



Volunteer Researchers

Are you interested in history and able to help us discover the hidden history of our community in Wiltshire?

Volunteer Researchers will help our research to discover people's memories, stories and experiences – social life, work, campaigns and protests, support groups, news stories, photographs, flyers and more, so that we can understand and tell the LGBTQIA+ history of Wiltshire.

Key activities:

- Using the archives of our project partners, Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre in Chippenham and Swindon Local Studies Library to uncover existing records, images, documents and stories
- Talking to people at We Were Always Here community events and at the Pride Hub in Swindon, to capture oral histories
- Engaging the community at other events throughout Wiltshire during Summer 2026, such as Swindon & Wiltshire Pride on August 15th 2026
- Documenting research that you have uncovered
- Supporting the exhibition launch in February 2026 and tour during Summer 2027, with further opportunities to engage the community around the stories we have uncovered

Benefits - Training and Expenses:

Volunteers will be paid expenses and you'll receive training from the Oral History Society in interviewing and recording people's stories (you will receive OHS course certification), and training on how to search the archives. Some research can be done online.

To submit your expression of interest, please visit <https://www.swindonwiltshirepride.org.uk/pride-history-project>

Project Overview

Swindon & Wiltshire Pride (SWP) (www.swindonwiltshirepride.org.uk) works to promoting equality and diversity, eliminating discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and advancing education. We do this by raising public awareness, celebrating LGBTQIA+ communities, producing educational materials, and staging inclusive events. Using money raised by National Lottery players, The National Lottery Heritage Fund supports projects that connect people and communities with the UK's heritage. 'We Were Always Here' is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Thanks to National Lottery players, SWP are undertaking a special heritage project to discover the hidden history of the LGBTQ+ community in Wiltshire, working in partnership with Wiltshire & Swindon History Centre in Chippenham, Swindon Local Studies Library and with the support of Swindon LGBT Social Group, Swindon Heritage Preservation, Wiltshire Museum (Devizes).

Our project aims to

- uncover the lesser known social history of lives lived by 'everyday' queer people in Wiltshire in response to national social attitudes, issues and legislation from the early C19th to the early C21st centuries; and
- make this open and accessible to the general public.

To reach as many people in Wiltshire as possible we will produce:

- **We Were Always Here exhibition** created on easily transportable, free-standing, printed double-sided banners (suitable for indoor and outdoor display). This will tell the story over +/- 16 panels using text and images and with QR-code links to audio clips or online sources of further information (including historical pages on our own website).
The exhibition will be available for loan to interested organisations (diversity and inclusion) and educational establishments, with a permanent home in the Pride Hub, Swindon town centre.
- **We Were Always Here concise, illustrated history book** , softback approx. 80-100 pages, given to every senior school, College, library and LGBTQIA+ organisations in Wiltshire
- **We Were Always Here Online** digital resource (adapted book content) plus pdf downloadable version of the book.
- **The three outputs will complement one another – extended information and images will be published in the book and online whereas the exhibition will tell the summarised story with links to the other outputs**

Content will come from project research. We will discover the hidden history by:

- Looking at nationally important historic dates, events, social attitudes to guide the lines of local research
- searching local historical, and online, records including resources such as newspaper reports, court records
- Inviting members of the community to contribute their memories of LGBTQ+ events, campaigns, issues, prejudice and social life
 - at in-person ‘community memories events’ – volunteers will be on hand to talk to participants about their memories, artefacts and elicit further information by making notes during the conversations or recording parts of the conversation. Contributors will be asked if recordings may be used for research only or for public purposes (archived at WSHC or as public-facing audio clips within the outputs) and in either case conversations should be attributed or anonymised.
 - at regular SWP meet-ups and events
 - by uploading information and/or images to our dedicated SWP webpage
 - emailing contributions to a dedicated SWP project email address

To find out more, please visit <https://www.swindonwiltshirepride.org.uk/pride-history-project>