Volunteer can encourage people to enjoy their visit. Visitors are always pleased to receive a friendly welcome. A good welcome to Polesworth Abbey contributes to visitors impression of the Abbey and the historic site.



To help provide refreshments and a welcome to School Staff bringing children to the Abbey site.

The Abbey runs a Schools Programme during the Summer called Monks and Nuns at Polesworth, and during the month before Christmas a programme called Baby Jesus at Polesworth. Baby Jesus has run for some years and Volunteers have met coaches and helped Teachers to bring the children to the Abbey from the coach park. The welcome that people receive is very important for the success of the School visit, and Teachers are always pleased for their group to be met and guided, especially if it is their first visit.

The programme of activity is run professionally by 'Diversions' who work with Schools supporting the history curriculum by role-play activities. Here at Polesworth Abbey the children who come for Monks and Nuns at Polesworth will dress up and the 'Diversions' staff will be 'in role'. For the children, they will go back to the medieval period and experience the monastery as it was over 1,000 years ago. Volunteers can help Staff and show the children around the site, moving from activity to activity.

Mainly these activities will be based at the Coach House, but the Staff will bring the children to the Abbey for part of the programme, both to the church and to the garden.

Refreshments for the Staff are important. Volunteers make a huge difference to the programmes and we hope that you will enjoy this role. At the end of the visit there is a audio presentation linking the activities of the monks and nuns in the past with the present-day activities of the Abbey parish. We hope that that will be an inspiration to everyone and show that the kindness and generosity of the past religious life continues in the parish community today.



To be involved in Monks and Nuns at Polesworth

We seek adult volunteers who might lead a small group of children, possibly giving a demonstration of a craft or skill that fits in with Monks and Nuns at Polesworth.

Monks and Nuns at Polesworth is a Schools programme run for us professionally by 'Diversions' who make-history-real for children by role play. The children will dress in monastic costumes and their programme of activities will take them back over 1,000 years to the medieval life of Monks and Nuns at Polesworth.

Some of the programme is 'plenary' activity, with all the Staff and children together. But other parts of the programme are 'small group activities'.

We seek Volunteers who might demonstrate calligraphy, or candle making, embroidery, or other crafts that fits in with Monks and Nuns. Usually the demonstration will be followed by some practical work by the children, often trying their own hand at the activity themselves. The small groups will be of up to 8 children only, and they will be accompanied by their school staff.

We hope that this is an opportunity for people who have a skill, or who might like to learn one, to join in with the project and enjoy passing on a new experience to children. This aspect of Monks and Nuns is likely to be popular and Volunteers will be well supported!

Volunteers work closely with the professional staff who produce and coordinate the project. Volunteers may need to dress up and be 'in role'.

We think that this Volunteering-opportunity is quite unique!



Volunteering Opportunities Sensory Garden

The Sensory Garden at Polesworth Abbey recreates the peace and calm of the monastery Cloister, and provides a place of reflection for Schools visitors and others. Schools groups learn about the properties of herbs, especially about the physic herbs and their healing powers. Other visitors to the Abbey site have the opportunity to absorb the peace of the monastery cloister which is today part of the Abbey Church site. There are a number of volunteering opportunities connected with the Sensory Garden:

1. maintaining and developing the planting and environment of the Sensory Garden.

A garden is always developing, and always needs careful attention. As well as routine tasks our plants need to be identified for the Schools visitors and a supply of herbs for the children to use as part of their visit is needed. We have tools and hand equipment and the help of a professional landscape designer to oversee the landscape developments and the evolution of the garden. Many hands make light work. Please come and help to maintain and develop this beautiful place which was founded 1200 years ago.

2. interpreting the garden for Schools visitors to Monks and Nuns at Polesworth

We hope that some people may volunteer to talk to small groups of children about the properties of herbs. The groups of young people from Primary Schools would always be accompanied by their teacher. Learning about the physic, culinary and cloth dying capabilities of the herbs is an important part of the Schools' programme, which teaches children about the origins of medicine and the use of herbs in cooking and textiles.

3. developing the garden for visitors

Volunteers who might work with a professional artist, possibly a sculptor, to reflect on the Abbey and suggest suitable sculptures for the Sensory Garden.

4. creating word-trails within the Sensory Garden

Volunteers who would produce 'word-trails' for the Sensory Garden along religious and spiritual themes. We envisage poems or quotations, an authors own reflections. Sounds may be possible too. We aim to have a collection of word-trails that may be used for different occasions or according to the interest of certain visiting groups.

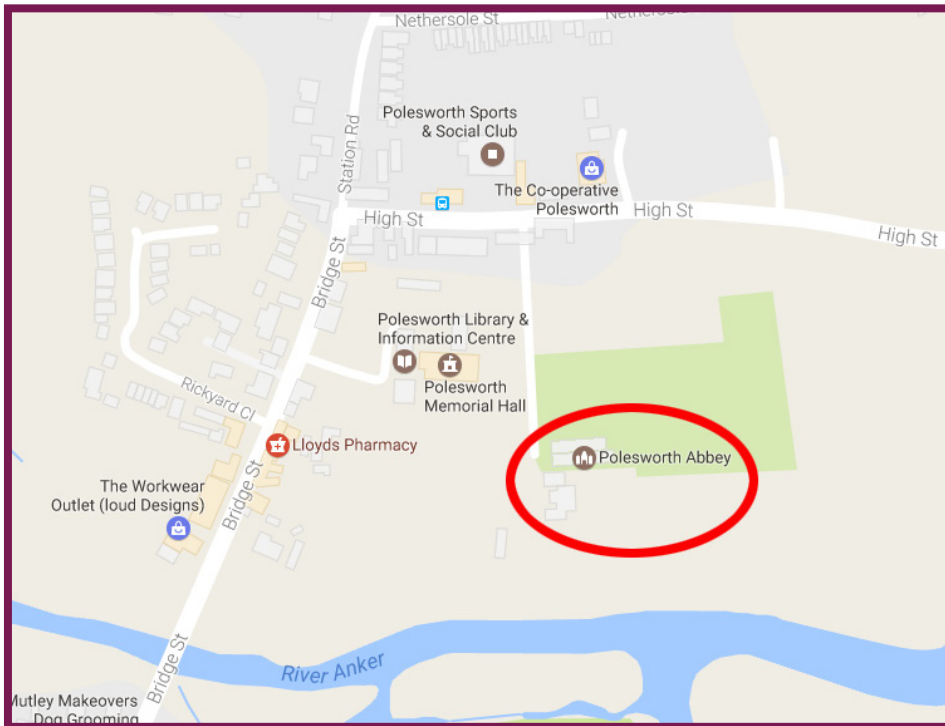


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