

Working with prisoners, a domestic abuse charity, young children and the elderly have all been aspects of Rachel Duffield’s job since she joined an HLF-supported project in Norfolk.

The role as learning and engagement officer has helped Rachel change her own life while she has been helping others to change their appreciation of heritage.

> "My role as Learning and Engagement Officer has made a massive difference to me.”
>
> - Rachel

She has found her working life taking on a new impetus – and even a new persona - since her involvement in the Voices from the Workhouse project at Gressenhall Farm and Workhouse run by Norfolk Museums Service.

“I had been in my previous role a long time and felt ‘maxed out’ with what I could offer,” says Rachel. “Now, my role as Learning and Engagement Officer has made a massive difference to me. It has certainly clarified what I’m good at, and galvanised me into action in terms of my plans for my own career progression.”

The main targets for the skills that she has “dusted off” for the role are hard-to-reach community groups, as well as the visiting public, especially people unlikely or unable to visit a museum because of their personal circumstances.

One project involved working with dance and drama A-level students and a playwright from domestic abuse charity Leeway to create a dramatic performance based on the experiences of Victorian women of the workhouse. Another meant visiting HMP Wayland to create an artwork project with prison inmates, including those in the personality disorder unit. There are now plans to get other prisons involved.

There has been work with Year 8 students from a school for children with learning difficulties, work with the Norfolk Deaf Association, residential homes for the elderly, and now Rachel has another project underway: Brick by Brick is looking at the differing functions of the workhouse walls - to protect, to isolate, to separate and to exclude people.

Moaning Martha

Rachel has also delivered workhouse tours to hundreds of visitors as a costumed character, the grumpy workhouse inmate Moaning Martha, who also tweets in a Norfolk dialect. Martha has morphed into Rachel's alter ego and this helped her pick up the third prize in Visit England's Tourism Superstar Award 2016. As Martha told her Twitter followers: "Ar bin give a serstifficut, hinta."

Reactions to Rachel's work underline the impact she has had on her many different audiences. Following her visit, an



