Tempo

Pathways to the Past
Llwybrau i'r Llynedd

Pathways to the Past – Involving volunteers and connecting communities

Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund
led by Tempo Time Credits in Neath Port Talbot

This toolkit is interactive

Time Well Spent



Gwnaed yn bosibl gan | Made possible with
Cronfa Treftadaeth
Heritage Fund

Sandfields Community Garden
Neath Port Talbot, Wales



Foreword

Collaboration, connection, community

"Volunteering works best when it is built on reciprocity, inclusion, and connection. Developing approaches together empowers more people to contribute, to belong and to thrive.

In this toolkit, we share real practice and lessons learned from the **Pathways to the Past** project to empower future projects.

This toolkit brings together learning from the Pathways collaboration. It is grounded in real experience, shaped by heritage practitioners and volunteers, and informed by a community-led approach to engagement. While rooted in Neath Port Talbot, the ideas and tools within this resource are designed to be adapted and used by heritage organisations in a wide range of places and contexts.

Thank you to all our partners in communities, public services and voluntary organisations up and down Wales and England for their collaborations with Tempo since 2008. Together with heritage organisations and partners in Neath Port Talbot Pathways to the Past has explored how volunteering in heritage can be more welcoming, more accessible, and better serve communities.

Together, we have tested new ways of engaging people, overcoming barriers, and creating meaningful pathways into volunteering, especially —for people who have felt excluded or that heritage spaces are not "for them".

We hope this toolkit supports you to reflect, experiment, and build volunteering opportunities that strengthen connections between people and heritage—now and for the future."



Rachel Gegeshidze
Chief Executive Officer,
Tempo Time Credits



Young Archaeologists Club trip Tretower Court and Castle

Welcome to the Pathways to the Past:

Involving volunteers and connecting our communities

This toolkit is designed to support heritage organisations to involve volunteers in *meaningful,* inclusive, and sustainable ways.

Developed through the Pathways to the Past: Involving volunteers and connecting communities in Neath Port Talbot **to their heritage project,** this toolkit is rooted in practical learning from working alongside heritage organisations, community partners, and citizens across the County Borough of Neath Port Talbot.

While the project is **place-based**, the principles, approaches, and tools within this resource are designed to be adaptable to heritage settings and volunteering programmes in many different contexts.

At its heart, Pathways to the Past is about opening doors. It recognises that heritage volunteering has enormous potential to connect people to place, history, and each other—but that traditional volunteering models can unintentionally exclude people.

This toolkit supports organisations to *rethink* how volunteering happens, who it is for, and how people are welcomed, supported, and *valued.*

About the Toolkit

Throughout this project, Tempo worked with heritage organisations to co-produce a new model of volunteering—one that takes people on a journey, from first engagement through to deeper involvement, and that actively encourages new and different people to take their first steps into heritage volunteering.

The toolkit draws on a community engagement approach, recognising that people connect to heritage in different ways and at different stages of their lives.

It is designed to help organisations:

- **Recruit and retain** volunteers of all ages and backgrounds
- **Broaden participation** beyond to underrepresented groups
- **Build long-term relationships** with communities born out of greater confidence and sense of belonging
- Create **flexible, accessible, and meaningful** opportunities to volunteer
- Develop a **sustainable volunteer base** for the future

Developed in close collaboration with Neath Port Talbot Council and aligned with the the council's Heritage Strategy, the project also supports wider goals of raising awareness of local heritage, increasing engagement with sites, and strengthening the role of heritage organisations within their communities.

Using this Toolkit

Watch our animation

This toolkit is not a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, it offers practical guidance, reflective prompts, and adaptable tools that can be shaped to fit your organisation, your community, and your heritage context.

Whether you are:

- Looking to attract new volunteers
- Trying to reach communities who have not traditionally engaged with heritage
- Reviewing your current volunteering offer
- Or starting from scratch

This toolkit is here to support you to take the next step—building inclusive pathways into heritage volunteering and creating connections that last.



The impact the club has had on the children, I think, is developing a keen sense of the world around them. It's giving them confidence, it's team building skills, but also learning about their community and broader communities too.

Watch Harriet's story here

Harriet Eaton, Young Archaeologists Club

Place-based, community led

Working alongside communities, public services, and voluntary organisations, Tempo develops approaches that strengthen communities, widen participation, and create opportunities for people to contribute, connect, and belong.

We take a **place-based, community-led approach,** recognising that every community is different and that sustainable change happens when local people are actively involved in shaping solutions.

We have particular expertise in supporting organisations to engage people who are underrepresented in volunteering, including those facing social, economic, or health-related barriers. Tempo works across a range of sectors, including heritage, health and social care, housing, environment, arts and culture, and community development.

We collaborate closely with local authorities, voluntary and community organisations, and strategic partners to design and deliver programmes that respond to local priorities and deliver lasting impact.

At the heart of Tempo's work is a commitment to equity, inclusion, and reciprocity—ensuring that participation is accessible, valued, and beneficial for individuals, organisations, and communities alike.

Everyone's time is valuable: the Time Credits model

Tempo Time Credits are a proven tool that recognise and reward people's time when they contribute to their communities.

People earn Time Credits for volunteering or giving their time, which they can then use to access activities, services, and experiences—often within their local area. Time Credits are based on the principle that everyone's time is valuable. They help to reduce barriers to volunteering, build confidence, and encourage people to take their first steps into participation.

They are particularly effective in engaging people who may not identify as volunteers or who face practical or psychological barriers to getting involved.



In heritage settings, Time Credits can:

- Support **recruitment of new and more diverse volunteers**
- Encourage **ongoing participation and retention**
- **Recognise** informal as well as formal contributions
- **Strengthen relationships** between heritage organisations and their communities
- Create pathways into **deeper engagement, skills development, and wellbeing benefits**

Today hundreds of organisations and partners across England and Wales access Time Credits, in turn supporting thousands of people to make a difference in their communities. Flexible and adaptable, Time Credits can be shaped to fit the needs of different organisations, projects, and places.

Together, Tempo and Tempo Time Credits provide a practical, values-led approach to building inclusive volunteering opportunities and stronger connections between people and the places that matter to them.

Find out more at: wearetempo.org

Understanding Barriers in Heritage Volunteering

As part of the Pathways to the Past project, we gathered feedback from existing volunteers and community members about what can make it difficult for people to get involved or to continue volunteering. This feedback provides valuable insight into the real and perceived barriers that shape participation in heritage volunteering.

The barriers identified highlight that challenges are often interconnected, with practical, social, and structural factors reinforcing one another.

"My brother is disabled and loves to visit the cinema with his carer. He can do this now with time credits and it does not cost me anything."

Anonymous volunteer feedback



1. Health, Wellbeing, and Confidence

Volunteers highlighted that physical and mental health can significantly affect people's ability to engage, including:

- Ill-health and mobility challenges
- Social anxiety and confidence-related barriers
- Fear of the unknown when entering unfamiliar spaces or roles

These factors can be exacerbated when volunteering environments feel formal, intimidating, or inflexible.

