

Volunteering and Inland Waterways

How to Attract, Integrate and Retain Volunteers



Volunteering and Inland Waterways: How to Attract, Integrate and Retain Volunteers

Final Report to the Inland Waterways Advisory Council

September 2010

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What is the Inland Waterways Advisory Council (IWAC)?

IWAC is a statutory public body consisting of 14 Volunteer Members, a part-time Chair and two support staff. It provides independent advice to the UK Government, Scottish Government, navigation authorities and other interested parties on matters it considers appropriate and relevant to Britain's inland waterways.

IWAC was established in April 2007 by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Its predecessor organisation was the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council, formed in 1968. IWAC is supported by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Scottish Government.

In England and Wales, IWAC's remit covers all of the inland waterways such as:

- canals (including those managed by British Waterways, canal companies, local authorities and smaller independent bodies);
- rivers (including those which are the responsibility of the Environment Agency, British Waterways and port authorities);
- the Norfolk & Suffolk Broads; and
- the navigable drains of the Fens.

In Scotland, IWAC's remit covers inland waterways that are owned or managed by, or which receive technical advice or assistance from, British Waterways.

What is IWAC's role?

IWAC's role is to ensure that the inland waterways are sustainably developed to meet the needs of all who use and enjoy them. Once used mainly for freight transport, inland waterways now have a strong recreational and amenity use. They are an effective catalyst for the regeneration of local economies, acting as a distinctive focus to bring economic, social and environmental benefits to cities, towns and rural communities.

IWAC has published reports which include: using inland waterways to tackle social exclusion, funding and income sources for a selection of overseas waterways, insights into the funding of inland waterways in Britain, balancing the needs of navigation and aquatic wildlife, awareness and appreciation of the canal network in Scotland, reducing carbon dioxide emissions by moving more freight onto inland waterways.

More about IWAC

Please visit our website at www.iwac.org.uk for further information about IWAC and to see copies of its reports.

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Executive Summary

The **purpose** of this report is to help inland waterway organisations to attract, integrate and retain more volunteers. It draws on inspiration from a wide range of volunteering case study organisations operating in sectors **outside of inland waterways**.

The case studies are set against the context of a **changing policy agenda** which has included the Compact (setting out guidelines for joint working with the voluntary sector), support for Corporate Social Responsibility and most recently the emergence of the 'Big Society' concept. Wider **trends within the voluntary sector** have included increased competition and professionalisation, engaging young people as volunteers and localism. Developments within the inland waterways sector, including the proposed mutualisation of British Waterways, now seek to **build on a tradition of practical volunteering activity** and a range of good practice that has emerged, as illustrated by selected case studies in Annex 1 (page A1).

Ten key **challenges and opportunities** in attracting, integrating and retaining volunteers to inland waterway organisations are identified to inform the selection and content of 20 case studies (pages 12-31), drawn from a range of types and size of volunteering organisation. Each of the case studies highlights a number of **success factors** and **learning points** in relation to these challenges and opportunities, as cross-referenced in the table below.

Table 1 Case Study Selection Criteria

Case Study	In-depth or Summary	Capacity Building	Corporate Volunteering	Local Focus	Marketing & Publicity	Organisational Development	Partnership	Sustainability	Training & Support	Understanding Volunteers	Volunteer Diversity
Cathedral Camps	In-depth			✓					✓		✓
CSV Environment	In-depth		✓	✓						✓	✓
Kent Libraries	In-depth					✓	✓		✓		✓
Imperial War Museum	In-depth				✓				✓	✓	✓
Mayfield Nurseries	In-depth					✓	✓			✓	
National Trust	In-depth	✓		✓			✓	✓			
Refugee Council	In-depth		✓			✓	✓	✓			✓
RSPB	In-depth	✓						✓			
Co-op Vol. Programme	In-depth		✓							✓	
WRVS	In-depth	✓					✓		✓	✓	
Age UK	Summary							✓			✓
Brighton University	Summary					✓					✓
Friends Limited	Summary						✓				
Groundwork	Summary		✓	✓			✓				
KPMG	Summary		✓				✓			✓	
RSVP	Summary							✓		✓	
Samaritans	Summary	✓					✓		✓		
Victim Support	Summary								✓		
VODA	Summary	✓			✓						
Youth Action Network	Summary				✓			✓	✓	✓	

A **central theme** throughout the case studies is the adoption of an explicit **strategy of change** focused on volunteering, but also encompassing capacity building, organisational development and encouraging increased diversity of volunteers and volunteering opportunities. In practical terms, these strategies have resulted in key actions linked to a re-assessment of the breadth of roles that volunteers can play in an organisation and an increased appreciation of the contribution volunteers can play as co-workers. For most of the case studies, this change has been brought about through an **investment of time, money and management effort**, and has brought **significant benefits** to the organisations as a result of an increase in volunteering activity.

Inland waterway organisations have an opportunity to consider all of the **success factors** and subsequent **learning points** from the case studies in order to develop and implement their own tailored strategies to increase volunteering.

Building Capacity cuts across a number of the other challenges and opportunities, with many larger organisations such as the **National Trust** (page 22) allocating dedicated volunteer management resources, but smaller organisations such as **VODA** (page 41) explicitly integrating roles and responsibilities for volunteering across existing staff, or have co-operated externally to address (potentially onerous) regulatory requirements.

Corporate Volunteering in case studies including the **Refugee Council** (page 24) can provide a reliable source of volunteers, based on mutual understanding of organisational objectives as well as personal relationships. The perspective from the **Co-op** (page 28) and **KPMG** (page 37) emphasises the importance of appreciating the objectives of corporate schemes and offering tailored volunteering opportunities, such as those offered by **Groundwork** (on page 36) and **CSV Environment** (page 14).

Local Focus case study examples **Cathedral Camps** (page 12) and **Groundwork** (page 36) show how volunteers can be successfully engaged locally within a national structure, often building on community advocacy and 'word of mouth'. This provides links to strong locally-based motivations for volunteers, and offers specific opportunities for inland waterway organisations.

Targeted **Marketing and Publicity** can play an important role in attracting volunteers, but dissemination of good practice also has a role in terms of building partnerships, as demonstrated by **Manchester Museum and the Imperial War Museum North** (page 18). Use of social media, as demonstrated by **Youth Action Network** (page 42) can play an important role in integrating and retaining volunteers and demonstrates the importance of the social aspects of volunteering.

Organisational development is a key theme across all of the case studies, with examples such as **Kent Library Service** (page 16) working proactively with paid staff to address concerns regarding volunteers, and following through with clear planning and documentation of volunteer roles and task descriptions. Leadership from senior managers as well as recognition of the costs of integrating volunteers are also important success factors within wider organisational development strategies that incorporate volunteer development.

Partnership takes a number of forms and is shown to have a range of benefits across the case studies. Some partnerships are formal and long standing, for example between **Mayfield Nurseries** and **Solent Mind** (page 20) or **KPMG** and the **Refugee Council** (page 37 & 24), whilst other **partnerships** are more ad hoc in relation to specific projects, local recruitment or volunteer exchanges. Successful partnerships are often based on a Memorandum of Understanding, underpinned by specific agreements on lead responsibilities and protocols where necessary.

Financial and organisational **sustainability** is a perennial issue facing volunteering organisations. The **RSPB** (page 26) demonstrates that volunteers can play an important role in directly attracting funding, but they are also increasingly recognised as providing legitimate match funding or as an integral part of service delivery for contracting, as illustrated by the **Refugee Council** (page 24). Intergenerational volunteering, as promoted by **RSVP** (page 38), can help sustain organisations in the longer term, with a key success factor in this being the ability of organisations to identify a range of volunteering opportunities. Many of the case studies demonstrate how volunteers have enabled an organisation to fulfil an expanded range of roles.

Training and Support is increasingly important within the context of increasing professionalisation and competition for volunteers. A number of the case studies, such as **WRVS** (page 30), point to investment of time and resources in volunteers as being a key success factor in retaining volunteers, whilst for others, such as **Victim Support** (page 40) and the **Samaritans** (page 39), training forms a fundamental pre-requisite of their service.

Understanding volunteers is crucial in moving away from a paternalistic view of volunteers to one which recognises their motivations and regards them as equal to paid staff. A number of the case studies involve introducing one to one sessions to gain a better understanding of aspirations and skills. In the case of **Mayfield Nurseries** (page 20), this can lead to a rejection of volunteers who do not match with organisational needs and contrasts with **CSV Environment's** non-rejection policy (page 14). Both approaches have merits, but it needs to be made explicit to staff and volunteers which approach is being adopted by the organisation.

Encouraging **volunteer diversity** is another key theme across the case studies, in particular amongst under-represented groups, as this helps to ensure the widest possible organisational reach out into the wider community. Success factors including targeted marketing and local partnerships are illustrated by **Brighton University** (page 34) and **Kent Libraries** (page 16). An important feature in developing a more diverse volunteer base is offering a wider range of volunteer opportunities and being flexible about these opportunities, as demonstrated by **Age UK** (page 33).

Overall **Learning Points** include:

Attracting Volunteers:

- *Attracting volunteers from diverse backgrounds offers organisations new, different and valuable benefits*
- *Community advocacy can be powerful for attracting new volunteers locally*
- *Ensure there is a wide range of opportunities available including flexibility about timing and length of commitment*
- *Use different methods of recruitment and different messages to reach different sections of the population*

- *Provide varied opportunities for under-18's to volunteer - tailored opportunities such as summer camps offer a safe and time-limited format*
- *One-day activities give volunteers a good introductory taster of volunteering, but can often lead to longer term and sustained involvement*
- *Members offer a good start point for increasing volunteering as they are already 'warm' and sympathetic to the cause, hence it is much easier to draw them further in than recruiting from cold*
- *Accreditation is appealing for some volunteers, but by no means all - younger and older people may be less interested, but those seeking employment are more likely to want to strengthen their CV*

Integrating Volunteers:

- *Training and volunteer management should be integral to organisations' management processes*
- *Develop volunteer role descriptions alongside paid staff and address any overlaps*
- *Give paid staff explicit roles and responsibilities for supporting volunteers to enrich their jobs*
- *It is important not to underestimate the amount of time needed to adequately manage and supervise volunteers*
- *Reassure staff that volunteers are not replacing existing jobs and provide them with information, and opportunities for discussion and consultation*
- *It is important to be selective when matching volunteers to opportunities to make sure volunteer and organisations' needs are met*
- *Ensure senior management 'buy-in' is communicated to all staff*
- *Volunteers can themselves successfully become managers or leaders of other volunteers, including young people*
- *Adopt a structured volunteer policy that includes disciplinary guidelines for staff and volunteers and provide staff training*

Retaining Volunteers:

- *Constantly evaluate how the organisation can improve the relationship with volunteers through consultation to develop a better understanding of expectations and issues*
- *Dedicated volunteer management allows time for liaising with volunteers on a one-to-one or group basis, raising confidence and fostering integration*
- *Recognise and nurture the importance of social aspects of volunteering*
- *E-newsletters and social networking are good ways to keep in touch with volunteers and to build a community of volunteers over distances*
- *Invite volunteers to get involved in consultations and meetings to ensure their views have equal weight to those of paid staff*
- *Communication is key when volunteers only assist for short or infrequent periods of time - keep volunteers fully informed of what has happened during the time they have not been volunteering to keep momentum and continuity*
- *Help with fundraising is one way to keep volunteers actively engaged on an on-going basis, but may not suit everyone so needs to be part of a range of opportunities on offer*

Finally, a **Model Approach to Volunteering** for inland waterway organisations should include consideration of :

- Organisational Ethos and Volunteering Policy
- Statement of Commitment
- Policy Monitoring and Reporting
- Organisational Responsibilities
- Screening and Selection
- Induction, Supervision and Training
- Recognition
- Communication
- Diversity and Equality
- Health and Safety, Information and Data Protection
- Complaints

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this report is to help inland waterway organisations attract, integrate and retain more volunteers.

Within this, the more specific aims of the report are to:

- *Research evidence that is relevant to the operation of inland waterways in England, Scotland and Wales of how organisations successfully attract, integrate and retain volunteers*
- *Identify and explore those factors that make some organisations particularly successful in attracting, integrating and retaining volunteers*

This is primarily an 'outward looking' report, drawing on inspiration from a wide range of volunteering organisations operating at varying levels in different sectors. It is set within the context of a changing policy agenda, but is informed by current practice within inland waterway organisations. In particular, consultation with key stakeholders within the waterways sector identified that there is felt to be a major opportunity to enhance volunteering because:

- *Relative to organisations outside of the inland waterways sector, the role of volunteers beyond traditional 'practical' activities are under-developed*
- *There are a number of barriers to volunteering within the inland waterways sector which can be overcome by learning lessons from other sectors*

1.2 Method

ECOTEC Research & Consulting and CSV (Community Service Volunteers) Consulting were commissioned by the Inland Waterways Advisory Council (IWAC) in February 2010 to research relevant evidence from the wider volunteering sector that can help attract, integrate and retain volunteers in inland waterway organisations.

A qualitative approach has been used to address the research objectives through:

- Development of a framework for selecting case study organisations
- Design of research tools
- Desk-based research of current good practice and volunteering trends
- Conducting telephone interviews involving waterways stakeholders
- Conducting telephone interviews with 20 selected case study organisations
- Developing a profile of a model volunteering organisation for the inland waterways sector

Throughout the research, CSV Consulting provided advice and insights based on extensive practical experience of volunteering and ECOTEC led on undertaking desk research, qualitative fieldwork and write-up.

1.3 Structure

This final report draws together findings from case studies of 20 organisations from outside the waterways sector, highlighting volunteering good practice and transferable learning points. Ten of these case studies are 'in-depth', selected together with IWAC as being of particular interest for transferable lessons, with 10 further summary case studies and a selection of inland waterway case studies in Annex 1. The case studies are designed to act as stand alone fiches but are presented here within the following structure:

- **Chapter Two:** *Context of key developments affecting volunteering and inland waterway organisations and identification of key challenges and opportunities facing volunteering*
- **Chapter Three:** *Case study organisations, 10 in-depth and 10 summary, with key learning points*
- **Chapter Four:** *Findings and lessons arising from case studies and stakeholder consultations*
- **Chapter Five:** *Profile of a 'model' volunteering organisation for the inland waterways sector*

2.0 Context

This chapter gives an overview of key developments affecting volunteering in a changing national and political context, as well as of some of the existing volunteering good practice already taking place amongst inland waterway organisations. It concludes by highlighting some of the challenges and opportunities facing inland waterway organisations which are seeking to attract, integrate and retain more volunteers, which have then informed the selection and content of the case studies.

2.1 The Policy Agenda

It is estimated that around 26% of people in England formally volunteer at least once a month¹, with volunteers playing an important role in terms of social capital, cohesive communities and delivery of services. The recently renamed Office for Civil Society is the lead UK Government department for volunteering in England, with an aim to strengthen communities and transform public services through delivery, design, innovation and campaigning. As a devolved matter, volunteering is overseen by separate administrations in Scotland and Wales, but all three countries have seen an increased focus on the benefits of volunteering as part of the following developments:

- In 2007, the Prime Minister appointed Baroness Neuberger as the government's volunteering champion, producing three reports considering how public services should make better use of the third sector and volunteers.
- Since 2008, National Indicators in the Local Government Performance Framework have included an indicator (NI6) that measures levels of volunteering in a local area.
- Established in 1998, but revised and re-launched in 2009, the Compact is an agreement between the UK Government and the voluntary sector in England that recognises shared values, principles and commitments and sets out guidelines for joint working. The Commission for the Compact is the body charged with reviewing and updating the Compact, including strengthening relationships at regional and local authority levels and overseeing the Volunteering Code as one of the five underpinning codes of practice.
- UK and Scottish Government departments that fund and support volunteering have increasingly sought better alignment between volunteering and their policy objectives.
- The Corporate Social Responsibility agenda has been encouraged by the UK Government and has led to a number of volunteering programmes for large and small private as well as public sector bodies.
- The European Commission has designated 2011 as the European Year of Volunteering, which presents opportunities for celebrating and promoting volunteering.
- The 'Big Society' concept of the new UK Coalition Government highlights potentially significant new developments for volunteering and citizen involvement, including a National Citizens Service for young people.

