

Hilary a Volunteer writes:

I am washing up sink and I am smiling. I have been a regular volunteer at the Friary for quite a few years now, and yet I never really feel like I have visited properly unless I have washed up at least once. This is a good time for conversation; I have had deep and meaningful theological discussion, learnt a lot about other people's lives, shared a lot about my own life, laughed often, and even every now and then thrown some bubbles around!



Washing up done, there is a short break for a cup of tea with friends then back to work - although it's funny how away from home it doesn't feel like work.

Starting tonight there will be a course in the Rec Room so the early part of the afternoon is taken up with assisting in vacuuming the floor, straightening sofas, plumping cushions, checking refreshment supplies and the satisfaction of a job well done.

Next stop is the kitchen. It is Friday so supper will be something and chips. A plan is made, the tables are set for afternoon tea and I am sent to ring the bells that call people to tea. Afternoon tea is a cosy and relaxed time. The time for evening prayer approaches and people begin to drift away from the refectory.

Back to the kitchen and with my lack of chip orientated imagination am given charge of the simpler task of cooking fish fingers and vegetarian sausages and keeping on top of the washing up. Eventually supper is cooked, served and eaten, the washing up is done; the kitchen floor is swept and mopped and we head to the chapel for night prayer.

As I sit in the semi darkness of the chapel I give thanks for being able to be a volunteer here: for the way that worship and work is all so obviously part of the same thing, for the people that allow me to "belong" even if only for a day or a week, and for the fact that I can - and will - come again; please God.

The Friary, Hilfield, Dorchester, DT2 7BE 01300 341345

Email: hilfieldssf@franciscans.org.uk

Visit our website: <https://www.hilfieldfriary.org.uk>

and our Facebook pages:

<https://www.facebook.com/HilfieldFriary>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/709029506134847> (our Conservation Group)

Pax et Bonum

Hilfield FRIARY



Update

Number 38

December 2023

Br. John writes: Advent is my favourite liturgical season of the year. Perhaps it the sense of anticipation: Christmas is coming! Unlike in the traditional rhyme, we don't have a goose to fatten, but we do have pigs, and even new-born lambs, because our Dorset Poll sheep are hardy enough to breed twice per year. More deeply, though, it is the recognition that all is not right with the world that resonates with me. Although far from a perfectionist, I do yearn for wrongs to be righted, especially for the meek and the poor, and for the earth herself, and long for the day when we can all live together in righteousness and peace. These are the scriptural themes we hear and sing of in chapel as we prepare to celebrate Christ's birth. In the face of deepest darkness that surrounds us, they restore hope in the Prince of Peace who is on his way. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

Changing seasons

It feels like only yesterday that we were clearing the winter salad in the polytunnel and planting the tomatoes, peppers, aubergines and other summer vegetables. Yet already the summer vegetables are gone and a fading memory and the winter salads are planted again and it's like no time has passed at all. Despite this feeling of time moving quickly, each day or week the tasks at hand help to ground and slow down the feeling of time passing, with most offering great chances at appreciation of what's going on. Whether it's harvesting the first tomatoes of the year, taking a moment to pause when shifting manure to admire the robin that appears to pick through the disturbed pile or optimistically planting the first fragile winter lettuces there are lots of punctuating moments that allow for reflection and space during the quickly changing seasons. Now winter is here, we start preparing for the growing season next year, getting beds ready, pruning and generally clearing. It offers a nice moment to pause and plan.



Our polytunnel

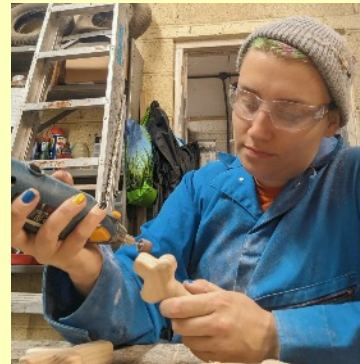
The Hilfield Community wishes you a joyous Christmas and New Year

Our new Volunteers

Four new volunteers have come to swell the ranks of our friary community this autumn. **Amy Bowen** from Southampton has been a longstanding member and leader of the Hilfield Youth Camp, so is very familiar with the friary but now seeing it from the inside. We are benefiting from her love of baking and preserving, as well as her artistic talents. **Luke Aylen** is a curate who has joined us from the diocese of Hereford and is particularly drawn to the distinctive mix of community living and care of creation that Hilfield offers. His practical and priestly skills are already enriching us. **Jose Oscar Rodrigues** has travelled the furthest: from Teresina, north-east Brazil. His mechanical experience and enthusiasm are already proving to be a huge asset with our building projects, and he loves to cook us special recipes from home. Our latest arrival is **Sophie Wiseman-Rose**, a paramedic and artist who has lived in the UK and the USA. Sophie is very keen to explore Franciscan life.

We are also delighted that **Ellie Stephenson** has chosen to remain with us for a second year. Ellie is another person skilled in crafts who also loves being outside working with our livestock.

Finally, we are eagerly awaiting the arrival early in the New Year of **Vicci Haas**, a trained cabinet maker from Germany. We are very blessed to have such gifted people making valuable contributions to our life.



*From left to right,
top to bottom:*

Amy

Luke

Oscar

Sophie

Ellie

Social Media

We've been having so much fun updating our social media with snapshots of life here at Friary. All sorts from photos from the garden, cooking, crafting, the shop, farming, chapel and our conservation projects! It's lovely to keep people connected with the Friary who might not be able to visit for a long time or people who have never been before to see what goes on here. So go and have a look at our Facebook and Instagram pages!

<https://www.facebook.com/HilfieldFriary/>

https://www.instagram.com/hilfield_friary/



Keith

It is with great sadness that we let everyone know that Keith MacDonald died on 7th December after a short illness. He was by far the longest serving Member of our Friary, being here almost 70 years! His welcome was legendary - along with his almost photographic memory of visitors.

Keith's contribution to the life of Hilfield was enormous, and it was our pleasure as a community to care for him at home during his final illness - we will miss him greatly. May he Rest in Peace and rise in glory. Let light perpetual shine upon him.



Would you like to be a Volunteer?

We are looking for young people aged 18 - 30 who might be interested in volunteering with us for a year. This a great opportunity to deepen your Christian commitment, enjoy life in community, and to learn many new life skills that working on the land and in conservation can foster. Community life will enrich any course of study or career path in the future. Living at the heart of a Franciscan community can inspire your spiritual life—and give a close up look at what religious life is like. More information can be found on our website.