Find out how to address these barriers

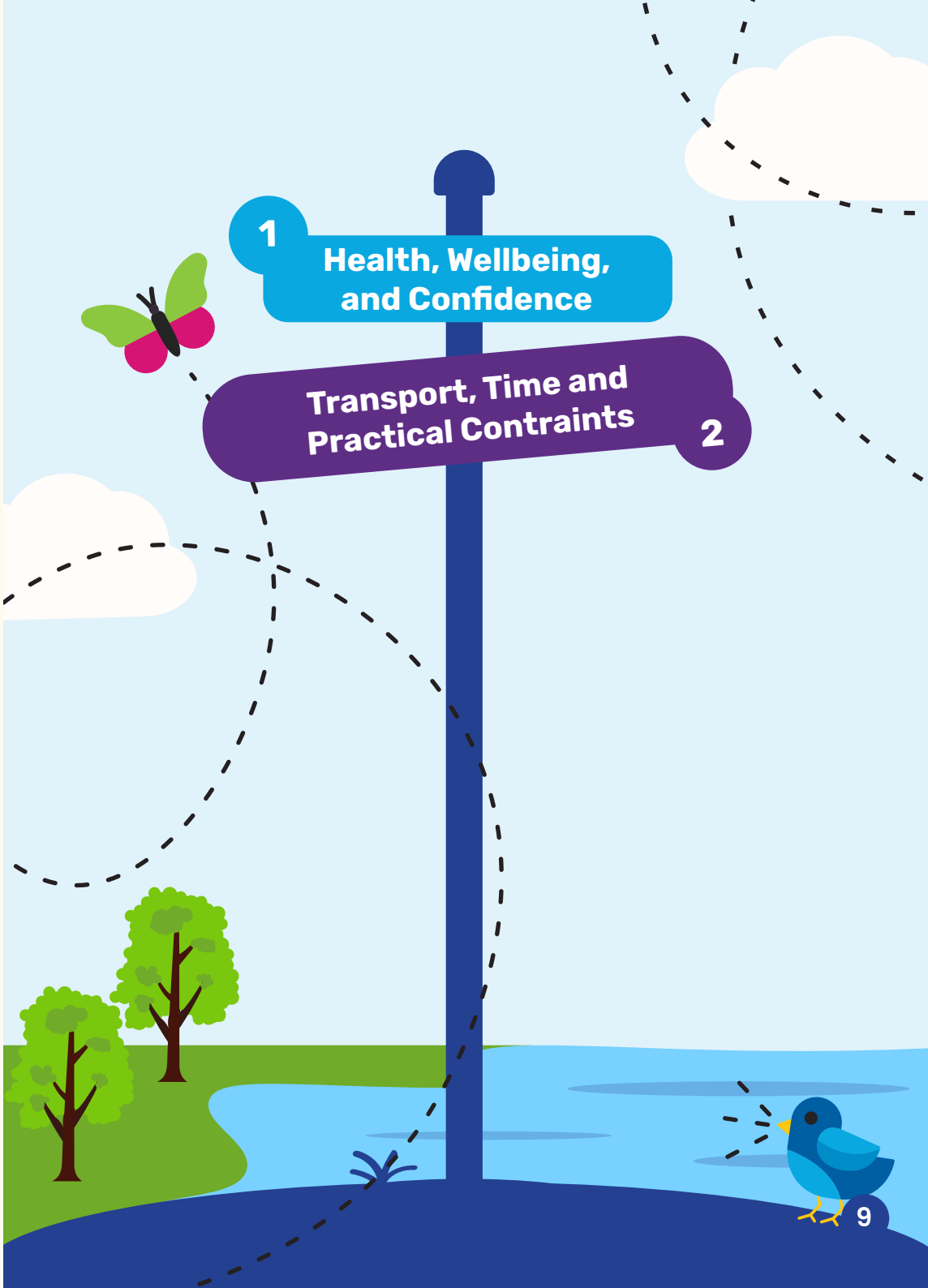
2. Transport, Time, and Practical Constraints

Practical considerations were commonly raised as barriers, particularly:

- The cost of transport
- Limited transport availability, especially in rural or less-connected areas
- Fixed volunteering hours that do not fit around other commitments

These issues can disproportionately affect people on lower incomes, younger people, and those without access to private transport.

Find out how to address these barriers



3. Caring and Family Responsibilities

Many people face competing priorities that limit their ability to volunteer, including:

- Family commitments
- Caring responsibilities for children, older relatives, or others

Where volunteering roles require fixed schedules or long-term commitments, this can exclude people who might otherwise be keen to contribute.

Find out how to address these barriers

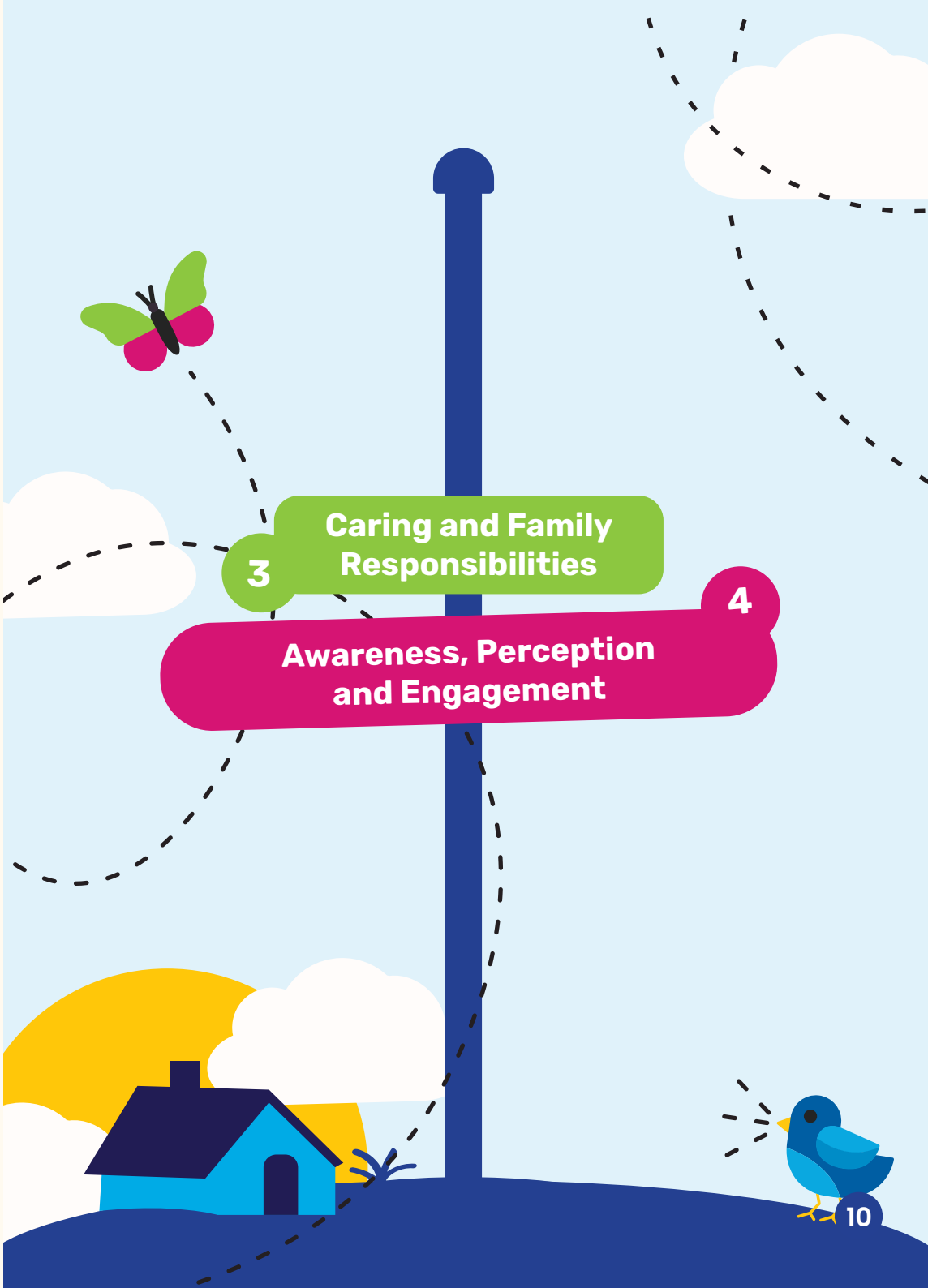
4. Awareness, Perception, and Engagement