¹ 2008-09 Citizenship Survey, *Volunteering and Charitable Giving Topic Report*, DCLG, April 2010

2.2 Trends within the Voluntary Sector

In addition to the changing policy context, there have been several trends emerging from within the voluntary sector of relevance to this study, including:

Increasing competition

As a result of reduced funding but also due to a more informed and demanding volunteer base, volunteering organisations increasingly find themselves in competition for volunteers as well as for funding, partnerships and contracts. This has led to increased professionalisation and marketing within the sector as well as the emergence of sophisticated organisational strategies for attracting, integrating and retaining volunteers.

Increasing professionalisation

The emergence in some organisations of a volunteer manager, more formalised training (including accredited training), written volunteer tasks, role descriptions and personalised volunteer programmes has contributed to a more professional approach to volunteering. Whilst recognising and fostering the informal ethos behind much volunteering, 'professionalisation' covers developments in the skills needed both in performing volunteer roles as well as those required for managing and running organisations that involve volunteers, in particular management and leadership skills².

Engaging young people as volunteers

There has been substantial investment in youth volunteering for 16 to 25 year olds, firstly through the UK-wide Millennium Volunteers programme and subsequently through the 'V' programme, funding youth volunteering projects in England. Within this, there has also been a focus on inter-generational volunteering and improving access to volunteering for (young) people with disabilities.

'Localism'

In addition to a wider public sector trend towards the localisation of public service provision and community development, a common motivation for individuals to get involved with volunteering is a response to a specific need in the local community³. As a result, a number of volunteering organisations are focussing marketing on local issues and making a difference to the local community as the 'hook' for engaging volunteers.

² Institute for Volunteering Research (2008) Management matters: a national survey of volunteer management capacity. http://www.ivr.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/9460E62B-FB69-4679-B043-B21035E6ADF3/0/management_matters.pdf

³ A motivation cited by a third of survey respondents in the survey *Helping Out: A national survey of volunteering and charitable giving* (2007) Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office

2.3 Volunteering and Inland Waterways

Volunteers play a key part in Britain's waterways; from safeguarding and restoration, to improving waterway services, campaigning and the experience of people using rivers and canals. Volunteering is not new within the waterways sector and has largely developed organically, focussing on practical maintenance and restoration activities. Within this, a range of processes and practices for organisations have evolved for attracting, integrating and retaining volunteers. Seven brief case studies to illustrate current good practice in volunteering within the inland waterways sector are included in Annex 1 for:

- British Waterways
- British Waterways Scotland
- The Broads Authority
- Essex Waterways
- Seagull Trust Cruises
- Waterways Action Squad
- Waterway Recovery Group

These case studies illustrate that there is already good practice in the sector, with strategies in place to diversify the volunteering base, in particular to involve more young people and address the specific barriers they may face. Organisations such as the Broads Authority already have formalised volunteer training and procedures in place and a number of inland waterway organisations are actively looking to offer a wider range of volunteering opportunities.

A complementary and more comprehensive survey of the extent and impact of volunteering on inland waterways is being undertaken for AINA (the Association of Inland Navigation Authorities) by ECOTEC and CSV and is due to report by the end of 2010. This will help to further highlight which elements of good practice in this report are particularly relevant to inland waterway organisations in light of a better understanding of their needs. It will also provide a more robust evidence base for policy and investment decisions relating to inland waterway volunteering going forward.

There are a number of challenges and opportunities for inland waterway organisations resulting from the new UK Government agenda as well as an on-going review of the contribution that waterways can make to the 'wealth, health and wellbeing of communities across the country' highlighted by the 'Waterways for Everyone' consultation in 2010. A central focus for this is the review of the role and status of British Waterways as a mutual or other third sector structure, highlighted in the UK Government's 2009 Operational Efficiency Programme, taken up as part of British Waterway's 'Twenty-Two Vision' strategy and currently under-going a full options appraisal.

2.4 Challenges and Opportunities

Bringing together the changing policy agenda, wider trends in volunteering and specific developments affecting inland waterways, this section sets out ten key challenges and opportunities facing inland waterway organisations in attracting, integrating and retaining volunteers. These have informed the selection and content of case studies in the following chapter and are outlined below.

Building Capacity

Lack of capacity, especially in relation to the management and leadership of volunteers is an issue across the voluntary sector, but felt to be acute within inland waterway organisations. Stakeholder consultees highlighted this as a key issue constraining the ability of inland waterway organisations to facilitate and manage new volunteering activities whilst maintaining the exiting volunteer base. Capacity in this context relates to the number of people willing to lead and manage as well as the skills and tools available.

Corporate Volunteering

With the rise of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and growing awareness amongst employers of the benefits to staff development and morale brought by volunteering, there are a number of well developed corporate volunteering programmes operating at different geographical levels. A number of these are based on 'strategic partnerships' as well as more local links but all programmes are based on a shared set of aims and values and between the corporate and host volunteering organisations which offer mutual benefits.

Local Focus

Building on the motivations of volunteers correlating to more immediate and local issues, a number of larger national organisations have successfully attracted, integrated and retained volunteers on the basis of local campaigns and structures. This brings challenges in terms of increased competition for local waterway organisations as well as the way in which national bodies present themselves and engage with volunteers.

Marketing and Publicity

Within the context of an increasingly competitive environment for time, resources and money and a more informed and demanding volunteer base, inland waterway organisations need to become more sophisticated and targeted in marketing and publicising volunteering opportunities. Within this, there are perceptions relating to the practical focus of waterway activity and an association with publicly-run bodies which needs to be overcome in order to attract the maximum number of volunteers.

Organisational Development

Where organisations are seeking to integrate and retain volunteers, a key challenge is how to successfully recognise volunteer roles within formal management structures and processes. For some waterway organisations, this involves broadening the potential roles, responsibilities and transferable skills that volunteers could provide by starting with an assessment of organisational needs and development and then matching volunteering opportunities to these roles.

Partnership

Partnership is commonplace in the voluntary sector, but needs to be entered into with an explicit recognition of the mutual benefit to participating organisations, as highlighted in the IWAC report 'Working Together'⁴. There can be risks which need to be managed in terms of volunteer perceptions, for example, where volunteers feel that they are substituting for paid workers in delivering a service through partnership.

Sustainability

A perennial issue for all voluntary sector organisations is financial and organisational sustainability. In the waterways sector in particular, volunteer roles are often short-term and project based, targeting specific groups, and funding is always under threat. Linked to other challenges and opportunities for organisational development, there is potential for waterway organisations to think more broadly about what volunteers can offer in terms of skills to an organisation in the longer term.

Training and Support

Linked to increased professionalisation of the sector more widely, there are a growing number of formal and accredited training opportunities for volunteers and volunteer managers alike. As the volunteer base becomes more demanding and volunteering is increasingly seen as one of the progression routes for employment programmes or as part of certified learning schemes for young people, there is an opportunity for waterway organisations to adapt more formal approaches to training and personal development. There is also a growing recognition that volunteers may have specific support needs which the host organisation needs to address to help the volunteer participate.

Understanding Volunteers

A key challenge for all volunteering organisations is developing a better understanding of the motivations and needs of volunteers in order to develop attractive, mutually beneficial opportunities which attract, integrate and retain volunteers. This will vary across the diversity of groups who volunteer and needs to be at the core of volunteer development strategies developed for volunteering organisations.

Volunteer Diversity

Of particular concern for inland waterway volunteering organisations is what is perceived as a relatively narrow volunteering base with the 'average' volunteer being white, middle class and aged over 50. This limits potential growth in volunteering and has implications for sustainability, with a need to constantly refresh volunteer recruitment as well as acting as a potential disincentive to other demographic and ethnic groups.

⁴ Available at <http://www.iwac.org.uk/reports>

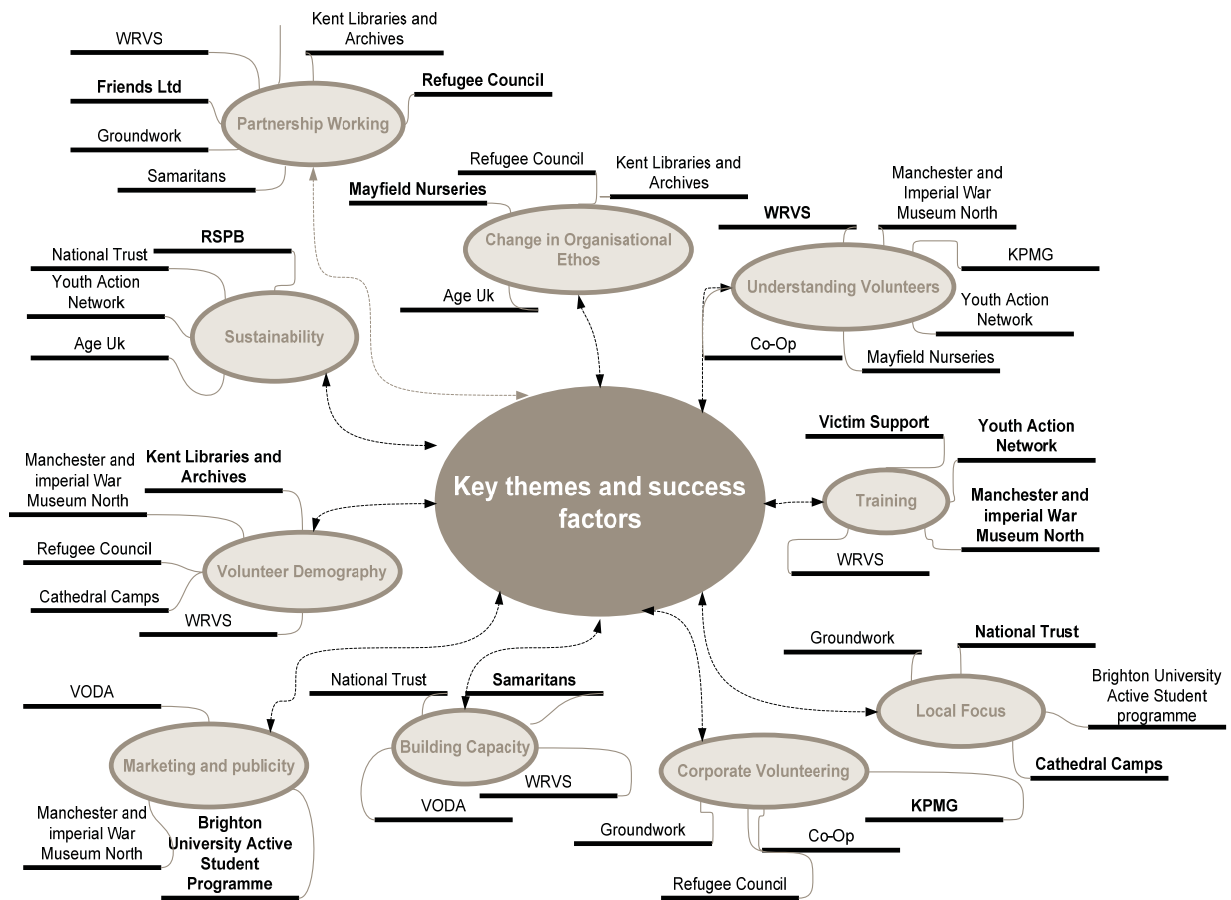
3.0 Case Studies

This chapter takes forward the 10 key challenges and opportunities identified in the previous chapter and presents 20 case studies drawn from the wider voluntary sector with transferable lessons for inland waterway organisations. Case studies have been selected to illustrate how these challenges and opportunities can be addressed, as well as representing a range of different organisational types, sizes and stages of volunteering development. The case studies also illustrate a range of different volunteer activities and volunteer profiles.

The 20 case studies have been selected to represent a cross section of organisations, as well as addressing the specific challenges and opportunities outlined in the previous chapter in attracting, integrating and retaining volunteers. Ten of these are 'in-depth' and have a number of key lessons for inland waterway organisations, and a further ten are in summary format.

Figure 3.1 shows how the case study examples relate to the key challenges and opportunities identified, before Figure 3.2 further cross-references the primary focus for each case study as an aid for navigating this chapter.

Figure 3.1 Mapping of Key Challenges and Opportunities against Case Studies



Organisation Abbreviations:

RSPB (The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)

VODA (Voluntary Organisations Development Agency)

WRVS (Women's Royal Voluntary Service)

Figure 3.2 Cross Reference Grid of Case Studies vs Key Challenges and Opportunities

	In-depth or Summary	Building Capacity	Corporate Volunteering	Local Focus	Marketing and Publicity	Organisational Development	Partnership	Sustainability	Training and Support	Understanding Volunteers	Volunteer Diversity
Cathedral Camps	In-depth			✓					✓		✓
CSV Environment	In-depth		✓	✓						✓	✓
Kent Libraries	In-depth					✓	✓		✓		✓
Imperial War Museum	In-depth				✓				✓	✓	✓
Mayfield Nurseries	In-depth					✓	✓			✓	
National Trust	In-depth	✓		✓			✓	✓			
Refugee Council	In-depth		✓			✓	✓	✓			✓
RSPB	In-depth	✓						✓			
The Co-op	In-depth		✓							✓	
WRVS	In-depth	✓					✓		✓	✓	
Age UK	Summary							✓			✓
Brighton University	Summary					✓					✓
Friends Limited	Summary						✓				
Groundwork	Summary		✓	✓			✓				
KPMG	Summary		✓				✓			✓	
RSVP	Summary							✓		✓	
Samaritans	Summary	✓					✓		✓		
Victim Support	Summary								✓		
VODA	Summary	✓			✓						
Youth Action Network	Summary				✓			✓	✓	✓	

3.1 In-Depth Case Studies

The following in-depth case studies are included in this section:

- Cathedral Camps
- Community Service Volunteers Environment
- Kent Libraries and Archives
- Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum North – In-Touch Training Programme
- Mayfield Nurseries
- The National Trust
- The Refugee Council
- The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- The Co-operative Corporate Volunteering Programme
- Women's Royal Voluntary Service

In-Depth Case Study

Cathedral Camps

Web: www.cathedralcamps.org.uk

Coverage: National

Number of Volunteers: 640

About the organisation: Cathedral Camps is a small charity founded 25 years ago which welcomes all young people between the ages of 16-25 to volunteer either at one week conservation and heritage summer camps in the summer, or one day projects which are run throughout the year in different parts of the UK. Volunteers work in historic churches, cathedrals and other faith buildings in Britain, taking part in the preservation of these landmark buildings. Cathedral Camps has one full time member of paid staff, plus help from volunteers.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed: Local Focus, Training and Support, Volunteer Diversity.

Volunteer profile: All Cathedral Camps volunteers are aged between 16-25. Each camp/activity is led by trained young volunteers, usually working as a pair. Cathedral Camps has actively set out to diversify its volunteers and to engage more 'hard to reach' volunteers through its ReFresh project.

2% of volunteers have a physical disability, 10% of volunteers are young offenders, 5% are young carers and 25% classify themselves as coming from low income backgrounds.

Volunteer recruitment: The main challenges encountered in engaging 'hard to reach' young people in volunteering are: i) Finding groups of young people and telling them about the project ii) Identifying the best ways to 'sell' the project to them so that they are keen to take part. Cathedral Camps uses intermediary groups like schools, youth clubs, Youth Offending Teams and other youth networks to reach young people as well as the Internet, which additionally attracts young people from overseas (mainly Europe).

Training and support: Cathedral Camps offers optional external accreditation to those young people as an incentive for them to participate. This includes the community service element for achieving a Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award and the Youth Achievement Award. 40% of Cathedral Camps volunteers have received an Award. Cathedral Camps also invests in training its volunteers for the future. Potential volunteer leaders attend a specially designed Youth Leadership Programme throughout the year and these help to ensure that volunteers are equipped with the skills, knowledge and information they need to run a Camp in future.

