



The Arts Society Launches 2020 Volunteering Impact Review

[LONDON, TUESDAY 28 JANUARY]: The Arts Society, a leading UK and arts education charity with 90,000 members, today releases their 2020 Volunteering Impact Report which reviews in detail the impact of volunteering projects undertaken by thousands of members across the country and abroad.

For over 50 years, The Arts Society, formerly NADFAS, has been at the centre of arts, museum and heritage volunteering in the UK. In 2019, thousands of Arts Society volunteers took part in hundreds of volunteering projects.

This Volunteering Impact Report (January 2020) produced by The Arts Society reviews the huge impact the volunteers make on cultural life across the UK and abroad as the Society looks to focus on the projects with the greatest impact going forward.

In 2020, The Arts Society reviews its volunteering under four key areas; Heritage Volunteering, Church Recording, Trails of Discovery and Young Arts.

Florian Schweizer, Chief Executive of The Arts Society: *“At The Arts Society, supporting our members to volunteer in the arts and cultural sector is at the heart of what we do. Thousands of Members have contributed millions of hours to our volunteering programmes over 50 years. We would like to express our deep gratitude to all volunteers who have volunteered with their Societies and in The Arts Society projects. As a charity we need to continue to be relevant and ensure maximum impact from all our activity. This review and its findings focus on how our charitable aims and objects connect with and support the sectors we operate - and how we can deliver the most impactful volunteering possible.”*

Key facts from The Arts Society Volunteering Impact Review are:

1. Heritage Volunteering:

- Evidence shows that volunteers deliver high levels of skill and engagement across a wide range of publicly accessible heritage venues that, without The Arts Society backed volunteers, could not fund or resource this necessary and valuable work.
- Heritage volunteering had high impact scores with over 80% of active volunteers agreeing that their volunteering was making a difference to the Heritage and cultural life of the UK

2. Church Recording:

- Over the past 50 years Church Recording has provided a large body of scholarship and knowledge of ecclesiastical art in the UK
- In 2020, the 2,000th Church Record will be completed, which is a significant milestone.
- Following this, central funding will cease in 2021 and the requirement for Societies having to pay towards the Records will be removed
- The Arts Society will continue to make existing resources available online to aid the ongoing activity at local Group level
- This decision has been taken due to the lack of evidence of public benefit; and due to very low usage of Church Records by the archival bodies that keep them

3. Arts Volunteering (formerly known as Young Arts)

- Young Arts is community driven volunteering and has high impact scores.

- Going forward this activity will be renamed Arts Volunteering to better reflect the broadened area of public benefit. Logos, leaflets and other assets will be made available in the next Bulletin if Societies wish to adopt the new name straight away
- Societies, and therefore The Arts Society, have been under-reporting the impact of Arts Volunteering for several years – this reporting issue is now being addressed and should demonstrate the true value from 2020 onwards
- Many of the projects within Young Arts provide access to the arts where communities would otherwise have little or no access to the arts due to financial deprivation or other circumstances

4. Trails of Discovery

- Started under Young Arts as Church Trails and was an activity for children aged 8-12 years whereby a Trail consisting of a sheet of questions led them round the interior of a church
- These have been impactful with engaging directly with the community and are well received by host organisations. They help 'open new worlds to children'
- Going forward the Society will develop an online map of all completed Arts Society Trails to increase public access and benefit

The Arts Society relies on thousands of volunteers across its activities. The Volunteering Impact Review examines why people volunteer, the scope of impact that volunteering projects have, the benefits derived by the volunteers themselves and crucially the public benefits delivered to the beneficiaries of the projects. The Report also recognises and celebrates the achievement, passion and commitment of The Arts Society's volunteers to the arts sector. In 2018, inspired by the views and questions of their volunteers, The Art Society embarked on an assessment programme that would allow the charity to increase the impact of its volunteer programme.

To read the full review please visit: www.theartsociety.org

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ABOUT THE ARTS SOCIETY

www.theartsociety.org

The Arts Society is a leading arts education charity with a global network of over 380 local Societies, which bring people together through a shared curiosity for the arts. Our events provide welcoming places – locally, nationally and globally – to hear expert lecturers share their specialist knowledge about the arts. Our 90,000+ members contribute to and preserve our artistic heritage through volunteering and grants. Our strength is our people, joined together by a passion for the arts which can nourish and empower us all. Our work creates a better, healthier and more connected society.