Volunteers identified that:

- Limited awareness of volunteering opportunities reduces participation
- Advertising does not always reach a wide or diverse audience
- Some people feel disengaged or apathetic towards heritage, often due to a lack of connection or relevance

This suggests a need for clearer, more accessible communication and outreach that speaks to different communities.

Find out how to address these barriers



5. Affordability and Financial Barriers

Cost was identified as a significant barrier, particularly for younger people. Notably:

- Travel and participation costs
- Unpaid time commitments
- Limited access to affordable opportunities to engage with heritage

Financial barriers can prevent people from even considering volunteering as an option.

Find out how to address these barriers

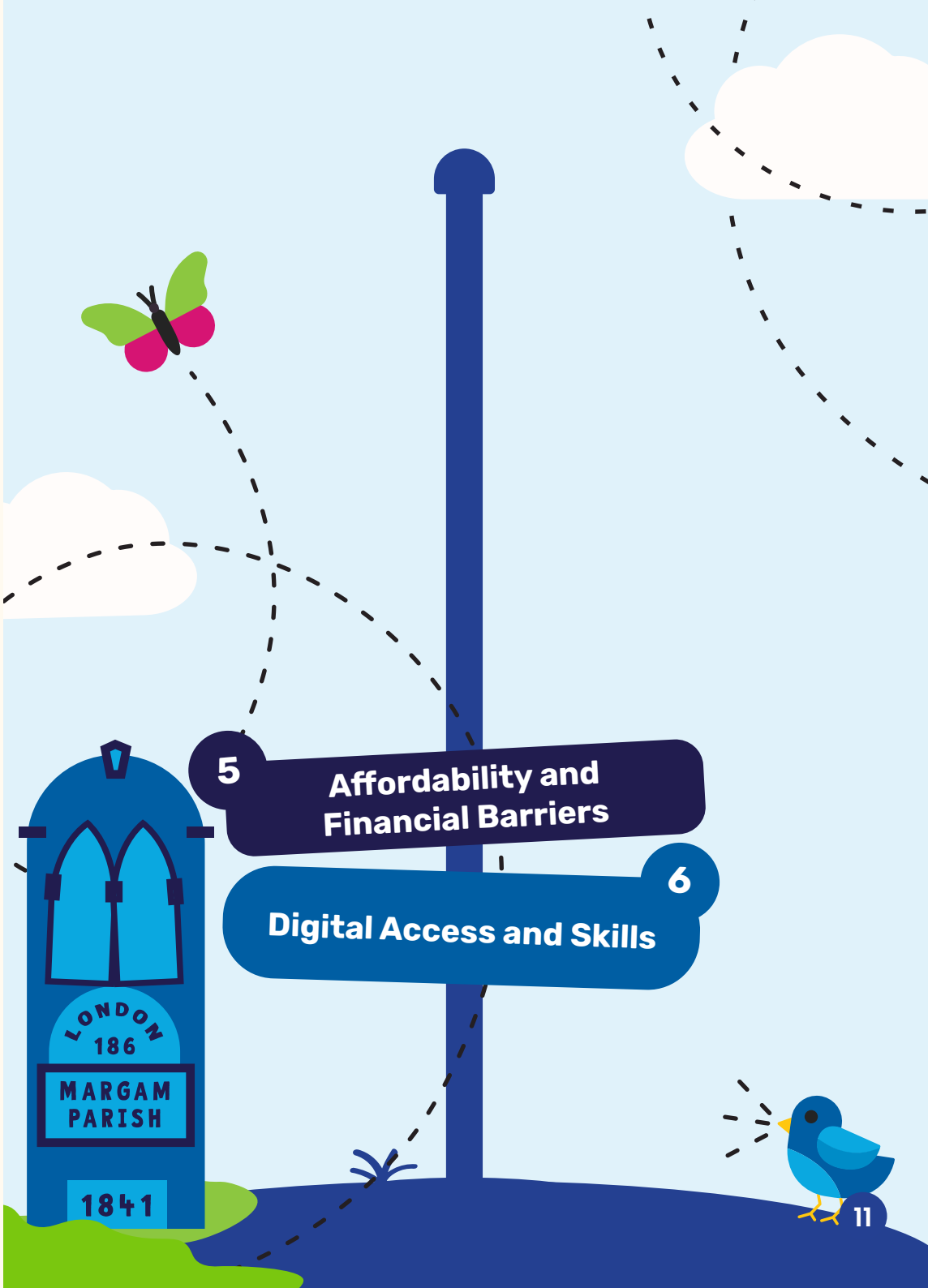
6. Digital Access and Skills

Digital exclusion remains a challenge for some potential volunteers, including:

- Limited access to devices or reliable internet
- Low confidence or skills in using digital platforms

Where volunteering information, recruitment, or communication is primarily online, this can unintentionally exclude people.

Find out how to address these barriers



7. Accessibility, Inclusivity, and Resources

Finally, volunteers identified broader structural challenges, including:

- Physical accessibility of heritage sites
- Inclusivity of volunteering environments and roles
- Limited funding and resources to adapt roles, provide support, or remove barriers

Addressing these challenges often requires organisational commitment, partnership working, and creative use of available resources.