Understanding the social aspects of volunteering: Cathedral Camps maintains communication with volunteers in between camps/projects and encourages its volunteers to keep in touch with each other via webgroups, social networking (e.g. Facebook), e-mails and telephone. It also organises celebration events to recognise volunteers' achievements and commitment. Social aspects are key to volunteering for young people, with a chance to meet new people, make new friends and to have fun as well as undertake hard work that makes a real difference.

Organisational development: Cathedral Camps is not a faith based organisation, but is specifically a youth volunteering charity and as such has taken steps to give young people a real say and some degree of control over its affairs. It wants young people to have real responsibility, not only in delivering its projects as leaders or in helping with administration and running of the day to day work, but also in the decision making, planning and governance. It has set up a Youth Board which has 8 members and this contributes to the strategic development of Cathedral Camps and feeds into the main Cathedral Camps Board of Trustees.



Photograph copyright Cathedral Camps

Partnership: Cathedral Camps recruits volunteers directly via schools talks, promotional leaflets and flyers, its website and through press coverage. It has built up a core group of supporters who promote it to young people they work with. Cathedral Camps also works in partnership with The Churches Conservation Trust, which sponsors and organises 3 summer residential camps a year at historic disused churches. It provides the staff to support the camps and specialist training for volunteers about aspects of Church conservation. Every venue that hosts a Cathedral Camp project is also a partner. These provide volunteer accommodation, tools, equipment, training and on-site support, as well as social activities. The ecclesiastical staff are often involved, as are Clerks of Works, Education Officers and other lay personnel. Around 20 cathedrals and churches take part in the summer residential

programme, of which some are repeat venues from year to year, depending on the amount and type of work needing to be done. In the summer 2010 programme, among the new venues are the cathedrals in Liverpool, Chester and Wakefield. Particularly prestigious cathedrals such as York Minster, Durham and Canterbury cathedrals regularly host one-day or summer residential projects.

Sustainability: Cathedral Camps is funded by a large number of charitable Trusts and Foundations, such as the Rank Foundation, or the Hedley Trust, and contributions from many small donors including Rotary Clubs and local funders in the locations of each camp. 'V', the youth volunteering charity funds much of the ReFresh project. Volunteers pay a subscription (currently £155) to participate in the week long summer camp, which covers a contribution toward the costs of providing volunteers' food and accommodation. This is charged at the point of completing an application form and booking onto a camp, which is done online.

Benefits of volunteering: 'ReFresh' as a model has enabled Cathedral Camps to develop more locally based projects which help to foster a positive image of young people with their local communities. It has created a more diverse base of young people volunteering who would not normally venture inside a cathedral or church and who have little sense of its historical, cultural or social significance, even though it is a local landmark known well. Cathedral Camps offers a valuable 'hands on' introduction to heritage conservation; some volunteers are enthusiasts for architecture, but do not usually get a chance to express that interest. Every volunteer, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to do practical tasks like cleaning, polishing, gardening, or maintenance.



Photograph copyright Cathedral Camps

Transferable Learning Points:

- E-newsletters and social networking are good ways to keep in touch with volunteers and to build a virtual and sustainable community of volunteers
- One-day activities give volunteers a good introductory taster, requiring a relatively low level of commitment but can often lead to longer term and sustained involvement
- Accreditation is appealing for some volunteers, but by no means all – it depends on their personal situation. Young people who are studying are least likely to want the additional paperwork and record keeping involved. Job Seekers however are more likely to want to strengthen their CVs and will find it more appealing and directly useful for job applications
- Young people can themselves make great leaders of other young people-with proper preparation and training, they can respond well to responsibility
- There are generally limited opportunities for under-18's to volunteer, so the one-week summer camps offer a safe and time-limited way for them to gain experience while doing something useful and worthwhile but away from home, often for the first time

In-Depth Case Study

Community Service Volunteers (CSV) Environment

Web: www.csv.org.uk

Coverage: Regional

Number of Volunteers: 500

About the organisation: CSV Environment is part of the national volunteering charity CSV and it recruits volunteers to take part specifically in environmental volunteering opportunities. CSV Environment has 30 paid members of staff, mostly based at its headquarters in Birmingham, in Bristol and in Scotland; and it works with 500 volunteers each year.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed: Local focus, understanding volunteers and volunteer diversity.

Learning Points:

Attracting volunteers: Success has come through building good links with local community associations in ethnically diverse inner cities. By persuading Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community leaders of the benefits of participating, they have encouraged people from their own communities to take part. Reputation, credibility and personal recommendations are important factors in engaging more volunteers from BME communities, as where people have taken part in projects and activities that have worked well, they have been more likely to participate again and encourage their wider friends and family to do so.

Volunteer diversity: One of CSV Environment's projects is called 'Engage' which aims to encourage more members of BME and faith groups to use and enjoy green spaces by engaging them in volunteering and leisure activities in local Country Parks and the wider countryside.

Understanding Volunteers: CSV has a unique non-rejection policy, with every offer of help welcomed. It works with anyone who wants to volunteer to make a difference in their community, supporting those who require extra help. The non-rejection policy is all about finding the right activities for the right people and so having a range of activities for different people to participate in is important. While everybody can do something, not everyone can do everything. An important part of implementing non-rejection is about putting in place a recruitment process that helps CSV Environment find out more about the skills, experience and interests of its potential volunteers. This involves a screening process that includes interviewing volunteers, and for some tasks where it is appropriate, taking up references and carrying out Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks.

Organisational development: CSV Environment has written role descriptions for its volunteers, which outline what the tasks involve and set out responsibilities and the required commitment from volunteers. Every volunteer has a volunteer induction, which covers roles and responsibilities as well as health and safety. The induction process helps CSV Environment to identify support needs and ensure that appropriate support is in place.

Health and Safety: CSV Environment risk assesses all activities involving staff, volunteers and members of the public. At the start of each practical task everyone participating has a health and safety talk during which tasks are explained and participants are shown how to use equipment safely. If volunteers need protective clothing/equipment to carry out a task CSV will provide it. This varies from providing protective gloves, goggles to in some cases purchasing protective footwear.



Photograph: Small Heath School and Community Partnership Project

Partnership and corporate involvement: CSV Environment uses many approaches to partnership and third parties to help it recruit volunteers, for example networks of local volunteer centres, community members and community organisations. There are also partnerships with a range of other organisations, some based on contractual arrangements and funding and some focused on providing volunteering opportunities and project development ideas. Its partnership with the Environment Agency is one example of this, where the Environment Agency helps design and create ideas for new projects and in some cases suggests local environmental issues that it thinks volunteers can help to tackle. In addition to funding some of CSV's work, the Environment Agency has also commissioned one day employee team volunteering challenges for its staff. Good working relationships have led to new areas of joint project work. For its part, CSV Environment tries to keep itself informed and up to date in its

understanding of the priorities of the Environment Agency. This has helped to ensure that CSV Environment is approaching the Environment Agency with relevant new project proposals through which volunteers can make a real contribution towards meeting the current priorities that the Agency is dealing with. Knowing what the mutual benefits can be for each partner and the respective strengths that each brings have played a significant part in CSV Environment maintaining an effective partnership.



Photograph: River Clean Activity Birmingham

'CSV can reach communities we cannot reach: the Environment Agency recognises the need to involve diverse communities in our work, especially those who are not currently engaged with their local environment.'

Will Groves, External Funding & Partnerships, Environment Agency

Transferable Learning Points:

- Have realistic expectations about what a partner can deliver, take small first steps and success can lead to longer term benefits
- Invest time and effort in developing the key relationships of people involved in the partnership
- Recognise the respective strengths of each of the partners and what they bring, to make a project bigger than the sum of its individual parts
- Volunteering can play an important part in creating links and building bridges between local communities and large organisations which can seem remote and irrelevant to their lives, by bringing people together in a shared task who may not otherwise have engaged



In-Depth Case Study

Kent Libraries and Archives

Web:
www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/libraries.aspx

Coverage: Regional

Number of Volunteers: 1000

About the organisation: Kent Libraries and Archives is part of Kent County Council, responsible for statutory and non statutory library and archive provision. Kent Libraries and Archives currently has around 800 paid members of staff and almost 1000 volunteers, collectively volunteering 14,000 hours of their time each year.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed: Organisational development, partnership, training and support, volunteer diversity.

Volunteer diversity: Kent Libraries and Archives has worked hard to engage volunteers from all sections of the community but particularly to include those from 'hard to reach' backgrounds. Monitoring data shows 33% of volunteers are male and 66% female, with 9% from BME backgrounds - higher than the local demographic profile (5%). 14% of volunteers identified themselves as disabled, which is reflective of adults in Kent, but the figure is very high if compared to many other charities and to numbers of disabled people in employment. Monitoring information is collected during 1-1 meetings between the volunteers and Library Service staff, so that volunteer support needs can be identified. The main challenges for engaging 'hard to reach' groups has been overcoming paid staffs' anxieties about how much of their time will be spent supporting volunteers. In many cases, it has been the volunteers themselves who have done most to address this concern by demonstrating the positive contribution they can make.

Organisational development: Volunteers contribute to the management of the Volunteer Programme through their membership of Volunteer Development Groups which meet quarterly. The volunteers bring a distinctive perspective and insight to the development of the programme. As a result, the Library Service developed a 'Volunteer Champion' scheme for each district. The Champion is a member of the Library Service staff and responsible for recruiting and supporting volunteers in their district. The Volunteer Champion scheme has been particularly effective in giving locally based staff ownership of the volunteer programme and has in some cases helped to change their views (in becoming much more positive about the value of volunteers). It has also proved a success in managing communication with a large and geographically spread group of volunteers. A Volunteer Development Manager, responsible for

managing and developing the volunteer programme across Kent, organises regular meetings and training activities with the Volunteer Champions to ensure they are fully equipped to fulfil their roles.

Prior to 2002, Kent Libraries and Archives did not have a formal volunteer programme and it engaged very small numbers of people as volunteers. It now has a strategy in place for developing volunteering within the service, including targets for volunteer engagement both for the whole county of Kent and for its districts.

'The Kent Library and Archive Service recognises the benefit of engaging volunteers in our service, volunteers are willing people who act as ambassadors and critical friends for the service. Volunteers bring an additional set of skills and a new perspective to the service. There are things that we could not and would not achieve without the volunteers'.

Diane Chilmaid, Business Support Manager, Kent Libraries and Archives



Photograph: Baby Bounce Session supported by volunteers

Partnership: Kent Libraries and Archives has formed some good local partnerships to support the broadening of their volunteer base. For example, Kent Supported Employment (a partner that supports people with mental health issues) provides volunteers to Kent Libraries as an initial step towards gaining employment and also advice and guidance about supporting their clients' needs. Partnerships also provide additional benefits such as links with Kent County Council's Sports Development Unit that helps volunteers engage in 2012 volunteering activity.

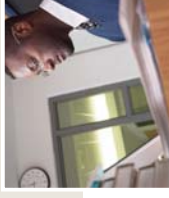
Since the start of the Volunteer Programme in 2002, Kent Libraries and Archives has carried out periodic reviews of the delivery of the volunteer programme and considered whether to continue to tender to an external provider (CSV), to bring it in house or to end the volunteer programme altogether. Progress against the milestones, targets and outputs in the volunteering service contract are systematically reviewed quarterly.

In 2005, initial Department for Culture Media and Sport funding for the pilot programme came to an end and the Library Service made a decision to mainstream the funds for the volunteer programme into core budgets. At each of the review points, the Library Service has consulted its staff across the service at all levels and grades for their views about the future of the programme. The process also involved carrying out cost analysis for all of the options for future delivery. At each review, senior management took the decision that although financially it costs slightly more to continue contracting out, the intangible benefits and added value such as experience, knowledge and advice of an external provider outweigh this additional cost.

Benefits of volunteering: Volunteering is a good way to promote community engagement and links with the Library service as well as for the library to respond to local communities and its customers. Activities like 'Baby bounce and rhyme' can accommodate more children and run more frequently because of the input from volunteers. More young people participated in the Library Service 'Summer Reading Challenge' because young volunteers were proactive in encouraging peers to participate.

Transferable Learning Points:

- Provide staff with information, opportunities for discussion and consultation and training so that they understand that volunteers will not be replacing paid staff; give them roles and responsibilities for supporting volunteers to enrich their jobs
- When involving volunteers who have additional support needs (such as mental health issues) get support and advice from specialist organisations
- Involve Trade Unions and check out volunteer roles with the Unions so that they will not be misunderstood as job substitution, but as adding value to strengthen and extend service delivery
- Volunteers bring in skills, knowledge and expertise that cannot always be found within the staff of an organisation; and they allow more to get done, which helps the organisation to meet its service objectives and customer goals
- Contracting out the service to a specialist volunteering agency allows core day to day tasks to be taken care of while also being able to access expertise 'in house' as and when it is needed



In-Depth Case Study

Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum North – In-Touch Training Programme

Web: <http://north.iwm.org.uk/server/show/ConWebDoc.4056>

Coverage: Local

Number of Volunteers: 70 at present

About the organisation: In-Touch is a volunteer and training programme developed jointly by The Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum North to target disadvantaged individuals in Greater Manchester. The project started in January 2007 and is funded for three years by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). In Touch aimed to help around 180 disadvantaged individuals re-engage with learning and improve their prospects for employment through access to heritage environments.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed: Marketing and Publicity, Training and Support, Understanding Volunteers and Volunteer Diversity.

Training and support: The 'In-Touch' programme builds on successful elements of previous volunteer programmes. All volunteers who join the programme undertake a tailor-made 10 week museum training course, which has basic literacy and core skills embedded into the training. The course is delivered in partnership with Basic Skills tutors from Salford City College who have mapped the content to the Basic Skills Core Curriculum. All volunteers gain a recognised literacy qualification on completion. The scheme also provides additional in-house and external training including the Tourist Board accredited customer care courses Welcome Host and Welcome All.

Volunteer recruitment: The following recruitment cycle has been adopted for the programme:



This recruitment process is accompanied by a budding system to help volunteers integrate into the Museum team and settle into volunteering, introducing them to other volunteers and staff, explaining procedures and supporting them in assisting visitors. Volunteers are recruited from across Greater Manchester and are selected on the basis of the programme's target groups; unemployed and long term unemployed, people with a low or outdated skills base, young people (over 16) in danger of social or economic exclusion, single parents, refugees and Asylum Seekers. The programme deliberately targets people that have not previously considered volunteering, are not frequent or regular museum goers, have low and/or outdated skills or are unemployed and are struggling to get back into work. Key to attracting new volunteers is targeted and proactive local recruitment.

'A key focus for the Programme has been the development of links with job advisors and support workers from a range of organisations within the Greater Manchester area, through making visits or invitations into the Museums. We hold networking events where advisors from the community can get together to find out more and meet the volunteers. Forging links and building relationships with a variety of organisations is essential in reaching target audiences.'

The Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum North

Organisational development: The training programme incorporates innovative structures with less 'traditional' volunteer training and literacy activities combining on-site learning. The course comprises 20 sessions that are delivered twice weekly. Each session looks at different aspects of the Museum, its remit, architecture, exhibition spaces, role of the marketing department, handling collection and conservation. The Museum values the work of volunteers highly, and as part of the training it invites a member from each of their departments to attend and talk about the work they do to contribute the success of the museum. It is producing an advocacy document describing how it set up the Volunteer Programme, highlighting the successes and learning points, and showing the way forward for other museums who want to set up similar programmes.



Photograph Copyright: Manchester and Imperial War Museum North

Partnership: Salford City College has worked closely with Imperial War Museum North since it opened in 2002 and The Manchester Museum since 2007. The College provides additional opportunities for volunteers to gain qualifications in English, Maths and ICT as part of their 'Skills for Life' strategy. The museums approached the College to discuss how a qualification could be embedded into volunteer training and it was decided that the Skills for Life Strategy worked for both the College and the Museums. The partnership works well because the college provides a Skills For Life tutor and the literacy qualification; in turn, the Museums recruit a core target group and provide a training room and resources. The resulting qualification gained by volunteers count towards Salford City College's targets and attracts Skills Funding Agency funding.



