

Carisbrooke Priory Trust Company Limited

SPRING/SUMMER 2026

Growing Together at the Priory Garden

We are truly blessed by our garden volunteers, whose time and energy help make the Priory grounds such a beautiful and welcoming place. In recent months, we've welcomed new gardeners, planted fruit trees thanks to a successful fundraiser, and added a greenhouse to grow even more plants. We're now shining a light on the people behind the work, with some volunteers sharing their experiences, what they enjoy most, and what the garden means to them.



Charles first became connected to the Priory through his wife Mary, who started attending soon after it opened. A few years later, he joined her and began working in the garden, gradually becoming more involved. What Charles enjoys most about the garden is the fresh air, the peace and quiet,

and the chance to meet all sorts of different people. He has a particular fondness for vegetables—especially runner beans—and takes great satisfaction in seeing the garden flourish. One of his most memorable experiences has been helping transform overgrown areas of brambles and nettles into productive spaces and restoring parts of the orchard. For Charles, the garden is a very special place, cared for by Christians for over 150 years, where God's love is shared in a gentle, welcoming way. What he most values about volunteering is making new friends and meeting people he would not otherwise have met. To anyone thinking of joining, his message is simple: "Please come—you will enjoy it."

Steve and Gerry first became involved with the garden after a friend invited them to the café for lunch, where they noticed the garden was in need of some TLC. Having first seen it in November 2025, they are now excited to see what growth emerges as the seasons progress. One



memorable moment for them was encouraging a friend to get involved with the garden too, and they are very happy that he has now joined in the fun. For Steve and Gerry, the garden is important because it's "good for the soul – for gardeners and visitors." What they enjoy most about volunteering is the fresh air and exercise with friends in such a delightful and restful environment. Their message to anyone thinking about joining is simple: "Come and join in. It will lift your spirits."

Jayne and Clive

Jayne first came to the Priory while helping to organise the flower festival and was soon drawn to spend more time in the garden. What she enjoys most is the unique atmosphere of the Priory—the sense of



calm, along with the warmth and friendliness of the other volunteers.

A particularly memorable moment for Jayne has been being entrusted with the care of the cloister garden, a role she values deeply. For her, the garden is important because of its peace, which can be truly healing. It offers space to be quiet and reflective, while also being part of a supportive "family" of volunteers who come together to share ideas and plans.

What she appreciates most about volunteering is the strong sense of support from others whenever it's needed. To anyone thinking of joining, she says: "I can't think of a better place to be. If you like gardening and have the time, you will be made so welcome."

Alex first got involved with the gardens after his stepdad, who had previously volunteered as a gardener, recommended it to him. Stella also showed him pictures of the gardens and encouraged him to join. What Alex enjoys most is the sense of fellowship among the gardeners, where volunteers share ideas, inspiration, and horticultural knowledge while working together. His favourite part of the garden is the chapel garden, which he describes as a peaceful sanctuary—like a living room surrounded by plants—perfect for reading, meditation, and relaxation. One of his most memorable moments was celebrating Clare's birthday

with other volunteers and staff during a sunny summer afternoon picnic by the tree.

Alex believes the garden is important because it showcases the beauty of nature and offers visitors a calm, welcoming space to enjoy. He says anyone thinking of volunteering just needs enthusiasm, an open mind, and a



little creativity, as there is always plenty to do and a supportive team of kind, like-minded gardeners ready to help. For Alex, volunteering is not only a chance to learn new skills but also to share laughter with fellow gardeners and grow as a person.

Monty

After retirement and bereavement, Monty was looking for an outlet to keep active and discovered the gardens at Carisbrooke Priory. Initially apprehensive about joining established volunteers, he was soon welcomed as part



of the team. Although daunted by the garden's size, he found it peaceful and rewarding, with a sociable aspect from fellow volunteers and visitors. As a hobby gardener, Monty enjoys the diversity of plants—the colour, scent, and texture, the taste of fruit and vegetables, and the sounds of wind and birdsong. Each season brings its own star performers, and every part of the garden has a unique appeal. One memorable moment has been discovering an oasis of colour amid the routine outside the Priory, finding personal achievement in even the smallest tasks alongside a friendly, sociable team. Monty values the garden both historically and today, offering

visitors tranquillity, fresh produce, and a welcoming community. Volunteering benefits mental health, keeps the body active, and fosters friendship, encouragement, and fellowship among the gardeners.

Clare has been a huge part of the garden volunteer team, dedicating her time and energy to caring for the gardens. She has worked especially hard in the Chapel garden, which now has a new greenhouse—an exciting addition for the gardeners—and has helped the space flourish into the beautiful area it is today.

Michael joined the gardening team in January, having volunteered in other gardens and looking for a new opportunity. Friends from a previous garden had started at the Priory and recommended it, and he immediately felt at home with the welcoming team. He enjoys the peace and



tranquillity, fresh air and exercise, amazing wildlife, and the fellowship with other volunteers. Working in the long back garden vegetable beds, he appreciates the diversity of plants—from primroses and crocuses to budding trees—and finds the garden uplifting even on gray days. Memorable moments include gardening alongside other volunteers and meeting islanders and visitors from all over the world. Michael values the garden as a place where everyone is welcome and can contribute in their own way, whether through physical work, asking about the garden, or simply enjoying a moment of calm. He encourages anyone thinking of joining not to hesitate—there's always a task to suit every ability, and you'll leave tired but content, feeling part of a friendly, supportive community.