Find out how to address these barriers

Six practical steps to overcoming barriers

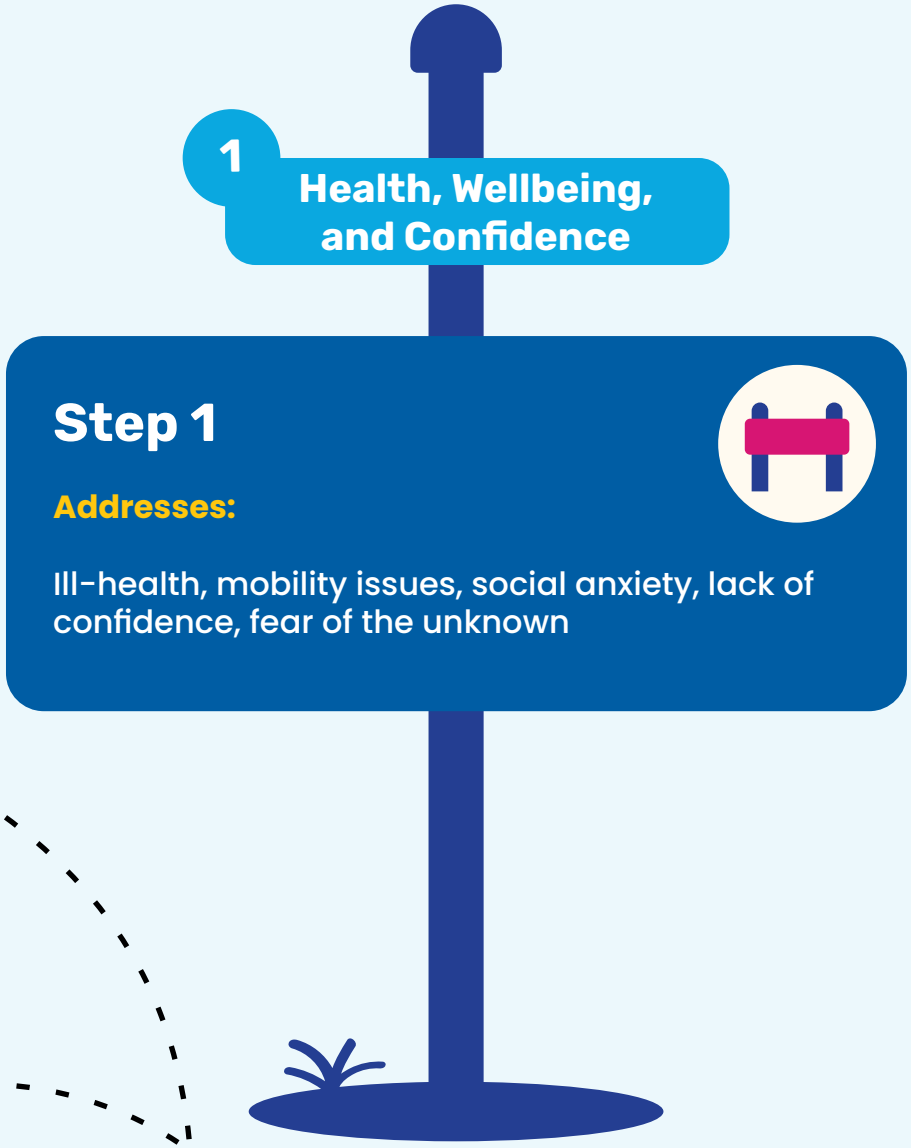
Responding to barriers in heritage volunteering requires more than removing individual obstacles. It involves rethinking how volunteering is designed, communicated, and experienced, so that more people feel able to take part and stay involved.

Tempo's approach is grounded in the belief that volunteering works best when people feel connected to place, purpose, and each other, and when their time and contribution are genuinely valued.

Find out how to address these barriers



Six practical steps to overcoming barriers to volunteering



Start with People and Place

A people-first approach recognises that volunteers come with different needs, experiences, and starting points.

Practical actions include:

- Offering **informal, low-pressure ways to get involved** before committing
- Designing roles that can be **adapted around health, mobility, or confidence levels**
- **Valuing lived experience and interest** in place as much as heritage knowledge
- **Creating welcoming environments** where people feel they belong

When volunteers feel connected to the place and purpose of the work, confidence grows over time.

Six practical steps to overcoming barriers to volunteering



Create meaningful and flexible roles

Rigid volunteering roles can exclude people unintentionally. Flexibility is key to widening participation.

Practical actions include:

- **Shorter or one-off opportunities** alongside regular roles
- **Flexible time commitments** that fit around caring, work, or health needs
- **Clear explanations** of how each role contributes to protecting, sharing, or bringing heritage to life

Flexibility helps people take part in ways that fit around their lives— making it easier to return and stay involved.

Six practical steps to overcoming barriers to volunteering



Step 3

Recognises:

Limited awareness, apathy, fear of the unknown, lack of confidence.

Tell Heritage Stories, Not Just Role Descriptions

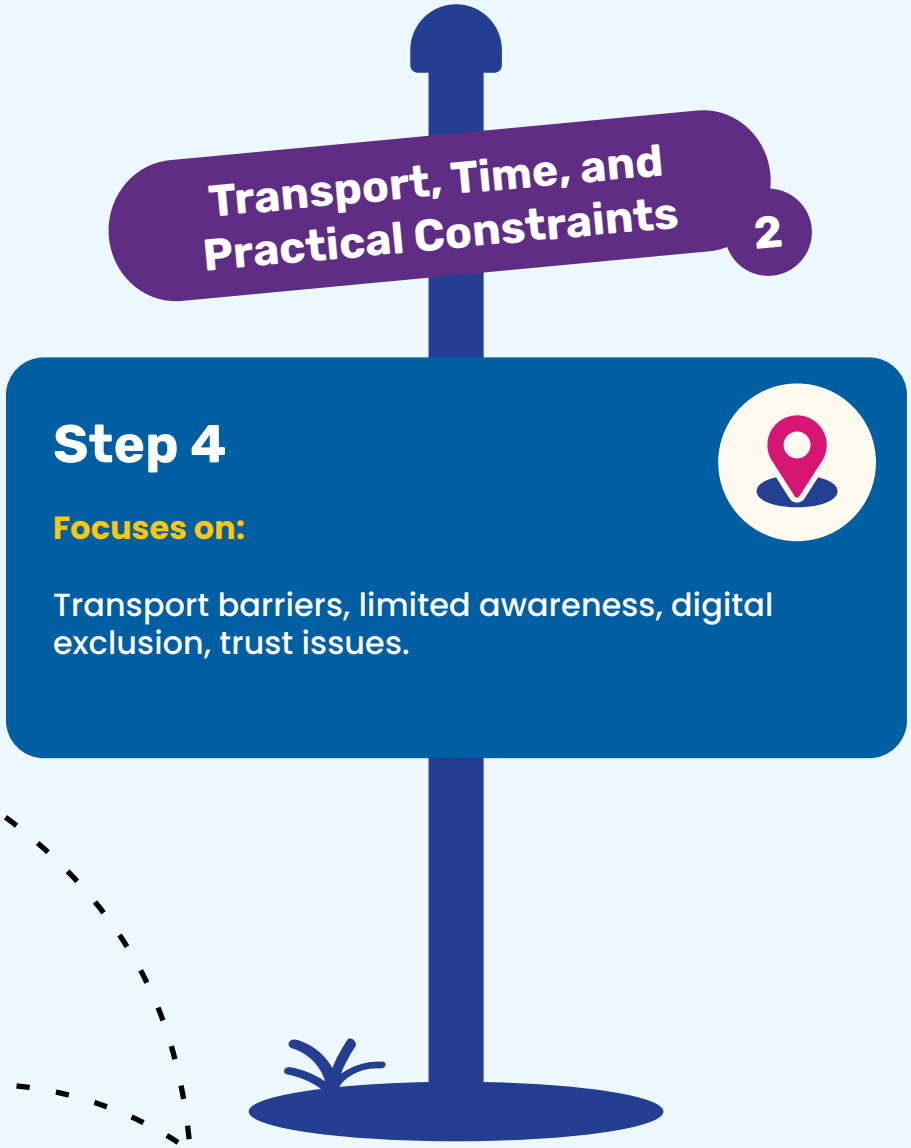
Volunteer feedback highlighted that people are often unsure what heritage volunteering involves or whether it is “for them”.