Transferable Learning Points:

- When considering introducing a volunteer programme it's important to have senior management 'buy-in'
- Have a planning phase in which a volunteer coordinator is introduced. They can communicate effectively with staff and the existing volunteer team. Coordinators can hold consultation sessions with staff at the beginning of planning stages to gain their input and raise awareness of the reasons to develop a programme. This also allows for dissemination of the programme in advance
- Develop volunteer role descriptions alongside paid staff and make sure there are no overlaps. Reassure staff that volunteers are not replacing existing jobs. 'Once staff members are aware of the reasons and outcomes of such a project they become much more supportive'
- Adopt a structured volunteer policy that includes disciplinary guidelines for staff and volunteers and provide staff training on mental health issues, learning difficulties, disability etiquette and refugee awareness to help promote diversity within the team
- Having dedicated volunteer staff allows time for liaising with volunteers on a one-to-one or group basis, raising confidence and fostering a sense of ownership. 'This can be as simple as having the time to chat to a volunteer about how their week has been since you last saw them; or it can be more involved, such as spending time together on specific tasks to develop confidence or grasp a tricky concept, or assisting with identifying and applying for potential college courses or employment opportunities'

In-Depth Case Study Mayfield Nurseries

Web: www.mayfieldnursery.org.uk

Coverage: Local

Number of Volunteers: 12

About the organisation: Volunteers are heavily involved with the day-to-day running of the business. Alongside the nursery manager, two paid staff work alongside volunteers and people with mental health problems and manage a team of horticulturalists. Volunteers work with up to 70 people with mental health problems, as well as getting involved with promotional activity (e.g. producing press releases, drafting funding bids, events) as well as retail work. Volunteers tend to be long-term (with many helping for over ten years) and typically help for one day a week with horticultural activities, although a number of the volunteers focus on business roles, including marketing. Tasks allocated to volunteers have to be flexible, with activities being undertaken as and when needed and according to volunteers' skills. For example, if a volunteer wanted to sit on the Board of Trustees, this would be considered if they had the right skills. All three paid staff manage the volunteers as this task would not be possible for only one person.

The organisation has changed its approach to volunteering in the last five years in order to attract, integrate and retain more volunteers. Although the Nursery has always been focused on volunteering it sees this as a 'development' in terms of volunteering rather than a 'wholehearted change'. The following aspects were developed in order to meet the needs of the growing business:

- Training for all staff including volunteers covering mental health training or lifting and handling courses that can then be a skill to add to their CV
- Regular monthly staff/volunteer meetings
- Updating their volunteering policy (adapted from their parent organisation Solent Mind) clarifying more clearly the role of volunteers within the organisation and their position in terms of formal procedures such as grievances and the processes for gross misconduct
- Making sure that volunteers have the same induction procedure as staff, for example covering Health & Safety

Volunteer recruitment: Due to its social enterprise status, Mayfield Nurseries is often approached by members of the public to offer their services as volunteers. As a result, it has a steady stream of volunteers and on average it recruits four or five volunteers per year. Apart from advertising on the Southampton Voluntary service website, it does not need to undertake any marketing.



Photograph: Mayfield Nursery volunteers – copyright Mayfield Nurseries

Integrating volunteers: The nursery has found that it is very important to be selective in its choice of volunteers and, as a result has had to turn a certain number of volunteers away. From experience, there is a need to make sure that there is a good match between the volunteering opportunities offered and making sure that the volunteers' needs are met. It is also important to consider how the new volunteers could potentially affect the dynamics of the rest of the volunteering group, to make sure a good working environment is maintained as this is important for retaining current volunteers as well as new recruits. Volunteers are also involved with decision-making within the project; for example, the project holds regular monthly staff/volunteer meetings and makes sure that paid staff and volunteers are treated equally.

Partnership: Partnerships are used to refer people with mental health problems to the charity, usually from Solent Mind as the parent company. This is beneficial as it secures regular service users that the volunteers work with. The HR function of the organisation is also dealt with by Solent Mind to issue contracts and deal with formal communications with staff and volunteers.

Practical benefits and challenges: The main benefit of involving volunteers for this project is that they can extend the organisation's service offer, for example, by opening at weekends, which would otherwise not be possible. Volunteers also enhance service delivery, providing dedicated time to people with mental health problems and undertaking practical tasks that would not get done. One of the main challenges the project has experienced has been the amount of time that is needed to manage volunteers. Problems often have to be resolved and individuals need to be given adequate time for supervision and more hands on management. Due to the sheer amount of work that volunteers undertake, a lot of management time is needed to direct the work they do.



Photograph: Mayfield Nursery volunteers – copyright Mayfield Nurseries

Transferable Learning Points:

- Communication is key when volunteers only assist for one day a week: it is important to keep volunteers fully informed of what has happened during the time they have not been volunteering to keep momentum and continuity
- It is important to be selective when choosing suitable volunteers to make sure there is a good match between the volunteering opportunities the project can offer and making sure that the volunteers' needs are met as well as retaining a balanced volunteer group
- It is important not to underestimate the amount of time needed to adequately manage and supervise volunteers
- Volunteers are an important human resource that help an organisation accomplish many more things than it can without them

In-Depth Case Study The National Trust

Web: www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Coverage: National

Number of Volunteers: 4000 seasonal staff at peak periods and 61,000 volunteers

About the organisation: The National Trust works to preserve and protect the coastline, countryside and buildings of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This is done in a range of ways, through practical conservation, learning & discovery and encouraging millions of people to visit and enjoy the national heritage.

'Involving volunteers in the National Trust is a way of delivering our core purpose: public benefit. Our volunteers help connect us to our local communities and help us to reach new audiences. They enable us to do things we just wouldn't have the time to do ourselves. They challenge us, guide us and help us make sure we're relevant.'

National Trust

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed: Building capacity, local focus, partnership and sustainability.

Attracting volunteers: The National Trust has shifted its focus towards exploring how volunteering can connect with local communities and develop a more diverse volunteer base. More flexible opportunities and tasters for volunteers and younger people are being encouraged as part of this. In Greenway, for example, the National Trust has engaged the local community by focusing on a specific task to remove and store 5,000 items from the conservation collection. This attracted 80 new volunteers and gave local people a good insight into the conservation role of the National Trust as a springboard to further involvement.

Organisational development: With a greater focus on 'going local' at a strategic level there is a clear leadership decision to be more relevant to more people, but also in terms of local people relating to the National Trust and getting a deeper sense of belonging, pride and connection. This doesn't just mean presenting new, diverse opportunities for volunteers, but investing in an approach to involving and managing volunteers.

'Good management is essential to enable connections between people and their local communities, from recruitment and selection through to day to day communications and recognition. Each stage sets the tone and enables the Trust to ensure the volunteer experience is one of mutual benefit.'

National Trust

Building capacity: Recently, the National Trust has improved training for volunteer managers to reinforce the principles of its volunteering policy. This comprises five Essential Volunteering Standards as a quality framework to assist continuous improvement. The National Trust is now looking to revise its guidance and training to include a stronger focus on coaching and mentoring. In addition, they have looked to build capacity and capability locally by involving more volunteers in managing and leading others. For example, at Speke Hall in Liverpool a team has involved an experienced volunteer (with 10 years experience of managing and supporting people development) as a Volunteer Programme Manager. This role has become an important link between volunteers and the property team and enabled the staff team to 'let go', something which they were initially resistant to.

'Through the introduction of the Volunteer Programme Manager we have in a short period of time updated and improved our recruitment, selection and induction of volunteers; recruited volunteers to roll out Room Guide training; enhanced the purpose and function of Day Organisers Meetings; improved Volunteer Expense processing; and recruited additional Volunteer support (Administration Volunteers). The effort put into the careful recruitment and introduction of this role, involving the wider volunteer body, has paid'

National Trust

Partnership: The National Trust has had great success in involving BME and disabled people as volunteers through partnerships with organisations such as Thrive and Mencap. For these projects, volunteers work on particular initiatives over a period of time e.g. designing a sensory garden or developing better access to properties. Tasters and one-off projects to attract younger people is also being prioritised across the National Trust at a local level. For example, a recent project with the Prince's Trust developed placements

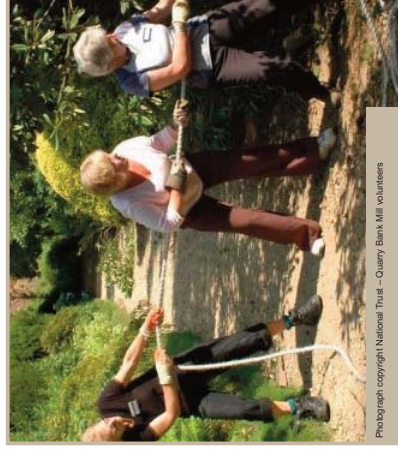
for young people to gain skills and there is also a Young Heritage Leader Scheme. The benefits of such partnerships include bringing specialist knowledge and opportunities to reach a new target audience. The following examples highlight the benefits of working in partnership to achieve shared goals:



Photograph copyright National Trust - Quarry Bank Mill volunteers



Photograph copyright National Trust and David Levenson



Photograph copyright National Trust - Quarry Bank Mill volunteers

manager at Phoenix Futures, realised the value that leaving your mark on the land can have, and the team at Alderley Edge actively seek to involve diverse groups of volunteers. Whatever the abilities of volunteers there are always projects that can be completed and as a result successful relationships have been developed with the Probation Services, Mencap, the David Lewis Centre for Epilepsy and The Prince's Trust.

Transferable Learning Points:

- Training and volunteer management should be an integral aspect of the organisation's volunteering policy that fosters an ethos of continuous improvement
- Take volunteering seriously by integrating its development with wider organisational strategies and development plans
- There are highly skilled and experienced people available who are willing to volunteer and who can themselves be managers or leaders of other volunteers

In-Depth Case Study

The Refugee Council

Web: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

Coverage: National

Number of Volunteers: 650

About the organisation: The Refugee Council is the largest organisation in the UK working with asylum seekers and refugees. The Refugee Council provides direct help and support and also work with asylum seekers and refugees to ensure their needs and concerns are addressed.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed: Corporate volunteering, organisational development, volunteer diversity.

Attracting volunteers: There is high demand to volunteer with the Refugee Council with a waiting list of approximately 1000 volunteers, around 200 of whom are refugees. The Refugee Council is regarded by volunteers as a trustworthy and safe organisation which provides good advice, with clients knowing that they will be treated fairly and listened to. There is an identified client demand for volunteering which is not currently being met by the opportunities that the Refugee Council can offer. Whilst the Refugee Council is clear that it doesn't want to become a 'volunteer centre' (finding and placing clients in appropriate volunteering opportunities) it does want to go further than simply pointing out opportunities or telling their clients to look on a website. The Refugee Council therefore seeks to act as a broker between their clients and volunteering, somewhere between signposting and actually placing clients.

Refugees as volunteers: The Refugee Council has recently started monitoring its volunteer base in a structured way and estimates that between 20 and 25% of volunteers are themselves refugees or asylum seekers. It is now working on a new programme looking at how it can take positive action to get refugees to volunteer and help organisations be accessible for them. For example it currently works with organisations to help them to develop policies and best practice around refugee volunteering opportunities. It advises organisations on potential barriers to working with refugees as volunteers which can include: CRB checks, the implications of immigration and asylum legislation, the right to live and work in the UK and entitlement to access funding for training. The Refugee Council can also assist with induction and training if an organisation is taking on refugee volunteers, as it recognises that there is a risk that some organisations perceive working with refugees as a 'tick-box' exercise.

Integrating volunteers: Volunteers are invited to get involved in consultations and meetings to ensure that their views are equal to those of paid staff, a specific commitment in their Volunteer Strategy. The strategy also stressed the importance of the roles of paid staff and how they would work with volunteers. The business model was based upon a mixed team of volunteers and paid staff, not paid staff with the support of volunteers and integration was taken further when volunteers took on some elements of the advice service, a role that had always been the responsibility of paid staff. Volunteers have taken on similar, but complementary, roles to paid staff with the process being initially piloted to ensure that it would work and to gather feedback. This worked because staff were trained in how to support and supervise volunteers and were able to take ownership of the process. Volunteers were seen as a way of solving the problem of too much demand from clients who would otherwise not be able to access the service, and not as a threat to jobs or a cost cutting exercise. Volunteers knew who to report to and everyone could see the benefit of not turning people away. Staff are positive about this change: historically there was a lot of resistance to volunteers providing advice, but this has ceased in the years following the introduction of the integration strategy.



Organisational development: There is a deliberate strategy to increase volunteering which is driven by external factors and Government plans to re-tender advice services for refugees. If the Refugee Council is successful with tenders, it already has models in place which involve increasing numbers of volunteers. The Refugee Council is also planning to review their definition of volunteering and clarify what this means in terms of issues around job substitution. The

organisation could expect up to a 50% increase in volunteers within the next 12-18 months, and as a result would need to manage potential constraints in terms of having the support in place and the capacity to deal with this number of volunteers. This increase in numbers of volunteers will depend upon decisions around public spending, so while it is in a position to substantially increase volunteer numbers, the flipside is that there will be a big reduction in numbers (depending on whether tenders go ahead / are successful). Capacity building could also be developed to focus on who is responsible for volunteers in the organisation, and being clear that volunteers are central to what the Refugee Council do and gaining further commitment from paid staff is also important.

Partnership and corporate volunteering: Some volunteers are recruited through corporate partnerships (including KPMG, see Summary Case Study), as well as one-off volunteering with Go-London. This usually consists of an informal agreement at the beginning of the year about what they hope to achieve together. The main benefit of these partnerships is promoting diversity and having partners that allow them to reach new people. A lot of people who have initially volunteered through corporate programmes have then gone on to become volunteers in their own right. In the future, the Refugee Council is considering partnering with more mainstream organisations so they can refer volunteers to get a wider experience of volunteering.

The partnership with KPMG has many facets, including volunteering, funding through the KPMG foundation, involvement of KPMG managers within the Refugee Council leadership board, awareness raising events for KPMG staff and hosting meetings. In terms of volunteering, the benefits of the partnership with KPMG include attracting a different set of volunteers with a different set of life experiences and skills from those currently present amongst paid staff and volunteers within the organisation. The relationship is important in helping to spread the message of the Refugee Council, adds credibility to the organisation and raises their profile with the business community. For example, KPMG has generated publicity by hosting activities during Refugee Week and entering the Refugee Council into various awards competitions which recognise the work that they undertake. Currently, the partnership between KPMG and the Refugee Council is based upon goodwill and good working relationships between the two organisations based around key individuals. The Refugee Council provides training for KPMG volunteers involved in supporting its work; however both organisations recognise that the KPMG volunteers are generally people in full-time work and have to strike a

balance between offering a comprehensive training package and not placing too many time demands on their volunteers. On this basis, it has condensed the training for KPMG volunteers to ensure that the time commitment is manageable.



Transferable Learning Points:

- Invite volunteers to get involved in consultations and meetings to underline that their views are as valuable as paid staff
- Reassure paid staff that they are not being replaced by volunteers to encourage a good relationship between paid staff and volunteers
- Encourage partnerships of mutual benefit, with tailored volunteer training

In-Depth Case Study

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

Web: www.rspb.org.uk

Coverage: National

Number of Volunteers: 14,900

About the organisation: The RSPB speaks out for birds and wildlife, tackling the problems that threaten the environment. The RSPB rely on membership and donations to fund their work and currently have over a million members. The RSPB belong to BirdLife International, the global partnership of bird conservation organisations.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed: Building capacity and sustainability.

