



**The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service**

*The MBE for volunteer groups*

## **Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2016 Press Release**

### **Narthex Sparkhill, in Birmingham recognised with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service for 2016**

It has today been announced in the London Gazette that the charity Narthex Sparkhill has been honoured with the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK.

Narthex Sparkhill Charity is Based at St John's Church in Sparkhill. During the last year over 100 volunteers have contributed almost 25,000 volunteering hours, supporting the 16 projects Narthex Sparkhill runs including Sparkhill Foodbank and its satellites, Resource Centre for Asylum Seekers Refugees and those in crisis, Advice Centre, Elderly Support including Lunch Club and Tea Dances, Boys Youth Group, Men's Club, Support for those who have suffered Domestic Abuse or Trafficking, Support for Carers

Rev John Self and Mr Nigel Brookhouse, Chair of the Trustees and CEO of Narthex Sparkhill attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2016 where they met the Queen and other winners of this year's award.

#### **Mr Brookhouse said:**

"It was an absolute privilege for us to represent Narthex at Her Majesties' garden party, and it is also good for Sparkhill to be acknowledged at this level"

Narthex Sparkhill is one of 193 charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year, which is slightly higher than last year, showing that the voluntary sector is thriving and full of innovative ideas to tackle community challenges.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work in their communities. The awards were created in 2002 to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee and winners are announced each year on 2 June – the anniversary of the Queen's Coronation.

#### **Mr Simon Topman MBE DL Deputy Lieutenant, West Midlands said:**

"Narthex has a quite exceptional group of volunteers, admirably led and all working towards a vision that goes way beyond the provision of sanctuary, food and clothes. They are highly innovative, as demonstrated by their satellite food and clothes banks at the QE Hospital and in Fire Stations (it speaks volumes that so many want to copy this initiative). They are changing the culture in Sparkhill and creating a community spirit to confound those who thought that such values were lost. After many years of assessing Queen's Awards for voluntary service, I have never found an organisation

who deserve it more or whose very existence ushers in profound change for the better in an area that so badly needs it”.

Mr Topman MBE DL Deputy Lord Lieutenant of West Midlands will be presenting Narthex with their award later this summer.

**The Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service Committee Chair, former broadcast journalist Sir Martyn Lewis said:**

“I warmly congratulate all of the inspirational voluntary groups who have been rewarded for their community work with a Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service. The judging panel for this year’s awards were struck by the quality and breadth of all the successful groups. The thousands of volunteers who give up spare time to help others in their community and to help solve problems demonstrate the very best of democracy in action.”

**Minister for Civil Society, Rob Wilson, said:**

“I would like to congratulate all groups who received this year’s Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service, in recognition of their fantastic achievements. The huge amount of work and commitment these organisations put into their local communities is surpassed only by the passion and motivation of the individuals who volunteer. I hope these groups continue to inspire others to get involved and make a positive impact so that we can continue to build a more compassionate society.”

**Rev John Self the Vicar of St John’s Church in Sparkhill who is Chair of Trustees said:**

“This is a marvellous recognition of the support Narthex Sparkhill receives from the local community through the many who volunteer in the Charity’s various projects and is a tribute to the dedication of a great staff team who are so supportive of the Charity.”

## **Notes to editors, TV & Radio**

1. For further information or interviews please contact Nigel Brookhouse CEO Narthex Sparkhill 0772 5278 636 or email [nigelb@narthex.org.uk](mailto:nigelb@narthex.org.uk)
2. Lord Lieutenants are the monarch’s representatives in their lieutenancy. There are 98 Lord Lieutenants who cover all areas of the UK.
3. This year there were 193 winners of The Queen’s Award Voluntary Service from across the UK. More information on the winners can be found at the London Gazette <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/>
4. Any group of two or more people that has participated in voluntary work for more than three years can be nominated for the award. Full details on how to nominate are available at <http://qavs.direct.gov.uk/>
5. Nominations for the 2017 awards close on 16 September 2016 and should be made online via <https://www.gov.uk/queens-award-for-voluntary-service/overview>