Practical actions include:

- **Sharing real stories** of volunteers and their journeys
- **Highlighting the impact of volunteering** on people, place, and community
- **Using accessible language and visuals** rather than formal role descriptions

Stories help people see themselves reflected in heritage spaces and imagine taking part.

Six practical steps to overcoming barriers to volunteering



Root recruitment locally

Local, relationship-based recruitment helps overcome practical and social barriers.

Practical actions include:

- Working with trusted **community partners and local networks**
- Promoting **opportunities in familiar, non-heritage spaces**
- **Offering face-to-face conversations** alongside online promotion
- Reducing reliance on digital-only recruitment routes

Local relationships build trust and make volunteering feel more accessible and relevant.

Six practical steps to overcoming barriers to volunteering



Step 5

Responding to:

Lack of confidence, fear of getting it wrong, retention challenges.

Support and Grow Volunteers Over Time

Volunteers are more likely to stay when they feel supported rather than managed.

Practical actions include:

- **Clear, welcoming inductions** that focus on confidence as well as information
- **Ongoing check-ins** and encouragement
- **Opportunities to build skills** gradually
- **Peer support and social connection** within volunteer teams

Retention grows when people feel safe to learn, ask questions, and develop at their own pace.

Six practical steps to overcoming barriers to volunteering



Step 6

Responding to:

Affordability, motivation, feeling undervalued, sustainability

Value Contribution Through Recognition and Reciprocity

Recognition is not an "add-on"—it is central to inclusive volunteering.

Tempo Time Credits offer a practical way to:

- **Recognise and value people's time equally**
- **Reduce financial barriers** linked to volunteering
- **Support motivation and retention**
- Reinforce that volunteering is a **mutual exchange,** not a one-way contribution

Time Credits can be used to access activities, experiences, or services, helping volunteering feel valued, be more social, and connected to community life.

Reciprocity through Time Credits, learning opportunities, and shared experiences helps ensure volunteering feels fair, inclusive, and sustainable.

Finance is one of the biggest barriers to volunteering - Reduce financial barriers to volunteering. Giving time should never come at a personal cost. By ensuring volunteers can easily access expenses and support, organisations create opportunities that are safe, inclusive, and sustainable for all.

I love it. Time Credits give me a sense of dignity. They allow me to treat people, and that brings me real joy.'

'Tempo Time Credits have allowed my brother the luxury of visiting the zoo and cinema without the steep cost of admission.'

'The digital platform has revitalised volunteer engagement, making recognition both accessible and independent.

Anonymous volunteer feedback

Bringing it all together

Creating volunteer pathways in your organsiation

Responding to barriers is not about doing everything at once. Small, intentional changes—rooted in flexibility, local relationships, and recognition—can make a significant difference.

By adopting a Tempo approach and embedding reciprocity through tools like Time Credits, heritage organisations can create inclusive pathways into volunteering, strengthen community connections, and build a volunteer base that reflects and supports the future of heritage.



Our Welsh Dragon exploring Tenby

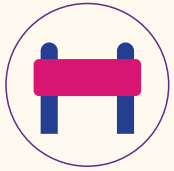
Self-Assessment Checklist: Creating Inclusive Pathways into Heritage Volunteering



This checklist is designed to help heritage organisations reflect on how accessible and inclusive their volunteering offer is currently. It can be used as a discussion tool with staff, volunteers, or partners, or as a starting point for action planning. **The aim is to identify strengths, gaps, and opportunities for change over time.** You do not need to answer "yes" to everything.

1. People and Place

- ○ We understand who currently volunteers with us and who is missing
- ○ We actively consider the needs, interests, and lived experiences of local people
- ○ Volunteers are welcomed in ways that feel informal, friendly, and low-pressure
- ○ People do not need prior heritage knowledge to get involved
- ○ Volunteers feel a sense of belonging and connection to the place
- ○ We aim to match people's skills, passions and interests with the volunteering opportunities we have available.
- ○ We seek to understand why people want to volunteer and what they hope to achieve.

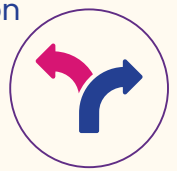


Reflect

Who feels most comfortable volunteering here? Who might feel unsure or excluded?

2. Flexible and Meaningful Roles

- ○ We offer a range of volunteering opportunities, including short-term or one-off roles
- ○ Time commitments are realistic and flexible
- ○ Roles can be adapted around health, mobility, caring, or confidence needs
- ○ Volunteers understand how their role contributes to the site or community
- ○ We review roles regularly based on volunteer feedback



Reflect

Are our roles designed around organisational convenience or people's lives?

3. Awareness and Communication

- ○ Volunteering opportunities are clearly explained in plain, accessible language
- ○ We use stories and examples, not just role descriptions
- ○ Our promotion reaches beyond our existing audiences
- ○ We use both digital and non-digital ways to share opportunities
- ○ People can easily ask questions before committing



Reflect

Would someone with no prior connection to heritage understand and feel invited?

4. Local and Community-Led Recruitment

- ○ We work with local community groups and trusted partners
- ○ We promote volunteering in familiar, non-heritage spaces
- ○ Face-to-face conversations are part of our recruitment approach
- ○ We consider transport access and costs when planning roles
- ○ Local relationships influence how we design opportunities

Reflect



How visible and relevant is our volunteering offer in the local community?