Volunteer diversity: RSPB is always looking to diversify its volunteering base. Currently, it is developing and running pilot projects across the UK to help develop tools to engage with hard to reach communities. RSPB is also involving more diverse groups in local communities through targeted partnership working, for example with Mencap to involve people with learning disabilities. Such partnerships require a 'non-tokenistic' approach, properly integrating the partnership into what the organisations' aims and objectives are and recognising external expertise in these areas. As a result of this approach, RSPB are focusing upon the overall 'package' they offer volunteers and new ways of presenting this to prospective volunteers in the future. The challenge comes when additional costs are incurred to secure engagement with a specific group of people that may not have been traditionally involved in the past, but additional benefits should be recognised and RSPB has also sought external funding for this type of activity.

Organisational development: RSPB has an integrated volunteering strategy and policy setting out the strategic direction for volunteering for the next four years. The strategy sets out four main objectives that involve:

- encouraging and enabling people to become and remain volunteers
- broadening the range of people of people volunteering with them
- delivering volunteering to meet the RSPB's needs
- delivering a first class volunteering experience

There are specific actions related to each of these headings that the organisation is working on delivering over the life of the strategy. In order to achieve organisational buy-in for the Volunteering Strategy, 'peer envy' and 'peer recommendation' are seen as powerful tools. This can be achieved by involving one or two

members of staff in certain areas of the business (already 'warm' to the strategy) to work with volunteers. Once a volunteer in a team is working well and helping the team achieve more, that part of the business will gradually become 'warmer' to incorporating volunteering, with the team advocating the value and benefit of involving volunteers. This has proven to be a useful tool for the RSPB to take forward volunteering and has proved more effective than 'top down' strategies.



Photograph: RSPB Volunteers - copyright RSPB

Integrating volunteers: One aspect of the RSPB that attracts volunteers is the way in which they are supported and managed by the organisation. Within the RSPB, 30-40% of staff are involved with managing volunteering, an approach that has been in place for the last 30 years. Where RSPB works in partnership with Local Authorities it is established at an early stage 'who is volunteering for who' and therefore whose Health and Safety policies are being followed, for example. Usually RSPB leads on the management of volunteers as it often has more experience. The RSPB has involved volunteers and staff in the development of its Volunteering Strategy and Policy, as well as the Board and Council to secure high level buy in. Volunteers sit on the Council and some Trustees are active as volunteers in other parts of the organisation.

Partnership: Partnerships always involve agreeing a common approach and Memorandum of Understanding, to make responsibilities clear, such as which organisation a volunteer is volunteering for, and which organisation is leading the work. Practicalities also need to be agreed in terms of what standards are

applying, for example expenses criteria, or who runs 'thank you' and recognition events. If the partnership is effective, volunteers may not even realise it is a partnership and just see it as a project they are supporting.

Sustainability:

Volunteer Fundraising Groups in Wales

The RSPB in Wales recruited a Community Fundraising Officer with a background specialising in fundraising in the third sector. The area of Carmarthenshire was chosen to pilot the fundraising group as there is no local RSPB reserve, meaning that establishing a fundraising group would provide a different way to involve members in RSPB activity. Fundraising volunteers were recruited by the Community Fundraising Officer sending letters to 400 members, thanking them for their membership and asking if they would like to do more for the RSPB by getting specifically involved with fundraising. Members were successfully targeted for recruitment as they already have a connection to RSPB and are therefore more likely to get involved at this stage.

The Community Fundraising Officer encourages a two-way process whereby volunteers are 'hands-on', making key decisions in terms of fundraising activities and utilising the Community Fundraising Officer's expertise. The Fundraising Group are currently developing a new constitution that is practical and related to the legal technicalities of fundraising: for example, obtaining licences for certain activities, or rules regarding street collections. The fundraising activities of the group have to fit into other local activities. One of the benefits of this approach is that it can lead to further volunteering opportunities on the basis of new people hearing about



Photograph: RSPB Volunteer - copyright RSPB

the work and the legacy of the Fundraising Group. In some areas of Wales where the RSPB has no nature reserve, it has been a good opportunity to raise awareness amongst current volunteers that they now also have a Fundraising Group which they could be part of.

Transferable Learning Points:

- Volunteering is a powerful tool for community advocacy. Well managed and happy volunteers will naturally advocate on behalf of your organisation in the local community
- Design clear tasks and roles for volunteers and ask for people to fill them, rather than put out vague and generalised calls for volunteers
- Help with fundraising is one way to keep volunteers actively engaged with a charity, but it is certainly not everybody's cup of tea so needs to be part of a range of options on offer
- Where an organisation has a membership, those members can be approached to do more active volunteering in addition to paying their subscriptions and supporting the charity financially. They are already 'warm' and sympathetic to the cause, meaning it is much easier to draw them in further than recruiting from cold

In-Depth Case Study

The Co-operative Corporate Volunteering Programme

Web: www.co-operative.coop

Coverage: National

Number of Volunteers: 10,240

About the organisation: The Co-operative Group is a group of businesses (including The Co-operative food, bank, travel, pharmacy, legal services, funeral care, insurance, motor group and online electrical shop) which employs over 120,000 people. The Co-operative Group has a well established and successful Employee Engagement programme. Figures for 2009 show that 10,240 staff donated 136,834 hours of their time to helping their local communities.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed: Corporate volunteering, understanding volunteers.

Corporate volunteering: The Co-operative Volunteer programme has created a variety of opportunities for its staff to volunteer, either by taking part in day long team challenges or by taking part in tailor made individual volunteering opportunities. The team challenges are very popular with staff and over 100 team challenges took place across the organisation in 2009. In July 2009 34 Co-operative Group staff members carried out a make over project at the Royal School for the Deaf in Derby. This involved painting toilets, games rooms, the entrance hall and a common room. The feedback from the school was very positive:

'Over 70 children within the school use the student club during the week. It provides a place for the children to enjoy their free time out side school where they can relax and unwind'.

Barbara Worsley, Fundraising Manager, Royal School for the Deaf

In Manchester, The Co-operative has a full time member of staff to identify community volunteering opportunities for staff to participate in. The Co-operative has worked hard to ensure that there is a variety of opportunities available; this includes offering opportunities in a variety of locations, at different times of the day. Some staff like to volunteer doing tasks related to their paid role, while others prefer to take part in activities that are completely unrelated. Examples of individual tailor made opportunities include: mentoring young people; volunteering in schools running Enterprise Days; acting as panel members for the Youth Offending Teams; and acting as School Governors.



Photograph copyright Co-operative Volunteering Programme

Organisational development: The Co-operative has a well-defined Community Plan that sets out 3 key themes i) Combating Climate Change ii) Tackling Global Poverty iii) Inspiring Young People. All of the employee volunteering that takes place must contribute to one of these three key themes. The programme is very popular with staff and the only challenge the Co-operative has faced has been around making sure that the programme fits across all of the Co-operative businesses. There is no blanket policy about how much time employees are given to volunteer; it is up to individual manager's discretion. In Co-operative Financial Services, each employee is initially given one day a year to volunteer followed by another two if they are matched by the volunteer. Each year the Co-operative reviews the volunteer programme and sets objectives for development.



Partnership: The Co-operative works in partnership with 2 national charities to help it deliver its volunteer programme, CSV and Business in the Community. CSV carry out risk assessments and Health and Safety checks for the volunteering activities, which are then checked and verified by the Co-operative Group Health and Safety experts. Business in the Community also organises team challenges in Greater Manchester. The main advantage for the Co-operative of working in partnership is that it helps the Co-operative manage the scale of the volunteer programme and ensures that opportunities are available to staff across the family of Co-operative Group businesses. In addition, the partners also have the knowledge and understanding of the Community and Voluntary Sector to develop a wide range of volunteering opportunities for staff to participate in.



Benefits of volunteering:

- Personal development of staff. To assist with this for individual volunteering opportunities, personal development is monitored against staff competences.
- Co-operative staff volunteering feedback surveys have highlighted an increase in staff engagement and loyalty to the Co-operative Group as a result of participating in the volunteer programme

Transferable Learning Points:

- Ensure there is a wide range of opportunities available including flexibility about when staff can volunteer, and length of time commitment required
- Link the benefits to staff personal development

In-Depth Case Study

Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS)

Web: www.wrvs.org.uk

Coverage: National

Number of Volunteers: 50 000

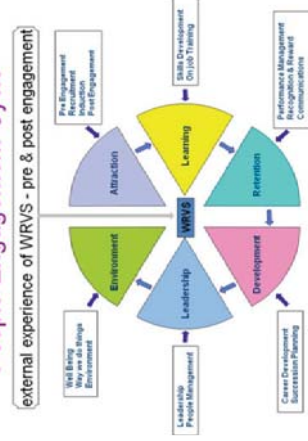
About the organisation: WRVS is a national organisation with over 3000 projects that help older people in their homes, in hospitals and in communities. The WRVS helps older people remain independent at home when their health or mobility declines and helps alleviate the loneliness many older people experience after they retire from work, or lose their partner.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed: Capacity building, partnership, training and support, understanding volunteers.

Attracting volunteers: WRVS attracts volunteers as a trusted brand at a national level, offering different services and a variety of opportunities. In terms of commitment, it increasingly needs to more carefully meet the changing needs of volunteers, in particular more flexible arrangements. This is also because volunteering is becoming increasingly competitive and there are a large number of charities to choose from. As a result it really has to 'sell' volunteering opportunities and look after its volunteers. WRVS has developed an approach to selling its volunteer offer locally (as opposed to nationally), and undertaking profile-raising in the local market using marketing, media and PR specialists.

Organisational development: WRVS has a deliberate strategy to be increasingly flexible around volunteers and their offer. The advantage of this is that it keeps it 'fresh' and WRVS has to develop opportunities that volunteers enjoy. WRVS has to be aware of the differing motivations for volunteering such as personal development and therefore training has to be tailored towards a variety of volunteer opportunities. WRVS is in the process of refreshing its volunteer strategy and it has been integrated into the organisation by creating a People Engagement Cycle (for both paid staff and volunteers) which is illustrated below.

People Engagement Cycle



This cycle provides a framework for focusing on improving WRVS's volunteer offer and people engagement.

'People engagement is the degree to which individuals identify with, are motivated by and are willing to give their commitment, time, effort, knowledge and skills to WRVS over a period of time. When engagement is embedded into the culture of the organisation, people are positive about the organisation, they remain in the organisation and they are willing to give of their best and more.'

WRVS



The cycle looks at the path that volunteers take when they come into contact with the organisation with six key drivers identified that WRVS believe will influence the degree of engagement with the organisation. The touch points within each driver provide a framework enabling managers to assess levels of volunteer engagement and understand how to improve them. Such consideration for improvement is a factor on both entry and exit.

'Engagement does not end when a volunteer leaves WRVS as their individual experience can influence what they say about the organisation to their external network of contacts. Negative or positive experiences can affect not only our reputation as a charity but also has the potential to impact upon future financial support and engagement of new volunteers.'

WRVS

Partnership: The restructure has led WRVS to be more joined up in terms of local processes and as a result of this local focus it is able to capitalise upon partnership working. WRVS has partners that deliver training to volunteers and certain aspects of its services are run in partnership with the Red Cross and Age UK. Partnership working means WRVS can work more flexibly or signpost volunteers to other more specialised organisations.



WRVS has contractual relationships with Local Authorities to deliver Meals on Wheels and the NHS Trust to run retail units in hospitals. Such contracts do not directly fund volunteering, but rather the costs associated with volunteers (and their expenses are built into the tender for the contract). If WRVS is working with a new Local Authority that may not have previously worked with volunteers, it is important to explain to the Local Authority the added value of volunteers and counter any myths about the reliability of volunteers. It is important to remind local authorities that volunteers are not 'free' and do have built in costs when negotiating with them.



Transferable Learning Points:

- As a result of a local focus WRVS capitalises upon partnership working, such as contractual relationships with Local Authorities
- WRVS is constantly looking at how it improves its cycle of engagement with volunteers both on entry and exit and has integrated this cycle into its organisation
- WRVS attracts volunteers as it is a national organisation and is a trusted brand but is having to adapt its offer in a more competitive environment for volunteers

3.2 Summary Case Studies

The following summary case studies are included in this section:

- Age UK (formerly Age Concern / Help the Aged)
- Brighton University Active Student Programme
- Friends Ltd (formerly the League of Friends)
- Groundwork
- KPMG
- Retired and Senior Persons Volunteer Programme
- The Samaritans
- Victim Support
- Voluntary Organisations Development Agency
- Youth Action Network

Summary Case Study

Age UK

(Formerly Age Concern / Help the Aged)

Web: www.ageuk.org.uk

Coverage: National

Number of Volunteers: 20,000

About the organisation: The UK's largest charity working with and for older people

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed: Sustainability.

Organisational development: The organisation underwent a deliberate policy change 5 years ago with the establishment of a separate, national team that focuses on volunteering. It embeds volunteer management into the induction of paid staff so that volunteers can be managed consistently and everyone is seen as a volunteer manager, as volunteers can be involved in many different activities across the organisation.

Attracting volunteers: A key lesson is to ensure clarity about what an organisation is offering to volunteers. Age UK is moving away from the concept of 'we need volunteers' to a more considered approach about how it 'needs volunteers for x, y and z'. It is important to be flexible in its offer rather than asking volunteers to do what works for the organisation. Developing opportunities around what volunteers and older people want has worked very well.

Local focus: A positive aspect of having a federal structure for Age UK overall is that volunteers have more loyalty to the locality where they volunteer.

Volunteer activities: Age UK ensures it has a range of opportunities that are flexible in terms of commitments and volunteers needs, for example some are happy to remain in the background while others want to take the lead. Often tasks will be volunteer-led and they are encouraged to take the lead in developing volunteering opportunities.

Understanding volunteers: Age UK has worked hard to better understand why people volunteer, what they get out of it and how their needs can be met in order to match expectations and maximise benefits.

Sustainability: Funders and commissioners have realised volunteers can deliver a reliable and effective service and so are increasingly prepared to fund a volunteer delivered service as opposed to a paid staff service. As part of this, volunteering is also considered for match funding where required.



Transferable Learning Points:

- Volunteers' sense of identity is strongest in relation to a local project in their area rather than a more remote national organisation, but the well known 'name' and reputation of that organisation can help to recruit them in the first place
- Equip all staff in the organisation who will work alongside volunteers and with the knowledge and skills to do so, through training and providing induction for them to be comfortable and effective in their roles

Summary Case Study

Brighton University

Active Student Programme

Web: www.brighton.ac.uk/volunteering

Coverage: Local

Number of Volunteers: 250 per year

About the organisation: Active Student is the volunteering project for students at the University of Brighton. It promotes volunteering opportunities to students as part of their course or in addition to their course, with all volunteering opportunities providing personal development for the students involved.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed:
Volunteer diversity, organisational development.

Volunteer diversity: The majority of the volunteers are aged 18-21 and BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) students, and students with disabilities are well represented within this. The success that Active Student has had in recruiting volunteers from BME communities and with disabilities is a result of direct and targeted marketing, for example via BME YPP (Young Peoples Project) or the Federation for Disabled People. Active Student has also undertaken marketing to faith based clubs and societies. Students are attracted to volunteering with Active Student because of the clear links to employability and to their course.

Organisational development: Active Student brokers opportunities for students and has a formal process for organisations to register their volunteering opportunities. Paperwork includes information on insurance that covers the activities that the volunteer is involved in, health and safety policy, a risk assessment covering volunteer activities, an Equal Opportunities Policy, details on induction, information about training, details of who are the specified supervisors responsible for volunteers, the format and frequency of supervision and expenses the volunteers are entitled to. Active Student has withdrawn placements from their database that have been unable to comply with its policies.

Benefits and barriers to volunteering: Benefits include allowing students to have a fuller and more enriching student experience. The initiative also fosters good links between the local community and the University and can contribute to student employability.



