

We'd like to introduce you to some of our many volunteers at the Bicester Vaccination Centre



STEVE is part of the hardy bunch of people who make up the Car Park Crew at the Bicester Vaccination Centre. He's Bicester born and bred and is now a coach at Bicester Athletics Club after retiring from BT. While most of Steve's family live locally he says that his grandchildren now live in Sweden. Steve told us, "I haven't seen my grandkids for over a year, and I really wanted to do something positive to help us all get back to some form of normality. Even on the coldest of days, being in the Car Park Crew is the best job because you see people leaving with big smiles on their faces."

RACHAEL – Is one of our Front of House volunteers who meet and help people as they come inside the Centre. Having volunteered with 'Salute the NHS' she was keen to continue to support the NHS efforts, and registered to volunteer early on. She's currently a very long way from home, along with partner Des who's another member of the Car Park Crew. They usually live in Australia but when the pandemic struck they'd just returned to the UK for an extended holiday, visiting family in the Bicester area, and have found it impossible to get back. They said, "It's amazing to see the vaccination centre operating, and to be a part of it. We want to help everyone get their lives and freedom back. We really enjoy the volunteering – it keeps us busy and we know that it's helping out."



CAROLYN – is someone you probably won't see during your visit as she's busy upstairs helping manage some of the data entry work that connected to each patient's vaccination. Originally from Chester, Carolyn has lived in Bicester for over 25 years. Carolyn says she finds a sense of purpose in volunteering at the Vaccination Centre, "I feel like I am doing something useful, and at the same time, I love the social aspect and huge sense of community that comes with the volunteering." She's looking forward to continuing to indulge in her passion for travel when the pandemic is over. A keen tennis player and fan, she has been to all the Grand Slam tournaments.

BETH – is another of the data entry team. She’s an HR professional from Bucknell and currently a stay-at-home Mum to Louie and Riley. With a huge passion for music, Beth would usually be found singing in a choir and with the band, ‘What the Funk’. If schooling from her home isn’t already enough to keep her busy, Beth says she’s also started to learn to play the piano from scratch and says, “I miss performing and experiencing live music, but at least by helping at the vaccination centre, I feel that I am really doing something to help.”



MARTIN – is the person who you’re most likely to see when leaving the Centre. He’s the one with the smiling face who’ll give you the farewell greeting as you head out the back door.

He lives just down the road in Launton where he’s also kept busy childminding his grandson, Teddy. At just two years old, Teddy’s quite a handful and keeps his Grampy on his toes and active – which’ll be useful once Martin can get back to playing golf and squash again.

Of the volunteering, Martin says “I just want to help out, and it’s lovely to chat to people. Many of the people we’ve seen haven’t been out since last March, and they’re so pleased to have been vaccinated. It’s a pleasure to be a part of this.”



The people featured here talked with Bev Burnham, another of the Vaccination Centre volunteers. Pictures and article produced by Chris A’Court.

