

Tianna (in full time work, plus studying, age 25)

What attracted you to the Star and Shadow?

The films were the first thing that attracted me to the Star and Shadow. I was interested in the fact the ones playing here were not the kind that play anywhere else. Then, I learned a bit more about the place – that it is all volunteer ran, volunteers suggest the films and that is why it is such an interesting mix. So, I got involved from there.

Do you remember which film was the first one you came to see?

I don't!

No worries, if it comes back to you, I'll add it at the end. So, what all do you do at the Star and Shadow?

I've done a bit of everything now: I've done the bar, I'm doing the cafe today for the first time, box office and ushering for films, and in the gardening club as well. So, I've tried a bit of everything.

And what would you say made it easy to become a volunteer?

Well, I already followed the Star and Shadow on Instagram, because I was coming as a punter. I saw a post for a volunteer induction, 'Come along and sign up' sort of thing, so it was pretty easy to do. Especially as they do them quite often, so I could find a date that worked.

The induction itself was quick. I came with my friend as I was just a bit scared of coming alone. She hasn't been back since! But obviously, I've been here a long time now.

When was it you joined?

January of 2023.

Eighteen months! You're an old hand. And an insider too. So, I'm curious, what made it easy for you to come back after the induction? But can you also share – or imagine - what may make it hard?

I think it's definitely difficult walking in somewhere for the first time and you not knowing anyone. The first thing I did was extra hands for community kitchen, which is quite a busy night! After that, I only did films and I think that's a nicer introduction because there are fewer people.

Since then, I've done Community Kitchen and something that really helped was that we had a little meeting beforehand, before the doors opened for everyone to come in for dinner. Everyone who was cooking came out the kitchen, everyone who was extra hands or anything else all came and had a meeting. I met people that I didn't know, it felt like a team and was able to feel useful. It was a really good way to include everyone.

Okay so is there anything that isn't currently running that you'd love to see at the Star in Shadow? Any classes or workshops or anything like that?

I really liked the crafty stuff. They did screen printing and that hasn't been on in a while as I think the person who ran it, Debbie, has kids, so she's quite busy. Also, I wonder if we could do something like an Art Workshop where we sell what we make to make money for the Star and Shadow.

That's a great idea.

I went to a mosaic workshop last year with my friend. It was just tiles - loads of different little coloured squares – so it was easy to get on with. There are so many classes like that we could set up and do and then potentially sell the artwork. It fits in well with the art club.

And of course there's the creative writing club here too and I saw that the New Bridge Art Project publishes booklets of their writers' poems, so perhaps the creative writing group could put together a little...

Zine?

That's the word I'm looking for. Maybe to sell, maybe to give away. But certainly, the craft classes is a great shout. So, to wrap up, how would you describe the Star and Shadow to someone who's never heard of it?

When I tell people - and I tell everyone about it - I always say it's entirely volunteer run. It's like a community club - anything that you want to do, you can probably do it here. People help you and support you, if you have plans.

And what do you feel it has given you?

I would say I've definitely gotten more confident meeting new people and being in different situations. For example, I did the volunteer induction with Joe last week. I never would have done that before. But just talking to Joe and him saying we need someone else to do it, I said, OK I'll do it. That wouldn't have been me last year.

So, it has definitely given me confidence, connections; I've met loads of cool people, seen a lot of cool films. There is so much to learn from everyone and I think everyone's so open to teaching you things as well.

Perfect. Thank you. Did you remember the first film you watched at the Star and Shadow?

Mullholland Drive.

Oh, you are cool, aren't you?