Transferable Learning Points:

- It is important to be clear about the role of volunteers and what is expected of them as part of targeted recruitment activity, with Active Student illustrating the benefits of a very active marketing campaign, having experienced active competition for volunteers in some areas
- If an organisation is looking to involve students, it is important to note that they prefer to participate in local volunteering opportunities that do not require much travel

Summary Case Study

Friends Ltd

(formerly the League of Friends)

Coverage: Local

Number of Volunteers: 200

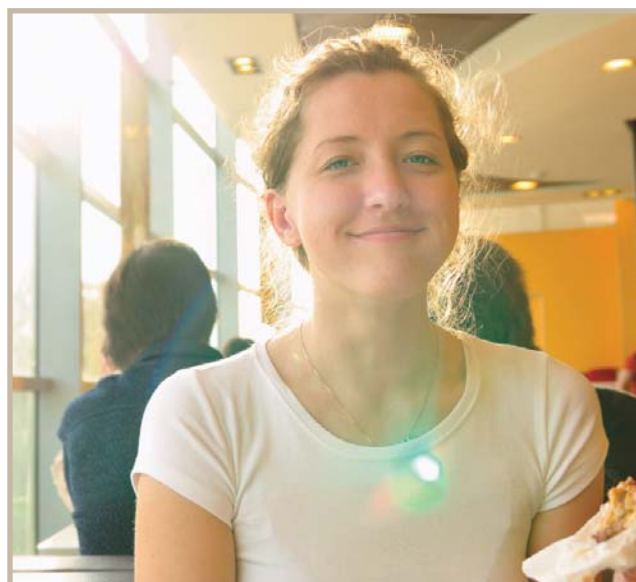
About the organisation: Friends Ltd is a registered charity and is based at Queen Mary's Hospital in Sidcup. Friends Ltd runs three retail outlets at the hospital, shops and a cafe bar and has almost 200 volunteers and 3 part-time members of staff. The café bar is managed and run exclusively by volunteers.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed: Partnership.

Volunteer activities: Volunteers carry out a variety of roles within the outlets, ranging from managing the rota systems and ensuring the shops are staffed, buying and selling stock and managing other volunteers.

Organisational development: Friends Ltd has a structured recruitment process for new volunteers with recruitment carried out by the part-time paid volunteer co-ordinator. It involves an interview, Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check and hospital health clearance.

Partnership working: Friends Ltd works closely with other volunteer-involving groups within the Hospital to ensure that it is complying with the NHS Trust requirements and regulations. It is guided by NHS Trust staff on issues such as CRBs, Health Clearance, Infection Control and Health and Safety.



Transferable Learning Points:

- Where organisations need to comply with complex regulations, sharing resource and experience with other volunteering groups offers advantages

Summary Case Study

Groundwork

Web: www.groundwork.org.uk

Coverage: National

About the organisation: Groundwork is a federal structure of regional and local charities helping people and organisations make changes in order to create better neighbourhoods, to build skills and job prospects, and to live and work in a greener way.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed:

Corporate volunteering, local focus, partnership.

Partnership: Groundwork works in partnership with different organisations to create jobs and roles for the long term unemployed. The beneficiaries are often referred through Jobcentre Plus. As part of this, a formal Service Level Agreement exists between Groundwork and British Waterways in the West Midlands for an employment training programme, with the Environment Agency also partnering with Groundwork for the same scheme to provide training for volunteers.

Local focus: One of the benefits of the federal structure is that it more readily enables partnerships with local stakeholders and Local Authorities. Local councils like to have a partnership with a local organisation, as they can feel more connected and have more influence over the work that is going on in their area. In addition, key strands of the volunteering roles on offer are based around community activities, for example organising a 'fun day' or a village fayre. Groundwork also runs local consultation sessions, to find out what people want to change in their local community. If Groundwork wants to improve something in a community, then there is an obligation to make sure that the activity is in the interest of all parts of the community. Volunteer management is also approached locally, with a manager or coordinator that is locally based.

Sustainability: Employees have a core skill set around education, youth, community and employment training. Although the overall mission of Groundwork hasn't changed, it does change the way it applies these skills in the current changing political and funding climate. As long as outcomes are measured from different projects, then there is something new to 'sell' funders. Effectively, Groundwork 'sells' the outcomes it can achieve to different organisations and funders without the need to develop new skills within the organisation.

Corporate volunteering: An increasing number of companies are asking for their employees to volunteer and be involved with the local community, which is undertaken in a standardised way. Groundwork has compiled a list of activities that corporate volunteers can do and the company decides on what task will be the most beneficial. However, it is important to highlight that a lot of companies don't understand that volunteering costs money, time and resources and that they will be required to pay for the services that Groundwork provides.



Transferable Learning Points:

- One of the benefits of the federal structure is that it more readily enables partnerships with local stakeholders including Local Authorities
- If the organisation is considering becoming involved with corporate volunteering and working with partners, it is important to highlight to companies that volunteering costs money, time and resources

Summary Case Study

KPMG

Web: <http://www.kpmg.co.uk/WhoWeAre/>

Coverage: National

Number of Volunteers: In 2008/09, 32% of KPMG employees volunteered as part of the KPMG Corporate Social Responsibility Programme.

About the organisation: KPMG is a global network of legally independent professional firms with over 140,000 employees in over 140 countries. Volunteering schemes and community projects which focus on education, enterprise and employability, and environmental management are the focus for its commitment to supporting sustainable communities.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed:
Corporate volunteering, understanding volunteers.

Volunteer activities: Many opportunities are arranged by local offices and directly benefit the local community. KPMG has a number of skill sharing opportunities for staff to take part in and runs a mentoring programme, where staff mentor people from local small business and community organisations as well as a schools programme where KPMG staff support children's learning in schools. KPMG also runs enterprise days in schools for pupils interested in business development and innovation.

Organisational development: As well as a network of key community partners, KPMG delivers community engagement programmes through a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Forum that helps implement the national CSR strategy and respond to local priorities. There are two strands of community involvement activity: community investment programmes which focus on employee volunteering, and a programme of charitable giving. KPMG has a Volunteering Policy which sets the time allowance for employees to volunteer. The policy identifies the key themes around volunteering and the types of organisations that KPMG wants to work with. KPMG Staff are able to arrange their own volunteering as long as it fits with KPMG's key themes. An example of this is taking on the role of a school governor. KPMG surveys its employees every two years to check that they are happy with the Volunteering Policy and staff are also involved in selecting an annual charity, for which its employees volunteer and raise money throughout the year.

Corporate volunteering: Volunteering creates good development opportunities for staff, for example improving communication skills. Staff also gain a greater understanding of social issues and have increased motivation at work. Volunteering is good for the reputation and profile of KPMG and promotes work with stakeholders. KPMG is rolling out a new focus on volunteering following a strategic review of our activities with a view to increasing the value of volunteering for all involved.



Transferable Learning Points:

- Take time to understand the aims and objectives of corporate volunteering programmes to see if they align with the volunteering organisation
- Ensure work done by corporate volunteers is meaningful, for example fulfilling a community need - gone are the days of employees just looking for some time out from the office

Summary Case Study

Retired and Senior Persons Volunteer Programme (RSVP)

Web: www.csv-rsvp.org.uk

Coverage: National

Number of Volunteers: 14,000

About the organisation: RSVP is a national volunteer programme that has been running since 1985 focusing on serving older people.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed:
Understanding volunteers

Volunteer activities: Many volunteers are attracted to RSVP because it gives them the opportunity to use their life and former work skills. RSVP is currently running intergenerational work, for example through a number of specialist projects such as 'Grand-mentors' that recruits older people in London to mentor young offenders, looked after teenagers and other hard to reach young people. RSVP also helps volunteers to find other volunteering opportunities, for example volunteering in Southwark Cathedral. It provides many volunteers who assist in primary and secondary schools in a range of duties including improving children's literacy and reading levels, in oral history projects, or as classroom helpers. In many parts of the country, RSVP's volunteers are attached to GP surgeries and health centres from where they provide social, emotional and practical support (such as transport) for more vulnerable older patients.

Organisational development: RSVP volunteers are generally aged 50 plus and get involved in delivery, management and fundraising for volunteer activities. The majority of the volunteers are managed and supported by 'volunteer' volunteer organisers. RSVP is part of Community Service Volunteers (CSV) and follows CSV's policy and procedures for volunteer involvement. RSVP's aim is to create opportunities for people to play an active role in the life of their communities and they share CSV's non-rejection policy that aims to work with, and support those who want to volunteer to make a difference in their community.

Partnership: RSVP encourages representatives from community groups, public sector and other voluntary organisations to become involved in the planning of local projects to ensure they fully reflect and address local needs. Examples of RSVP partners include Primary Care Trusts, Age UK and Schools.

Funding for volunteering: Volunteers have increased opportunities for fundraising. For example, one volunteer raised a total of £1million for RSVP over a ten year period, writing bids and applications to trusts and foundations.



Transferable Learning Points:

- The over-50's 'baby boomer' generation are a substantial proportion of the population, many of whom remain fit, healthy and active well into their post-retirement years. Their knowledge and experience offers a huge resource to organisations
- Many retired people are looking for more challenging ways to spend their free time than was the case with previous generations of retirees
- The retired population includes many people who had never volunteered during their working lives but are ready to find interesting ways of filling the time they now have on their hands

Summary Case Study

The Samaritans

Web: www.csv-rsvp.org.uk

Coverage: National

Number of Volunteers: 15,000

About the organisation: The Samaritans is a volunteer-led organisation that provides emotional support by telephone, email, SMS messaging, face to face and letters, 24 hours a day 7 days a week. Samaritans is currently developing a five year Volunteering Strategy which will be implemented from January 2011.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed:

Building capacity, partnership.

Volunteer activities: Volunteers are involved with the core work of the charity through front line 'listening' roles, as well as helping in the day to day running of branches by providing essential administration support to all functions of each branch. As branches have independent charity status, all are required to involve a treasurer as part of their management committee, which are also volunteers.

Volunteer diversity: Local Samaritans branches strive to ensure that the volunteers reflect the demography of the local community. Collecting diversity information about volunteers is undertaken by individual branches with this then being fed to the central team. Increasing diversity will be part of the emerging Volunteer Strategy, exploring the methods of communication with the local branches and identifying ways to help branches understand why it is important to collect monitoring information.

Organisational development: Samaritans has a Volunteering Team of 8 full-time staff, responsible for providing advice and guidance to branches on recruiting, selecting, training and supporting volunteers. Each branch is managed by experienced volunteers. 'Support' volunteers are also involved in the day-to-day running of the branch, fundraising, managing finances, outreach, promoting the service and carrying out administration tasks.

Partnership: Partnerships can work at both strategic and local levels. At a Samaritans branch in Scotland there is a particularly effective partnership and relationship with the local branch of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) to encourage and support people with hearing impairments who volunteer for Samaritans. Samaritans is also a member of volunteer networks both nationally and locally. For example, the National Network of Volunteer Involving Agencies (NNVIA) and England Volunteer Development Councils (EVDCs). These networks provide Samaritans with the opportunity to share good practice with other national and local volunteer involving organisations.

Sustainability: All Samaritans branches are independent charities that must raise funds that allow them to keep the branch open and continuing to support their community. Volunteers are heavily involved with fundraising and have a key role in the planning and delivery of fundraising activities on behalf of their branch.



Transferable Learning Points:

- Organisations that are substantially led and run by volunteers can do so highly professionally and achieve very high quality work. This involves setting clear standards and expectations of performance of volunteers, with effective support, supervision, back-up and training
- There are benefits to organisations from keeping in touch with developments in the wider volunteering world, by being connected through membership of national networks

Summary Case Study

Victim Support

Web: www.victimsupport.org.uk

Coverage: National

Number of Volunteers: 6,500

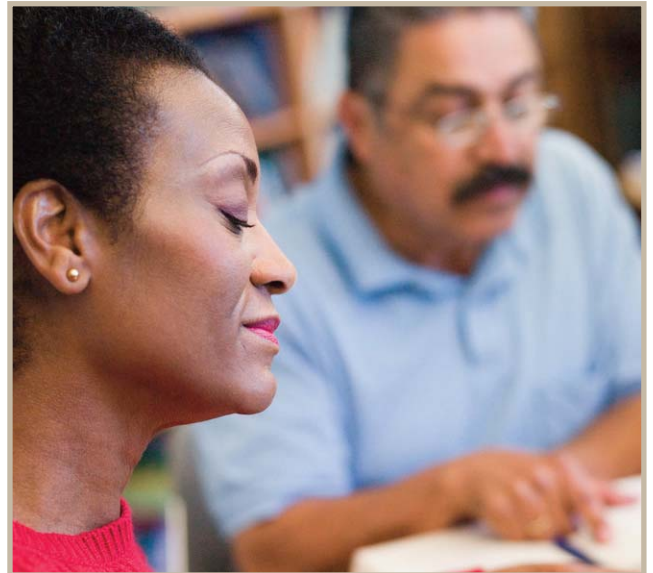
About the organisation: Victim Support is a charity organisation that supports victims of crime in England and Wales.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed:
Training and support.

Volunteer diversity: Victim Support is attractive to volunteers as it is a very accessible service that operates across the UK. Victim Support has specific recruitment targets that relate to how to engage people as volunteers from harder to reach groups, and specific managers responsible for the training and management of volunteers from such communities. Victim Support is currently trying to involve more students in volunteering as part of a wider strategy for involving more diverse groups of people.

Organisational development: Volunteers are offered professional training, based on the same occupational standards used by the whole Criminal Justice System, with regular supervision and support. They are provided with career development opportunities and can 'help shape the work and future of the organisation across the country'. Volunteers are offered a basic training package which covers aspects such as improving communication skills, equal opportunities, diversity, confidentiality and personal safety. There are more specialist training opportunities for volunteers who want to focus on supporting victims of sexual and domestic abuse, hate crime, and for work with families of victims or vulnerable and intimidated witnesses. All volunteers can get involved in Victim Support's work through becoming 'supporter members'. Having a voice in the organisation is encouraged through voting to elect other volunteers to represent them on a national Assembly.

Partnership: Victim Support's partners include Volunteering England, Youth Network and Time Bank. All partners are involved in the training of volunteers. Partners are also involved with different volunteering initiatives. For example currently all the organisations are involved in trying to increase awareness of volunteering through links to the 2012 Olympics.



Transferable Learning Points:

- The importance of consultation with volunteers about the organisation's direction and having a voice in the development of services
- When depending heavily on volunteers to provide a reliable service, it is even more essential to give them recognition and appreciation for their efforts (Victim Support has started an annual national Volunteer Award scheme, at which their Honorary President, the Princess Royal, distributes awards to nominated volunteers)
- There are plenty of volunteers who are prepared to take on really serious responsibilities, but the challenge is of finding ways to reach them and communicating why they should support the organisation's cause

Summary Case Study

Voluntary Organisations

Development Agency (VODA)

Web: www.voda.org.uk

Coverage: Mainly regional (North East), some national

Number of Volunteers: Currently seven volunteers work with them on a weekly basis, with more volunteers involved on a short term basis for VODA events.

About the organisation: VODA is a registered charity providing advice, training, information and support to volunteers, voluntary and community groups working in North Tyneside. VODA works locally, regionally and nationally to promote the values and needs of the voluntary and community sector in North Tyneside. It helps to encourage and develop networks and partnerships between the voluntary and community sector and others.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed:

Building capacity, marketing and publicity.

Volunteer diversity: VODA currently has a wide demographic profile of volunteers and has had success involving people with physical disabilities and those with mental health problems. VODA also has a Youth Action Team - a steering group of young volunteers that has responsibility to lead some of the projects that are delivered. It has also helped to put together funding applications, evaluate some of the projects delivered, as well as delivering sessions to other young people and design publicity materials. The steering group has been provided with training and it then generates the ideas for projects which are used in funding applications.

Recruitment of volunteers has been quite consistent but VODA is now receiving more enquiries from people who would like to receive support around using volunteering to increase their chances of employability. It has experienced an increase in the number of referrals received from Jobcentre Plus, with a similar picture being painted across the region as a result of the recession.

Organisational development: Currently VODA does not have a dedicated post for volunteer management, instead it is undertaken as part of a team that share the responsibility. VODA does not have a strategy to increase volunteering at its centre, but it does within the organisation as part of its role in brokering volunteers into placements in other organisations. At its volunteer centre, it comes into contact with people who would like to volunteer and signposts them to organisations that are looking for volunteers.