A note from our Newest Trustee, Tom Wells:

My name is Tom Wells, and I live in Niton with my wife Chloe and our three children. It is a privilege to join the team of trustees here at the Priory. It's truly exciting to see God at work and to witness the wonderful things happening in this special place. From a young age, I've always felt a deep fondness for the Priory and for the faithful stewards who, over many years, have shared God's love with all who visit. Through my grandmother, Eileen Wells, and later my uncle, Alistair Wells, I grew up hearing stories of lives changed, prayers answered, and of the Priory being a sanctuary for so many seeking Jesus.

"He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

Psalm 91 v1-2

Hope is Riding by Bob

Surely that should be “rising”, as in the modern hymn? But did you encounter the Coat of Hopes (www.coatofhopes.uk) during its pilgrimage on the Isle of Wight, 9th February to 16th March? People literally pinned their hopes on that Coat using creatively crafted patches.



From its arrival at Ryde Pier Head (above) until its departure at Yarmouth, the Coat was both inspirational and controversial, the latter because of many questions being raised about its relationship with the Christian faith. As always, it was right to “test” the pilgrimage and ask probing questions before God. Students at Christ the King College, who brought the Coat to the Priory on Tuesday 24th February, very keenly engaged in the pilgrimage, hence we can learn much from their reflections on the experience:

“The pilgrimage made me feel peaceful and connected to God.”

“I believe that Christians fight for hope.”

“God is the way, the truth and the life and the Coat is connected to God.”

“Christians fight for HOPE.”



Anxiety has reached a pandemic level, with many young people feeling betrayed by the hapless generations that are harming our planet, killing each other and prejudicing their future. Icons so easily become idols, but the Coat of Hopes is marching on to Land’s End while those who touched its hem, maybe even wore it, have the Kingdom of God to both enjoy and seek.

Theologian and environmental campaigner, Ruth Valerio, who has worn the Coat of Hopes, made a welcome return to the Island to speak at the Priory on Monday 2nd March and then minister at Christ the King College the following day. Her theme at the Priory, and also the title of her latest book, was the very pertinent “How to Survive a World in Crisis”, concurrent events in the Middle East (where she ministers with Embrace the Middle East) being as like a grim soundtrack.

Carisbrooke Priory
An Evening with
Ruth Valerio
Environmentalist and theologian, social activist and author
ruthvalerio.net
How to Survive a World in Crisis
Monday 2nd March 2026
7pm to 9pm @ The Priory
Free entry, donations encouraged
For enquires and bookings, please email creationmatters@gmail.com
Creation Matters!
39 Whitcombe Road, NEWPORT, Isle of Wight, PO50 0TS (01983) 333551
www.carisbrookepriory.co.uk

Using six very simple and yet utterly profound headings, Ruth ministered God-centred hope and a call to Spirit-fuelled practical action to an attentive and keen gathering in the Chapel.

“The proof of the professing is in the going out and getting”, one might say, picking up on Ruth’s “take action” heading. “Find your community” was partially realised in the fellowship that was enjoyed during the breakout period of the evening.

“Inspirational” was how a teacher described Ruth’s time at Christ the King College and I have subsequently heard of how the people involved there would like to continue the relationship with her. At a time when there is a risk of political betrayal of our nation’s young people, the message of hope through Jesus Christ and action to walk that talk seems to very much reflect God’s priorities for us, His people.

Notice Board

British Flowers Festival

at Carisbrooke Priory
39 Whitcombe Road, Carisbrooke, PO30 1YS

TICKETED PREVIEW EVENING
Monday 15th June, 6-8pm
FOR INFORMATION & TICKETS:
admin@carisbrookepriory.org.uk

A festival of beautiful floral arrangements, handcrafted by talented Isle of Wight florists. Also, an exhibition of floral inspired artwork.

Tuesday 16th & Wednesday 17th June
10.00am - 4.00pm

Tea Room serving homemade cakes & light lunches

PARKING AVAILABLE

FREE ENTRY

If you enjoy the festival, a donation to Carisbrooke Priory would be much appreciated
Event organised by Jayne Roberts - The Moth House. Poster by Simone Dickens

CRAFTY ARTISTS SUMMER EXHIBITION JULY 21 - 31, 2026

Carisbrooke Priory

10:00 am - 4:00pm
Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays

 <p>Pat Clarke Colorful and Imaginative Painting and Prints</p>	 <p>Pat Cornwell Wire sculpture fairies, mermaids, boats and more</p>	 <p>Pauline Evans Bright and cheerful kiln formed glass</p>
 <p>Chris Hicks Paintings, original prints and cards</p>	 <p>Marion Large Fine art paintings and landscapes</p>	 <p>Liz Toft Wheel thrown and sculpted porcelain jewelry</p>

Come and meet the Artists!

DAILY PRAYER



Join us for Daily Prayer

10:00 - Morning Prayer
in the Main Chapel

12:00 - Noon Prayer
in the Small Chapel
(upstairs)

Please keep in touch with everything that is happening at Carisbrooke Priory by visiting our website –

www.carisbrookepriory.org.uk, take a look at our Facebook page, or contact the Administrator if you would like any further information

Carisbrooke Priory Trust Co Ltd,
39 Whitcombe Road,
NEWPORT,
PO30 1YS
Telephone 01983 523354
Email:
admin@carisbrookepriory.org.uk