

Our company volunteering scheme - Rachel's story

For her volunteering day this year, our Marketing Manager, Rachel Chancellor, spent the day at the Thames Street Living Room baking festive biscuits with visitors.

The [Thames Street Living Room](#) is located in Wallingford, Oxfordshire, and is open on Mondays for anyone who would like to socialise with other members of the community. It opened earlier this year in response to a visible need for a safe and friendly place for people who often feel isolated or on the fringes of society, and is now abuzz with many enjoying a cup of tea and cake, or playing a game of chess or Scrabble, or just having conversations.

A part of the ethos behind the Thames Street Living Room is offering visitors opportunities to learn some useful life skills. This may involve helping to make soup for lunch to gain some basic cooking skills, or having a lesson on computer usage, or help with writing documents such as letters or CVs. The team at the Thames Street Living Room thought that many of their regular visitors would enjoy having a go at baking, so Rachel showed up with a plethora of ingredients, decorations, and a rather heavy stand mixer.

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For many, this was their first time baking, and the results were delicious! From mixing up muffins, to making cookie dough, to cutting and decorating gingerbread, fun was had while a mess was made.

One baker greeted a newly arrived visitor with "Would you like one of these biscuits? I made them!", while another exclaimed how easy baking biscuits was.

Later in the afternoon, several young people showed up after school to hang out, and got stuck in with

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rolling, cutting and decorating gingerbread. Rachel took care of all of the oven work, demonstrating how someone who has baked for three decades is still capable of burning a batch of cookies.

By the end of the day, many biscuits were eaten with hot cuppas and much fun was had by all.

Supplied by:



INTERTRONICS

12a Station Field Industrial Estate, Banbury Road, Kidlington

Oxfordshire England OX5 1JD

t 01865 842842 e info@intertronics.co.uk

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