VODA has a board of trustees who are all volunteers and which has responsibility for how the organisation is run. The Board represents the views of the wider user group which has been beneficial to the organisation. However it is keen to have more volunteers in a Steering Group role, so that it can improve the services provided. It is also important to provide support for other volunteers. For example, peer support is essential for the Partners in Volunteering project.



Transferable Learning Points:

- Support or buddy volunteers can assist other volunteers who may need extra help by volunteering alongside them
- Provide younger volunteers with youth leadership training so they can contribute more to the organisation in the long run

Summary Case Study

Youth Action Network

Web: www.youthactionnetwork.org.uk

Coverage: National

Number of Volunteers: 20 in the central organisation

About the organisation: Youth Action Network is a national organisation which promotes the principles of Youth Action and offers specialist support to organisations that encourage youth-led volunteering. It offers training, capacity building support, networking opportunities and awards and funding to voluntary organisations that support young people to develop their own volunteering opportunities.

Key Challenges and Opportunities Addressed: Sustainability, training, understanding volunteers.

Volunteer activities: Volunteers are involved in two different roles, one group are young reporters involved with field research collecting information for the organisation's website. The other group of young people are trainers that conduct workshops with organisations to talk about services available to young people. Members of both the Young Reporters and Trainers come to external workshops about Youth Action and talk to people about the issues surrounding Youth Action.

Attracting volunteers: The organisation is attractive to volunteers as it gives them an opportunity to travel to different parts of the country and work with volunteers from other parts of the organisation that they normally would not meet. It also gives volunteers a voice on a national stage to talk about their experiences and encourage people to get involved in volunteering. Some of the workshops are working with adults, giving them an opportunity to experience working with people of all different ages.

Organisational development: Volunteers are currently not involved in the management of the organisation but Youth Action plans to involve them at a strategic level soon. Volunteering in Youth Action is flexible. However as the organisation invests so much in training volunteers, it is important to achieve a level of commitment so volunteers will be retained. Generally, retention is not a problem and Youth Action Network has learnt that the more an organisation invests in the volunteer in time or training, the higher the retention rate. Youth Action also spends a lot of time encouraging team building, and the management of volunteers is shared between two people. The organisation has fluctuating volunteer numbers, so by having two people managing volunteers, they can support each other in their roles.



Transferable Learning Points:

- Be as flexible as possible with your volunteering offer and adapt policies around safeguarding
- Involving volunteers can improve your organisations' reputation within the Third Sector more generally
- Increasing volunteering has costs which aren't often fully recognised

4.0 Success Factors and Learning Points

This chapter summarises the transferable success factors and learning points within the 20 case studies which help to address the key challenges and opportunities in relation to attracting, integrating and retaining more volunteers in inland waterway organisations.

A central theme throughout the case studies is the adoption of an explicit strategy of change focused on volunteering but encompassing capacity building, organisational development and promoting the increased diversity of volunteers and volunteering opportunities. In practical terms, these strategies have resulted in key actions including planned staff development programmes to incorporate volunteer management and new partnerships with local organisations to engage new groups of volunteers. These actions are linked to a re-assessment of the breadth of roles that volunteers can play in an organisation and an increased appreciation of the contribution volunteers can play as co-workers. For most of the case studies, this change has been brought about through an investment of time, money and management effort, but has brought significant benefits to the organisations considered as a result of an increase in volunteering activity.

Inland waterway organisations have an opportunity to draw on the following success factors and subsequent learning points from the case studies in developing and implementing their own strategies to increase volunteering.

4.1 Summary of Case Study Success Factors

Building Capacity

Building capacity cuts across a number of the other challenges and opportunities considered, but also offers insights in its own right. Whilst most of the larger case study organisations such as the **National Trust** have recognised the need for dedicated capacity in the form of volunteer management posts, other smaller organisations such as **VODA** have explicitly integrated roles and responsibilities across existing staff. The example of **Friends Limited** also demonstrates that capacity can be built through external co-operation, including with other volunteering organisations, where specific (and potentially onerous) regulatory requirements need to be met.

Corporate Volunteering

For case studies including the **Refugee Council**, relationships which link to Corporate Social Responsibility agendas have provided a reliable source of volunteers based on mutual understanding of organisational objectives as well as personal relationships. Taking the perspective of the **Co-op** and **KPMG**, these examples offer additional insights into the motivations of these organisations in promoting schemes to their employees. The importance of appreciating the objectives of corporate schemes and offering appropriate opportunities was emphasised by the experience of **Groundwork** and **CSV Environment**. These organisations have successfully developed a range of formats for employee volunteering which recognise the time constraints and expectations of participants.

Local Focus

Case study examples such as **Cathedral Camps** and **Groundwork** show how volunteers can be successfully engaged locally within a national structure. This links to research showing volunteers are often motivated by local issues which helps to re-enforce connections between people, local communities and places. Picking up one of the themes of the UK Government's Waterways for Everyone (2009) report, inland waterway organisations are well placed to further build on the successes of the case studies in focussing on local issues and communities as part of volunteer strategies. The report highlighted the important role inland waterways have in the life of local cities, towns and rural communities. Key to working more locally is the power of advocacy or 'word of mouth' amongst community partners, as demonstrated by **CSV Environment's** 'Engage' project. This requires approaches to be adapted for different settings and target groups and allows local partners to lead on engagement.

Marketing and Publicity

Targeted marketing and publicity can play an important role in attracting volunteers, but dissemination of good practice also has a role in terms of building partnerships, as demonstrated by **Manchester Museum and the Imperial War Museum North** in their sharing of the experience of the 'In Touch' programme. Similarly, **Waterways Action Squad** is in the process of developing a Youth Involvement Strategy to share their experiences of working with young people within the sector. Targeted use of social media, as demonstrated by **Youth Action Network** can play an important role in integrating and retaining volunteers and forms part of the recognition across a number of the case studies of the importance of the social aspects of volunteering.

Organisational Development

The central theme across all the case studies was some form of organisational transformation where volunteers are more closely integrated. In practice, case studies such as **Kent Library Service** illustrate how organisations have proactively worked with paid staff to address concerns regarding volunteers. This has resulted in benefits for the organisation in question, paid staff and volunteers alike. A common fear is that volunteers will replace paid staff, but in practice the real benefit is to bring a range of additional skills and roles to an organisation. A success factor within this is clear planning and documentation of volunteer roles and task descriptions. Leadership from senior managers as well as recognition of the costs of integrating volunteers are seen as important success factors, as well as dedicated volunteer management roles, formal training and handbooks for paid staff.

Partnership

Partnership takes a number of forms and is shown to have a range of benefits within the case studies. Some partnerships are formal and long standing, for example **Mayfield Nurseries** and **Solent Mind**, or **KPMG** and the **Refugee Council**, while others are more ad hoc and relate to specific projects or issues. One strength of local partnerships is the ability to target particular groups of new volunteers. Another development is volunteer exchanges between organisations, which can offer volunteers and organisations a broader range of experiences as well as helping to enhancing retention. Successful partnerships are based on a shared agenda between organisations, often taking the form of a Memorandum of Understanding.

Where partnerships are entering into formal contracting arrangements for service delivery, this needs to be underpinned by agreements on lead responsibilities and protocols for issues such as health and safety and expenses (see Chapter 5, the Model Volunteering Organisation for a recommended approach to expenses).

Sustainability

As a perennial issue facing volunteering organisations, financial and organisational sustainability is linked to a number of the other challenges and opportunities across the case studies. Volunteers can play an important role in directly attracting funding, as demonstrated by the **RSPB** case study, and are being increasingly recognised as legitimate match funding or as an integral part of service delivery for contracting, as illustrated by the **Refugee Council**. In organisational terms, intergenerational volunteering, as promoted by **RSVP** can help sustain organisations in the longer term. More generally however, all the case studies demonstrate how volunteers enable an organisation to fulfil a number of needs across a range of functions, from practical and administrative roles to Trustees.

Training and Support

Within the context of increasing professionalisation and competition for volunteers and a more informed and demanding volunteer base, a number of the case studies serve to highlight integrated formalised training and development, both for volunteers (**Manchester Museum and Imperial War Museum North**) and staff (the **National Trust**). Case studies such as **WRVS** point to investment of time and resources in volunteers as being a key success factor in retaining volunteers whilst for others, such as **Victim Support** and **Samaritans**, training forms a fundamental pre-requisite of their service.

Understanding Volunteers

Generally, the case studies show that organisations have moved away from a paternalistic view of volunteers to one which recognises their motivations and regards them as equal. Part of this is recognising the volunteering market as a segmented one and developing creative formats and structures which appeal to different sections of the community, as exemplified by the **National Trust** and also **WRVS** in cultivating a trusted volunteering 'brand'. Volunteers are attracted to volunteering opportunities that can be fitted around other responsibilities, family and social lives. A number of the case studies show how organisations have introduced one to one sessions with volunteers to gain a better understanding of their aspirations and skills. In the case of **Mayfield Nurseries**, this can lead to a rejection of volunteers who do not match with organisational needs and contrasts with **CSV Environment's** non-rejection policy. The scale of CSV enables them to offer a range of opportunities to meet volunteer needs and whilst both approaches have merits, it needs to be made explicit to staff and volunteers which approach is being adopted by the organisation.

Volunteer Diversity

Another key theme across a number of the case studies was the development of strategies to diversify the volunteer base, in particular amongst under-represented groups such as young people, black and ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. Success factors including targeted marketing and local partnerships were illustrated by **Brighton University** and **Kent Libraries**. An important aspect to developing a more diverse volunteer base is offering a wider range of volunteer opportunities and being flexible about these opportunities, as demonstrated by **Age UK**.

Success was also linked to wider changes in relation to organisational development outlined above and a specific consideration of addressing the barriers faced by volunteers.

4.2 Summary of Transferable Learning Points

This section brings together the transferable learning points highlighted in Chapter 3 and presents them in terms of the factors that help attract, integrate and retain volunteers. Points have been ordered and grouped in terms of the types of actions that have formed part of change programmes within case study organisations.

Transferable Learning Points - Attracting Volunteers

- *Attracting volunteers from diverse backgrounds offers organisations new, different and valuable benefits*
- *Community advocacy can be powerful for attracting new volunteers locally*
- *Ensure there is a wide range of opportunities available including flexibility about timing and length of commitment*
- *Use different methods of recruitment and different messages to reach different sections of the population*
- *Provide varied opportunities for under-18's to volunteer - tailored opportunities such as summer camps offer a safe and time-limited format*
- *One-day activities give volunteers a good introductory taster of volunteering, but can often lead to longer term and sustained involvement*
- *Members offer a good start point for increasing volunteering as they are already 'warm' and sympathetic to the cause, hence it is much easier to draw them further in than recruiting from cold*
- *Accreditation is appealing for some volunteers, but by no means all - younger and older people may be less interested, but those seeking employment are more likely to want to strengthen their CV*

Transferable Learning Points – Integrating Volunteers

- *Training and volunteer management should be integral to organisations' management processes*
- *Develop volunteer role descriptions alongside paid staff and address any overlaps*
- *Give paid staff explicit roles and responsibilities for supporting volunteers to enrich their jobs*
- *It is important not to underestimate the amount of time needed to adequately manage and supervise volunteers*
- *Reassure staff that volunteers are not replacing existing jobs and provide them with information, and opportunities for discussion and consultation*
- *It is important to be selective when matching volunteers to opportunities to make sure volunteer and organisations' needs are met*
- *Ensure senior management 'buy-in' is communicated to all staff*
- *Volunteers can themselves successfully become managers or leaders of other volunteers, including young people*
- *Adopt a structured volunteer policy that includes disciplinary guidelines for staff and volunteers and provide staff training*

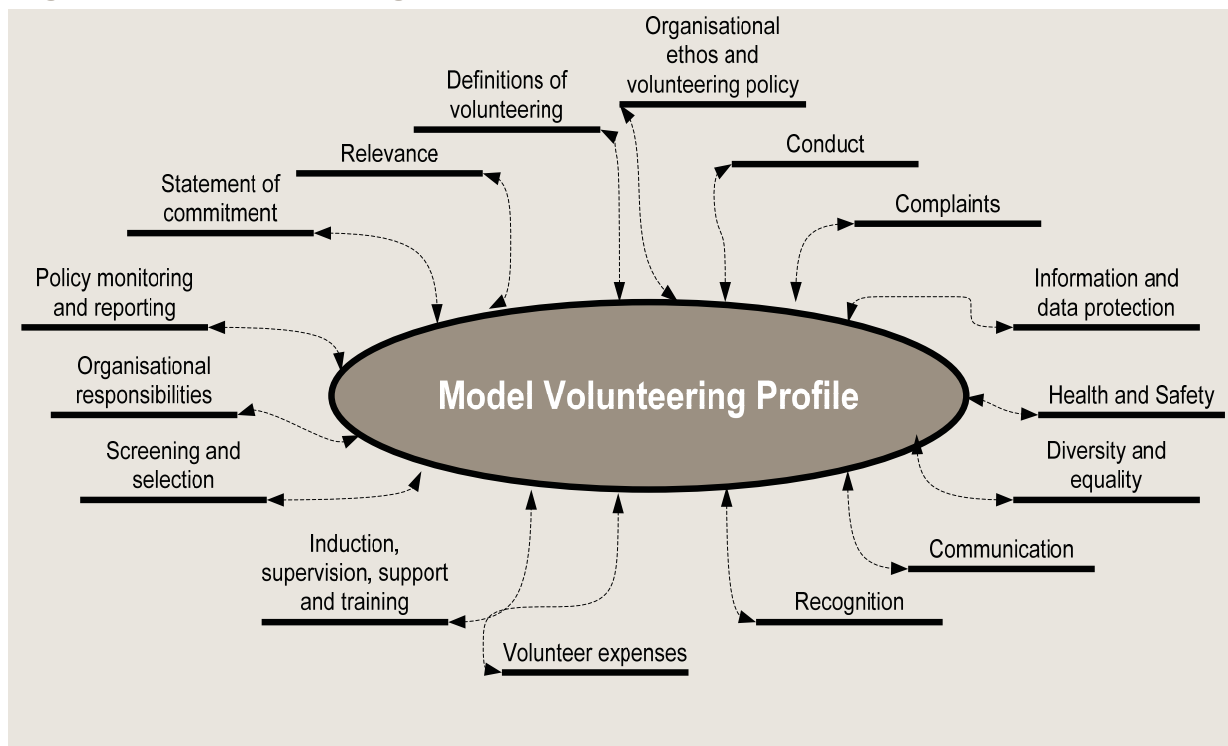
Transferable Learning Points – Retaining Volunteers

- *Constantly evaluate how the organisation can improve the relationship with volunteers through consultation to develop a better understanding of expectations and issues*
- *Dedicated volunteer management allows time for liaising with volunteers on a one-to-one or group basis, raising confidence and fostering integration*
- *Recognise and nurture the importance of social aspects of volunteering*
- *E-newsletters and social networking are good ways to keep in touch with volunteers and to build a community of volunteers over distances*
- *Invite volunteers to get involved in consultations and meetings to ensure their views have equal weight to those of paid staff*
- *Communication is key when volunteers only assist for short or infrequent periods of time - keep volunteers fully informed of what has happened during the time they have not been volunteering to keep momentum and continuity*
- *Help with fundraising is one way to keep volunteers actively engaged on an on-going basis, but may not suit everyone so needs to be part of a range of opportunities on offer*

5.0 A Model Approach to Volunteering

This final chapter illustrates the way in which volunteering could operate in relation to attracting, integrating and retaining volunteers within a 'model' inland waterway organisation. This model draws upon the key transferable lessons from the case studies set out in the previous chapters as well as the experience of CSV to form an exemplar volunteer-friendly organisation.

Figure 5.1 Model Volunteering Profile



5.1 Organisational Ethos and Volunteering Policy

Some of the case study organisations highlighted in the previous chapter have set about developments and changes to increase their emphasis on a whole-organisation approach to volunteering. Some waterway organisations are also undertaking a process of culture change and workforce development in order to achieve a better focus on, and fit with, their volunteers, by integrating volunteering within the ways they set out to achieve their overall mission and outcomes.