5. Support, Confidence, and Retention

- ○ Volunteers receive a clear and welcoming induction
- ○ Ongoing support is available, not just at the start
- ○ Volunteers feel safe to ask questions and make mistakes
- ○ We support volunteers to build skills and confidence over time
- ○ Volunteers feel listened to and involved in shaping their experience

Reflect



Do volunteers feel supported as people, not just as helpers?

6. Recognition and Reciprocity (Including Time Credits)

- ○ We regularly thank and recognise volunteers' contributions
- ○ Volunteers feel their time is genuinely valued
- ○ We celebrate contributions publicly and privately
- ○ We offer something in return for people's time (e.g. Time Credits, learning, connection)
- ○ Volunteering feels like a mutual exchange, not a one-way ask
- ○ We ensure volunteers are regularly reminded that they should not be out of pocket, and we foster a culture where claiming expenses is welcomed, encouraged, and free from stigma.
- ○ We can write letters and references on volunteers contributions.
- ○ We provide regular feedback on the difference or the outcomes that have been achieved through the volunteer time and commitment

Reflect



How do we show that volunteers' time and effort matter?

Next steps:

After completing the checklist:

- **Identify** 2–3 areas where small changes could make the biggest difference
- **Involve** volunteers and community partners in developing solutions
- **Revisit** this checklist regularly as your volunteering offer evolves

Creating inclusive pathways into heritage volunteering is an ongoing process.

This checklist is a tool to support reflection, learning, and action—helping you build volunteering opportunities that are welcoming, flexible, and sustainable.



Friendships is fantastic here. You can't beat it. It's the groups that's come together that have made a community for us, which has been ten times lost over the years, but have now come back in the library and in the garden.

Watch Alan's story here

Alan Roberts, Sandfields Garden

Creating Pathways into Heritage Volunteering:

A Community Development Approach

Not everyone begins their volunteering journey by stepping directly into a heritage site. For many people, heritage volunteering can feel unfamiliar, intimidating, or simply "not for them". A community development approach recognises this and focuses on meeting people where they are, building confidence gradually, and creating multiple entry points into engagement.

Tempo's approach to pathways into heritage volunteering is rooted in relationships, trust, and reciprocity. It starts in the wider community, not just at the heritage site.

A Community Development Approach

An Example Journey

Early community engagement (community group, local service, trusted space)

Help out / have a go in the community

Earn Time Credits

Use Time Credits to go on a trip to a local heritage site

Meet new people and make a new friend

Attend a "have a go / helping out" heritage event together

Earn more Time Credits

Use Time Credits on a local activity or experience in my local community

Attend another "have a go" heritage activity with family

Build confidence, interest, and connection

Informal conversation with Heritage Volunteer Manager (about skills, interests, passions, and what feels right)

Co-design how to be involved more often (flexible, skills-based, ongoing or occasional)

Pathways to Heritage Volunteering

A Community Development Journey Using Time Credits



Pathways to Heritage Volunteering

A Community Development Journey Using Time Credits

1) Start where people are at

Community groups, local services, trusted spaces

- People are engaged in places they already know and trust.
- Opportunities focus on helping out and having a go.
- Identify the gaps in heritage organisation - what do they need support for? What skills do they need?

2) First steps: helping out

Low-pressure, informal activity

- Short, flexible involvement
- No prior experience needed
- Confidence-building

People earn Tempo Time Credits

3) Time credits open doors

Using Time Credits for new experiences

- Go on a trip to a local heritage site
- Try something new
- Visit places that may feel unfamiliar alone

4) Connection and belonging

Social connections form

- Meet new people
- Make a new friend
- Build confidence through shared experience

5) Have a go in heritage

Taster volunteering / helping out event

- Attend together with a friend
- Short, supported activity
- Focus on learning and enjoyment

Earn more Time Credits

Pathways to Heritage Volunteering - Getting into the detail

A Community Development Journey
Using Time Credits

6) Reward and reciprocity

Spending Time Credits locally

- Take part in a local activity or experience
- Strengthen connection to community and place

7) Family and repeat experiences

Another 'have a go' opportunity

- Attend with family
- Intergenerational and inclusive
- Build shared confidence
- Try something new
- Visit places that may feel unfamiliar alone

8) Reflection and conversation

Informal conversation with Heritage Volunteer Manager

- Talk about skills, interests, and passions
- What did you enjoy?
- What feels right next?

9) Co-designed involvement

Ongoing connection (if and when it feels right)

- Flexible involvement
- Skills-based opportunities
- Regular, occasional, or one-off roles
- Continued recognition through Time Credits



Saffron, member of the Pathways to the Past team

Engaging People Where They Are

Tempo works alongside community groups, local services, and trusted organisations to connect with people in places they already feel comfortable. This might include community centres, housing providers, health services, youth groups, or local charities.

Through these relationships, people are invited to:

- **Have a go** at small, informal activities
- **Help out** in ways that feel manageable and meaningful
- **Take part** without pressure or long-term commitment

These early experiences help people build confidence, curiosity, and a sense of contribution—often before they ever consider themselves a "volunteer".

Using Time Credits to Open Up New Experiences

As people give their time—whether helping out in their community or taking part in early heritage-related activities—they earn Tempo Time Credits.

These Time Credits can then be used to access new experiences and opportunities, including local heritage activities they may never have tried before.

This might include:

- Visiting heritage sites or events
- Taking part in workshops, tours, or creative activities
- Trying something new in a supportive, welcoming environment

Using Time Credits in this way helps turn curiosity into confidence and creates positive first connections with heritage.

curiosity **confidence** **positivity**



Tempo Volunteer Trip to Tenby as part of Pathways to the Past



Young Archaeologists Club trip, supported by the Pathway to the Past Project

Ways People Can Earn Time Credits in Heritage

Heritage volunteering does not need to be formal or specialist to be valuable.

Time Credits can be earned for a wide range of activities, including:

- Helping out at a heritage open day or community event
- Supporting a one-off activity, workshop, or tour
- Assisting with light conservation, gardening, or site care
- Welcoming visitors or supporting family activities
- Sharing local stories, memories, or lived experience
- Helping with creative activities such as art, crafts, or displays
- Supporting behind-the-scenes tasks (like preparation or set-up)
- Taking part in consultation or co-production activities

Recognising these contributions through Time Credits reinforces that all forms of helping out matter.



Young Archaeologists Club leaders on Tretower Court and Castle trip, Pathway Partners

Micro Volunteering: Small Actions, Big Impact

Flexible volunteering offers short, flexible opportunities that fit easily into everyday life.

