



1. Dave Hughes

Dave is well known in Maghull for his entertaining programmes on Maghull Radio and his previous life as a local lollipop man.

Dave started to volunteer when he retired in 2000 after being a courier with Securicor. Working as a Lollipop man meant that he met lots of people he was always keen to keep involved in supporting his local community. In 2013 he read an article by Jim Sharpe in the local newspaper asking for young broadcasters who would be interested in getting involved in a new community radio station. Dave missed the word “young” and applied anyway. After training Dave became one of new Maghull Radio’s broadcasters and worked alongside councillors to help promote the station and Maghull.

Dave’s combined desires of travelling, to raise money for good causes and wanting to promote Maghull as far and wide as possible has resulted in him visiting places as far apart as New York, Heidelberg, Norway’s Polar Circle and the Outer Hebrides and Flanders, all aided by Dave’s lifelong accumulation of air miles and his trusty Vespa. Local officials have all received tokens from Maghull via Dave including the Mayor of New York.

Now at the age of 80 Dave has always wanted to keep active and enjoys meeting the public. He loves to see people getting on and will always try to help them come through their hardships. He uses his radio programmes to applaud achievements within the Maghull community and likes to give local people a platform to show what can be done with a bit of effort and a fair wind. Dave appreciates Maghull Radio as being community radio in its truest form run by local people for local people.

Dave has enjoyed all of his volunteer in activities in the round. The radio allows him to indulge his love of communicating. During the current pandemic he has set himself up to broadcast from home as the studio is out of bounds. Determined not to let the crisis stop his shows when they were most needed Dave equipped himself with a microphone and hasn’t stopped broadcasting throughout, with support from his radio station colleagues. He says it’s helped to keep him sane.

Dave’s most memorable moments as volunteer have come with his exhausting visit to Norway on his Vespa which raised £1,500 for the Walton Centre. This involved him having to travel 700 km a day in order to meet very tight ferry deadlines. He collected the 2016 Maghull Civic Award for his endeavours. Probably Dave’s most poignant trip was to the Isle of Barra after the Manchester Arena bombing where he laid flowers in honour of two young girls who died and who had travelled from the island.

Dave says that people wanting to volunteer should “Just do it...don’t think about it for too long. Don’t have any regrets and it’s better to have tried than to regret not trying later on”

2. Claire Sherman

Claire is a Reader in the Maghull and Melling Team of Anglican Churches made up of St Andrew, St James, St Peter and St Thomas.

She was a secondary school teacher who also worked for Connexions before starting her own women's fitness business. After becoming a Reader in the church in 2005, she has led worship in church services and now that she has retired wants to be more involved with the team within the church and to work with the community. The recent events surrounding the pandemic have emphasised to her that it is more important than ever to demonstrate acts of kindness and friendship towards people who need all the support they can get in such difficult times.

Having a strong faith and using that drive to express that in support of the wider community has helped her focus on identifying what she can do for others, working as part of the team of clergy and volunteers within the church. The pandemic has helped her appreciate even more her good health, strong marriage and close relationships of family and friends and made her more determined to help those who may not have these things to see them through the crisis.

In practical terms a lack of meetings and church services has led to her helping develop alternatives. Claire has participated in preparing a weekly worship service which can be accessed via the website www.achurchnearyou.com There is also a phone network between churches to keep communication going to ensure different churches are aware of the resources available to them which can be shared across the community. Claire has been part of the team which has created a prayer tree, two prayer gates and a prayer trail spread around the four churches to allow people some quiet space for contemplation whilst observing social distancing. There is a video of the prayer trail at St Andrew's on Facebook.

Claire has been involved in knitting hearts which go to hospitals to show support for NHS workers and bereaved families. Claire has been part of the Check in and Chat service provided by Sefton CVS and the May Logan Centre which allows people who are isolated at present to be buddied up and enjoy friendly chats helping to prevent a sense of loneliness and keep their spirits up.

Claire feels that there have been lots of rewarding little moments in the range of her volunteering activities. The sense of working as a team and all pulling together as a team in such trying times feels like a blessing. Her advice to anyone thinking of volunteering would be "Don't think too long and give what you can. You'll be amazed at what you get back in return".

3. Sandra O'Neill

Until recently Sandra worked at a local housing association providing social housing for people across Merseyside and the north west of England. Sandra was responsible for managing landlord's services to 10,000 homes.

Working as a volunteer in a local community café had provided Sandra with a taste of helping out and working with other volunteers. Once the pandemic began to impact on local communities Sandra was keen to offer what help she could and enrolled with Sefton CVS to be part of a shopping service. This service helps deliver supplies to people across Maghull and Sefton who are unable to go to the shops for themselves due to ailments and needing to self-protect and don't have any immediate family support but who don't fall in to the shielding category.

Sandra delivers to two residents in Maghull and Melling one who is visually impaired and the other who needs to minimise contact with other people. She goes shopping for each person once a week and delivers to their homes. This often requires an ongoing phone call at the supermarket as items that aren't available from the shopping list have to be replaced with suitable alternatives. Both residents have said they really appreciate the service and enjoy the social contact which helps to avoid loneliness and a sense of isolation, which could easily become precedent as they live alone.

Identifying a need and providing a solution to help people avoid potential crisis is what motivated Sandra to initially get involved. The purpose that volunteering provides was also attractive as well as connecting to people who genuinely appreciate you making an effort on their behalf when they may otherwise have a difficulty in carrying out usually straight forwards tasks, such as shopping. So much that could be taken for granted cannot be in current circumstances and everyone needs to rally around and help each other.

Sandra says that "little acts of kindness can make big differences to people's quality of life and if everyone who was able chipped in it's surprising what can be achieved".

4. Chris Walker

Chris volunteers at Maghull and District Foodbank which is located at the Methodist Church on Liverpool Road North

Prior to retirement Chris was Head of RE at Deyes High School she is a member of St George's URC Maghull and was immediately attracted to the Christian values of the Trussell Trust. She became a member of the Steering Group in 2013 when it began and she has volunteered there ever since. Chris has a strong belief that Christian faith has to be shown in action and the Foodbank allows her to do that within her own community. Although Maghull and District can appear to be a prosperous area there are many people here, as in every town, who sometimes need extra support in difficult situations.

Volunteering at the Foodbank involves a variety of tasks:

Organising the rota of the amazing volunteers

Setting up the room that Maghull Methodist Church allowing a different type of use (obviously in a very different way at the moment because it would usually provide tea and coffee and a space to chat)

Talking with people who come for help and signposting them to other agencies who may be able to help

Managing the stock that is so kindly donated from individuals and organisations within the community

Liaising with local schools and churches to help coordinate support and work carried out by the Foodbank.

When the Foodbank is open every Tuesday morning includes at least one memorable moment but at present it has to be the overwhelming generosity of people in Maghull and Lydiat who bring donations to support their less fortunate neighbours. From a lovely young girl who had organised a collection in her street to an older couple who come every week to bring something. We live in a generous, caring community and we are able to witness this every week.

Chris says "being a volunteer at Foodbank is a privilege and a source of joy. All of the volunteers are a pleasure to work with and we have formed solid friendships; and it is a blessing to be part of something that can make a positive difference in a person's life when they most need it."
