LOCAL HISTORY CAFE
EREWASH MUSUEM

A HVG CASE STUDY

a friendly cuppa

TACKLING LONELINESS AND SOCIAL ISOLATION THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

BY CHRISSIE VAN MIERLO, VOLUNTEER PROJECT COORDINATOR EREWASH MUSEUM

Local History Café (LHC) facilitates heritage and well-being get togethers for over-50s across the Midlands, serving up monthly local history talks and creative activities along with tea and cake. LHC offers unique volunteering opportunities by working in partnership with heritage sites, allowing volunteers to work together with museum staff and members of the community to tackle loneliness and social isolation.

At Erewash Museum, LHC drew upon an existing pool of volunteers who work in the Museum's highly successful volunteer-run tea room. Volunteers contribute in diverse ways from welcoming new members, to reminiscing about life in the local area to giving talks and presentations. Drawing on her professional experience, the Volunteer Project Coordinator has worked with the Project Director and the Museum's Collections Officer to recruit speakers from neighbouring universities who have kindly lent their expertise to LHC.

Volunteers are actively involved in shaping the project as it goes forward: at the end of each Café, they work with Museum staff to evaluate what is going right (and wrong!), offering ideas for improvements or adjustments.

We hope that the strong volunteering model we have established can inspire the various Cafés that are starting up across the region and look forward to meeting with other regional Cafes this Summer. In terms of evaluation, De Montfort University's Centre for Ageing are evaluating the impact of cafes on social isolation and loneliness.

FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL

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