It is ideal for people who:

- Have limited time or energy
- Are new to volunteering
- Want to have a go before committing

Examples of flexible or micro volunteering in heritage include:

- Helping for an hour at an event
- Taking part in a single activity or task
- Supporting an activity with a short timescale (start to finish)
- Contributing to a one-off project or consultation
- Supporting set-up or pack-down at a site

Micro volunteering reduces barriers while still creating meaningful connections to heritage and place.



Janet and Saffron at Neath Castle, Pathways to the Past team



Craig Gwladys event

Family Volunteering: Volunteering Together

Family volunteering creates opportunities for children, parents, grandparents, and carers to volunteer together. It supports inclusion, learning, and shared experiences across generations.

Examples include:

- Family-friendly heritage activity days
- Helping out at events designed for all ages
- Creative or outdoor activities suitable for mixed age groups
- Storytelling, craft, or discovery sessions

Family volunteering:

- Reduces childcare barriers
- Builds confidence for adults and children alike
- Creates positive early experiences of heritage
- Encourages a lifelong connection to volunteering and place

Time Credits earned through family volunteering can be used together, reinforcing the idea of shared contribution and reward.

Enjoying nature with Coed Lleol and Craig Gwladus Country Park!



Building Pathways, Not Gateways

A pathways approach recognises that volunteering is a journey, not a single decision.

By engaging people in their communities, offering opportunities to have a go, recognising time through Time Credits, and creating welcoming taster experiences, heritage organisations can open up volunteering to many more people.

This approach helps ensure heritage is not just preserved, but shared, shaped, and sustained by the communities around it.

> **I am a refugee in the UK and my experiences before I came here made me socially isolated.**
>
> **After Istarted to do volunteering and earn Time Credit then these pushed me to be part of the social life.**
>
> *Anonymous volunteer feedback*



Janet, Saffron and Laura at Tretower Caslte, Pathways to the Past team in 2026

Checklist for Heritage Partners Hosting Taster Volunteering Opportunities

This six-point checklist supports heritage organisations to offer short, low-pressure taster opportunities that help people have a go, build confidence, and explore heritage volunteering in a positive and supportive way.

Taster opportunities are about experience, not commitment. The aim is to make people feel welcome, valued, and curious to return.

Key principles to remember:

- **Keep it short, simple, and supportive**
- **Focus on confidence and connection, not output**
- **Use "have a go" and "helping out" language**
- **Recognise time and contribution through Tempo Time Credits**
- **Create pathways, not pressure**

1. Before the Taster Opportunity

- ○ The activity is clearly described in simple, accessible language
- ○ No prior heritage knowledge or volunteering experience is required
- ○ The time commitment is short and clearly stated
- ○ The activity can be adapted for different ages, abilities, or confidence levels
- ○ Accessibility needs (physical, sensory, language) have been considered
- ○ Travel and arrival information is clear and easy to understand
- ○ The opportunity is suitable for individuals, families, or small groups (where relevant)
- ○ Time Credits are explained in advance as recognition for taking part

Ask yourself:

Would someone who has never volunteered before feel confident signing up?

2. Creating a Welcoming First Experience

- ○ A named person is identified to welcome participants
- ○ People are greeted warmly and introduced to the space
- ○ The atmosphere is friendly, informal, and relaxed
- ○ Expectations are clear, with reassurance that it's okay to ask questions
- ○ Language used is inclusive and jargon-free
- ○ Participants are encouraged to have a go at their own pace

Ask yourself:

Does this feel like an invitation to join in, rather than a test?

3. During the Taster Activity

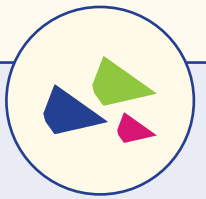


- Tasks are clearly explained and demonstrated
- Participants are supported, not supervised
- People can choose how much they do and when to take breaks
- Different ways of helping out are offered
- Staff and volunteers check in regularly and offer encouragement
- Contributions of all kinds are acknowledged

Ask yourself:

Are people able to participate in a way that works for them?

4. Using Time Credits Effectively



- Participants earn Time Credits for their time
- Time Credits are explained as a thank you and recognition, not payment
- Participants know how and where they can use their Time Credits
- Local or heritage-related spend options are highlighted
- Time Credits feel like part of the experience, not an add-on

Ask yourself:

Do Time Credits help people feel valued and motivated to try something new?

5. Ending the Taster on a Positive Note



- Participants are thanked personally for their time
- There is space to reflect informally on the experience
- People are told what happens next—without pressure
- Information is shared about future have a go or volunteering opportunities
- Participants leave feeling welcome to return

Ask yourself:

Would people leave feeling proud of what they've done?

6. After the Taster Opportunity



- Feedback is gathered in a simple, accessible way
- Any follow-up contact is optional and consent-based
- Learning from the taster is shared with partners
- Opportunities for further engagement are reviewed and improved
- The experience informs future taster opportunities

Ask yourself:

What did we learn that could make the next taster even better?



It’s been a really wonderful day. It’s felt really, really wholesome. And it’s the first time we’ve come across these events, so we’ll definitely come again. It’s really, really well run. And everyone’s bringing really good energy. It’s been really lovely.

Watch Susie’s story here

Susie Edwards, Neath Abbey

From First Steps to Ongoing Connection

Positive first experiences matter—but what happens next is just as important.

This section focuses on how heritage organisations can support people to stay connected, in ways that are flexible, inclusive, and led by people’s interests rather than predefined roles.

At the heart of this approach is recognition, relationships, and reciprocity—with Tempo Time Credits playing a key role in valuing people’s time and supporting continued engagement.

Recognition as a Foundation for Retention

Feeling valued is one of the strongest reasons people stay involved. Recognition should be:

- Consistent
- Meaningful
- Built into everyday practice

Tempo Time Credits provide a practical way to recognise time and contribution—whether someone is helping out once or returning regularly.

Time Credits can:

- Acknowledge effort without creating pressure to do more
- Reduce financial barriers to ongoing involvement
- Encourage people to continue engaging with heritage as participants and contributors
- Reinforce the idea that volunteering is a mutual exchange

Recognition works best when combined with simple thank-yous, informal feedback, and opportunities to celebrate contributions.



Peter and Fiona, at Neath Abbey

Co-Designing Volunteering Opportunities

Where possible, volunteering works best when it is shaped with people rather than for them.

Co-design can be informal and flexible, for example:

- Adapting tasks based on what people enjoy doing
- Inviting volunteers to suggest activities or improvements
- Creating opportunities together in response to local ideas or needs

Co-design helps:

- Reduce barriers linked to confidence and fear of getting it wrong
- Ensure volunteering feels relevant and meaningful
- Build stronger relationships between people and heritage organisations

It also supports heritage organisations to develop volunteering offers that evolve over time.



Young Archaeologists Club supported by the Pathways to the Past Project

Using Time Credits to Support Ongoing Connection

Time Credits can support progression and connection in several ways:

- Encouraging people to return for further opportunities
- Recognising consistency as well as one-off contributions
- Supporting access to heritage, cultural, or wellbeing experiences
- Reinforcing a sense of fairness and appreciation

Importantly, Time Credits help maintain reciprocity as involvement deepens—ensuring people continue to feel valued, not taken for granted.

Staying Connected Beyond Roles

People's involvement may pause or change due to health, caring responsibilities, or life circumstances.

Staying connected might mean:

- Inviting people to events or activities without expecting volunteering
- Offering occasional helping out opportunities
- Keeping communication light-touch and welcoming

Sustained engagement is built through relationships, not role descriptions.



Young Archaeologist Club trip, supported by the Pathways to the Past project

Though I am leader, I wouldn't be able to run the club without our band of volunteers, who are just fantastic in supporting the running of the club, finding archeologists to come in and creating activities.

The club connects to heritage because heritage itself is what we inherit, things from the past, and that is what archeology is.

Harriet Eaton, Young Archaeologists Club

Watch Harriet's story here

In Summary

Moving from first steps to ongoing connection is about:

- Valuing people's time and contributions
- Recognising skills, passions, and interests
- Co-designing opportunities that feel meaningful
- Using Time Credits to reinforce reciprocity and inclusion

By focusing on recognition, flexibility, and connection, heritage organisations can build volunteering pathways that are resilient, inclusive, and rooted in community—supporting people to stay involved in ways that work for them.



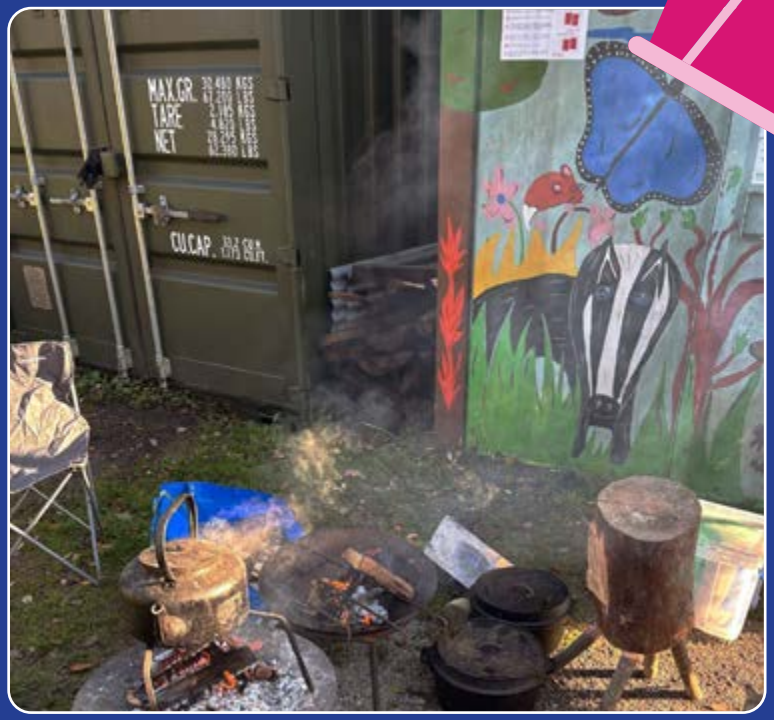
Tempo town visits a local school fete

Recognition and Retention Checklist

Supporting ongoing involvement in heritage volunteering

This checklist helps heritage organisations reflect on how well they recognise people's contributions and support them to stay connected over time. It can be used by staff, volunteer leads, or with volunteers themselves.

Retention is about maintaining relationships, valuing contributions and offering meaningful ways to stay involved. It is not about keeping volunteers in fixed roles.



1. Recognising Time and Contribution

- ○ We thank people personally for their time
- ○ Recognition happens regularly, not just at the end of projects
- ○ All contributions are valued equally, including one-off and informal helping out
- ○ Tempo Time Credits are used consistently to recognise time given
- ○ Volunteers understand how Time Credits work and how they can be used
- ○ Recognition feels genuine and proportionate, not transactional

Reflect

Do people leave feeling that their time truly mattered?

2. Using Time Credits to Support Retention

- ○ Time Credits are embedded in everyday volunteering practice
- ○ Time Credits help reduce financial barriers to staying involved
- ○ Volunteers are encouraged to use Time Credits to access heritage or community activities
- ○ Time Credits support both participation and progression
- ○ Time Credits reinforce reciprocity as involvement deepens

Reflect

Do Time Credits help people feel valued and motivated to return?

3. Skills, Interests, and Passions

- We ask people what they enjoy and feel confident doing
- Informal skills and lived experience are recognised
- Volunteers are not expected to fit into rigid role descriptions
- Opportunities evolve in response to people's interests
- People feel able to try new things at their own pace

Reflect

Are we shaping opportunities around people, or people around roles?

4. Co-Design and Shared Ownership

- Volunteers are invited to shape activities and opportunities
- Feedback leads to visible changes where possible
- People feel listened to and taken seriously
- Volunteering feels collaborative rather than managed
- Heritage spaces feel shared rather than "owned" by the organisation

Reflect

Do people feel like contributors or guests?

5. Ongoing Support and Connection

- Volunteers know who to speak to if they need support
- Regular and informal check-in's happen
- Volunteers feel safe to step back without losing connection
- Life changes (health, caring, work) are understood and respected
- People are welcomed back after time away
- We ensure volunteers are regularly reminded that they should not be out of pocket, and we foster a culture where claiming expenses is welcomed, encouraged, and free from stigma.

Reflect

How easy is it for someone to stay connected when life changes?

Notes:

6. Multiple Ways to Stay Involved

- ○ We offer different levels and types of involvement
- ○ Micro volunteering and one-off opportunities are available
- ○ Family and group volunteering is supported where appropriate
- ○ Participation without volunteering is still valued
- ○ There is no single "right" volunteering journey

Reflect

How many different ways can people stay connected to us?

7. Celebrating People and Community

- ○ Contributions are celebrated in ways that feel inclusive
- ○ Celebration methods respect different preferences
- ○ Achievements are shared with the wider community
- ○ Celebration builds connection between volunteers
- ○ Recognition strengthens a sense of belonging

Reflect

Do people feel like contributors or guests?

Notes:

After completing the checklist

- Identify one small change that could improve recognition or retention
- Involve volunteers in deciding what matters most
- Revisit this checklist regularly as relationships and opportunities evolve

Strong retention grows from recognition, trust, and reciprocity.



Michael Sheen Mural, Forge Road
part of ARTwalk Port Talbot

Tempo

Pathways to the Past
Llwybrau i'r Llynedd

Join us on social media

For more information:

Visit: **wearetempo.org.uk**

or email **hello@wearetempo.org**

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The National Lottery Heritage Fund is investing up to £200million in places across the UK to put heritage at the centre of local approaches that improve people's connection to where they live, work and visit.