Any volunteering strategy or framework should begin with a clear statement of intent about the organisation's commitment to involving volunteers, its purpose in doing so, and its alignment with the organisation's key policies, strategies and objectives. It will also provide a strong link to the organisation's Statement of Values. It is suggested that this statement should be at the heart of our model inland waterway volunteering organisation.

The model organisation will set out that it intends the quality of the volunteering opportunities that the organisation provides to be meaningful, realistic, rewarding and worthwhile. The opportunities should take into account the different abilities, capabilities, skill and knowledge levels, capacities and interests of a range of different volunteers and their diverse backgrounds. They will not be substituted for paid staff positions, nor will they replace staff in situations where a redundancy has been made.

A model waterway organisation will define what volunteering is or is not and the terms of its scope within the organisation. It will recognise that people's lifestyles, personal circumstances, wellbeing and many other factors will influence the amount of time, frequency and the regularity they are able to give as volunteers. A range of volunteering opportunities is required to match different individual's needs, for example:

- *Occasional*
- *One-off*
- *Regular*
- *Short-term*
- *Long-term*
- *Full time*
- *Part time*

It will also recognise that there are implications for paid staff when involving more volunteers but that volunteers add value and that they are critical to enhancing the number and quality of services, projects and programmes that the organisation can provide.

5.2 Statement of Commitment

A clear statement is required showing an understanding by the organisation that although volunteers provide a valued source of labour, they are not cost free and so a commitment of some modest resources of time and funds is required to support the implementation of volunteering. The organisation will ensure that volunteers have the necessary financial resources, equipment, office accommodation, access and permissions and any other requirements to undertake their work effectively, including timely reimbursement of out of pocket expenses. Usually these should be paid according to actual, rather than notional expenditure, but for queries in relation to expenses, local HMRC offices offer support and guidance.

5.3 Policy Monitoring and Reporting

Successful case studies show how a model waterway organisation should have monitoring and reporting mechanisms in place so that they are in touch with who their volunteers are and how much time they give. As well as providing important data for reports, including to funders, this can inform marketing and recruitment strategies, and ensure that messages are targeted to specific groups that are under represented in the organisation.

5.4 Organisational Responsibilities

A model organisation will publicise and promote its volunteering opportunities and regularly update its information about volunteering achievements, particularly through using newsletters and its website. It will designate responsibility and authority to a member of its staff, who could be a Volunteer Manager, or a volunteer for identifying suitable tasks and activities in which volunteers can be involved: for encouraging volunteers to come forward with ideas and proposals for new volunteering projects and to lead, support, advise and guide them in their day to day tasks. It may consider 'contracting out' these responsibilities to a specialist volunteering organisation.

Paid staff are likely to need training and development in order to be able to manage volunteers and involve them effectively. In a model organisation, people who are regular volunteers should have clear, complete, and current descriptions of the duties and responsibilities of their role, tasks and duties. This volunteer task description should be reviewed and agreed with each volunteer. Volunteers should not be retained on an open-ended basis or without being subject to a review and their performance to an appraisal.

5.5 Screening and Selection

The majority of organisations considered in the case studies and waterway organisations undertake some form of screening and assessment of volunteers. Some case study organisations discussed how they consider the selection of volunteers to be of utmost importance to the organisational dynamics, with appropriate volunteer selection also aiding retention of volunteers and making the organisation more efficient.

A model organisation's commitment to diversity and equal opportunity will mean that it believes that volunteering should be open to all. Only relevant criteria should be used in a volunteer's selection process. An interview should determine the suitability of potential volunteers and their commitment to fulfil the requirements of any given assignment. References should be taken up if appropriate, depending upon the nature of the task and the length of service for which the volunteer is being considered.

For certain activities where volunteers will have substantial or unsupervised access on a regular basis to children or to vulnerable adults, the organisation is required to undertake a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. CRB disclosures are free for volunteers.

5.6 Induction, Supervision and Training

The majority of case studies described the benefits of a structured induction, quality supervision and appropriate training for volunteers. All of these aspects further enhance the ability of an organisation to attract, integrate and retain volunteers.

A model organisation will make new volunteers feel welcome and appreciated for donating their time. All new volunteers should attend as a minimum a briefing session and orientation and be adequately prepared for the volunteering task they are undertaking. A core training/induction to the organisation and its work should be available, as should such essential topics as Health and Safety.

Volunteers will be encouraged to attend any other relevant training provided by the organisation, or free training that is available locally. For some people, volunteering is an important way of gaining experience for work and for moving forward in their employment, training or education. There is an important link between volunteering and accreditation for those volunteers who are looking for this and can benefit from it as a progression route.

5.7 Recognition

A number of case study organisations and waterway organisations highlighted the high importance of recognising the contribution of volunteers. Key approaches in a model organisation would be:

- Every person who works alongside volunteers is responsible for acknowledging their contribution regularly (this can be a simple 'thank you' or organising a local social event for volunteers)
- Every volunteer is entitled to a reference from the organisation on the strength of their volunteering
- To give volunteers certificates of appreciation. Outstanding contributions by volunteers could receive special awards
- To organise Awards Ceremonies which will give wider and more public recognition to their efforts and senior managers and board members can support such events
- For some people, accreditation and external validation of the skills and knowledge that they develop and the experience that they gain through their volunteering will be important
- To consult volunteers, so that they feel their voices are heard and that they are in touch with significant developments in their workplace or project
- For regular volunteers to receive information updates from managers and be 'kept in the loop'

5.8 Communication

A common theme arising from the case studies is the importance of effective communication about volunteering within an organisation between volunteers and paid staff. Also, that volunteer stories offer great opportunities for an organisation to promote itself and its work, both internally and to external audiences via press and media.

The model organisation will develop a standard Volunteer Welcome Pack and Handbook, to include essential information and copies (or summaries) of all relevant policies and procedures that they need to know to be able to work effectively.

Where possible, 'Case Studies' and stories of individual or groups of volunteers' achievements will be recorded and collected. These could be featured in the organisation's publications, its annual report and on the website. Opportunities will be sought to publicise volunteers and to promote their achievements and successes through 'good news' press releases. This can help to enhance the organisation's reputation in the community, reach potential new volunteers, generate new customers and create a 'feel good' factor for stakeholders.

5.9 Diversity and Equality

Of particular relevance to the waterways sector, attracting volunteers from diverse backgrounds is an important issue in reflecting the local communities in which waterway organisations are based. This will also promote the waterways sector to a wider audience, ensuring that it reflects the community as a whole and making it more sustainable in the future. Whilst acknowledging the importance of its current volunteering base, key statements encouraging diversity and equality could be adopted by a model organisation. These should positively emphasise how volunteers are actively encouraged from a wide cross-section of backgrounds and experiences, to ensure a diverse range of people take part and that the profile of the residents who are involved is as wide as possible.

The organisation will do everything it can to make volunteering opportunities available to everyone, including making reasonable adjustments for volunteers with disabilities. There is no minimum age requirement for volunteers, provided they are undertaking suitable tasks for which there is no legal minimum, they are supervised and not left alone and a parent or guardian has signed to give their permission if they are under 18. The organisation will not specify a volunteer upper age limit and recognises the contribution made by older volunteers for their valuable knowledge and experience.

5.10 Health and Safety, Information and Data Protection

Health and Safety is always an important aspect of working with volunteers within the waterways sector, as well as working with partners. A model waterway organisation will set out that its policy is to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all volunteers, so far as is reasonably practicable, by maintaining a safe environment without risks to health for all volunteers. It will provide appropriate instruction, training and supervision to ensure the health, safety and welfare of volunteers.

Risk assessments should be undertaken and risks considered of any activities in which volunteers are involved, which should be logged and recorded in exactly the same way as for employees.

Personal information recorded about volunteers should be stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality. Under data protection legislation, volunteers are entitled to access their own records and may request a copy. Volunteers should be advised of the need for confidentiality where they have access to sensitive information.

5.11 Complaints

It is important to have formal policies and procedures in place to deal with complaints and dissatisfaction, before problems actually arise. A model organisation will have considered these factors in order to avoid time-consuming and potentially costly disputes. It will encourage feedback and comments from its volunteers and consult them on relevant issues. It will recognise that volunteers have a right to complain about any aspect of their volunteering and make a Complaints Procedure for volunteers available as part of the Volunteers Handbook.

Complaints or dissatisfaction about the performance or quality of work of a volunteer will arise from time to time and these should be raised with them in the first instance by their supervisor. The volunteer should be given a fair opportunity to respond and a meeting held to discuss the situation, including what will be done to resolve the situation and what steps will be taken to make improvements for the future.

A model organisation will set out its expectations and performance standards clearly so that volunteers understand they are to carry out their regular duties on a scheduled and timely basis. Being 'only' a volunteer should not be an excuse for letting poor work continue without being challenged. Volunteers should also be expected to be conscious of their responsibility to the reputation of the organisation and for presenting a good image.

Annex One: Inland Waterway Volunteering Case Studies

British Waterways

British Waterways is currently in the process of developing and building upon its knowledge of volunteering, specifically looking at recognition, resourcing and targeting volunteers. This volunteering change process is being embedded within the organisation by 'getting volunteering on the agenda at the highest levels - it has to be talked about, respected and understood by the leaders of the organisation'. As a result, ideas about volunteering have 'started to permeate down' through the organisation.

It is also undertaking training for paid staff tackling volunteering myths (e.g. volunteers are unreliable, free and unprofessional). The aim of this training is to raise the profile of volunteers, incorporating them more fully in the organisation to change perceptions. British Waterways is also considering the professionalisation of volunteering and moving away from solely offering practical opportunities for volunteers by offering a wider variety of roles. The organisation sees this as one of the biggest opportunities for the waterways sector in the future, as it can offer voluntary opportunities in professional skills such as engineering, health and safety management and marketing.



British Waterways Scotland

British Waterways Scotland is currently considering the development of a 'Volunteer Council' (currently a working title) across Scotland and especially the lowland canals to provide a 'local face for volunteering.' Developments in the waterways sector in Scotland are two-fold. Firstly, British Waterways Scotland is bringing waterway organisations together to share a common vision. This process is about empowering local organisations to take ownership and develop further volunteering. It is also currently undertaking a study to understand the decline in membership of older canal societies and the increase in new third sector organisations, as it is keen to make sure they grow together in the future. British Waterways Scotland is aware that volunteers can find the organisation hard to engage with so they are developing a new ethos and language. Although it is possible to measure the economic value of canals it now needs to analyse the environmental and social return of canals. This will hopefully lead to stronger links with the community and lead to a higher quality canal environment and a long-term sustainability of the canals.



The Broads Authority

Working with volunteers since 1989, there are currently over 200 volunteers working with the Authority in a wide range of settings such as habitat management and site maintenance. Alongside 'traditional' volunteers, the Authority provides both short and long-term work placements in conjunction with a number of return to work placement agencies and educational establishments.

Formal volunteer management processes include the development of a Code of Practice for Volunteering and an equality and diversity monitoring system. The recruitment process of volunteers involves a face-to-face interview, arrangements for a 'taster day' for applicants to experience volunteering in their chosen work situation. If the applicant is successful, a volunteer induction process is undertaken focusing upon health and safety and risk assessment, with proposals to include a volunteer agreement that makes clear what the volunteer may expect from the Authority and what is expected of the volunteer.



The Authority has found that communication is vital in integrating and retaining volunteers and to demonstrating the Authority's commitment. Volunteers are kept aware of developments in the volunteer scheme, encouraged to develop their understanding of important issues for the Authority and to find out what volunteers within other parts of the Authority do. It is also important that officers and members are kept aware of the volume and scope of work that volunteers undertake on their behalf. The Authority is currently developing a volunteer handbook providing a basic reference for volunteers, as well as considering annual volunteer conferences to publicly acknowledge and celebrate the work of volunteers.

The Broads Authority is also supporting capacity building amongst volunteers, through training schemes and the attainment of appropriate qualifications. This is reflected in their current volunteering strategy:

'In order to achieve fairness and consistent practice... a single integrated volunteer scheme that facilitates progression and development should be developed. The scheme must apply across the whole of the Authority's work, should form an element of every Authority post and should actively promote opportunity for those groups in society currently less represented within the volunteer force. It is proposed that a review of volunteer training be undertaken and a training plan developed for delivery across the volunteer scheme. This would also be embedded through regular performance reviews'.

Essex Waterways

Essex Waterways is a largely volunteer-led and run organisation, managing the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation with just three full-time employees and a small range of part-time people and a small army of volunteers. The work is often carried out in partnership with other bodies within the waterways sector such as Waterway Recovery Group and Chelmer Canal Trust; local authorities, charitable trusts and corporate partners, particularly Essex & Suffolk Water. Essex Waterways consciously tries to attract a broad range of volunteers, for example by organising a planting scheme for Air Cadets, and schemes involving local employers. One of the benefits of partnership working in this way includes drawing upon expertise in areas such as Health & Safety, planning, construction, financial management and wildlife management skills, and one of the keys to gaining funding for activity has been the ability to use volunteer time as match funding.



Seagull Trust Cruises

Seagull Trust Cruises was founded in 1978 and is a voluntary organisation with 500 volunteers and branches in Falkirk, Inverness, Kirkintilloch and Ratho. The trust has no members of paid staff and takes 35,000 passengers on free cruises with depots in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Inverness. 'People have a real sense of ownership of the organisation' as volunteers are involved at every level, from management to selling merchandise and fundraising, as well as the running and sailing of the cruise boats. Volunteer retention in Seagulls is very high as volunteer roles are so varied.

The Trust is also considering partnering with British Waterways Scotland, allowing volunteers to exchange with partner organisations. This emerging concept has developed from a discussion about how volunteers can help in the wider waterways community. The benefits of such a concept include retention of volunteers, giving more variety to volunteer roles and increasing the commitment of volunteers to the organisation. The organisation is also trying to encourage younger volunteers and is currently in the planning stage of developing a 'floating classroom' to encourage youth involvement.



Waterways Action Squad

The Waterways Action Squad (WAS) builds on the work of the Waterways Trust and British Waterways with the 'V' volunteering programme in the north-west of England. The main aim of their work is to engage more 16-25 year olds to volunteer. As a result, WAS is currently developing a Youth Involvement Strategy in order to transfer knowledge of working with young people across the sector.

The main issues for involving young people have been two-fold: it is important to address the support young people need for volunteering as well as the barriers that they might encounter. In order to overcome these issues WAS undertook a survey of young people to establish a baseline for the project and to gain information about what young people think about the waterways and why they do/don't use it. From this information it then made sure the appropriate support structures were developed.



Photograph copyright – Waterways Action Squad Volunteers



When involving young people as volunteers WAS found that it was important to make sure that there is adequate support for longstanding volunteers and so WAS also undertook a consultation exercise with existing volunteers about what their attitudes towards young people and what potential issues might be and the type of support they might need. Part of this process was to reinforce the point that, by involving younger people, they are adding value to existing volunteer work. One of the unexpected benefits was the level of intergenerational work that has developed, as many older volunteers shared valuable experiences with the younger generation.

In order to broaden its appeal WAS has also diversified opportunities for volunteers away from the more practical activities such as litter picking and vegetation clearance to marketing, PR and administration.

Waterway Recovery Group (WRG)

WRG is a completely volunteer-led and run group helping to restore derelict canals in Britain and is 'a co-ordinating force', not centred on any one specific project. WRG operates by backing up and assisting local groups, with extra labour and knowledge, and does a big push on either a weekend or week long dig'. WRG runs about 25 week-long camps a year and six regional groups which usually run weekend activities. In total, there are approximately 1000 active volunteers each year. The purpose is both to achieve direct physical results and also to lead by example, showing the many restoration groups around the country how to organise themselves and to work to nationally agreed standards.



Publicity material – copyright Waterway Recovery Group

Due to the nature of its work, WRG has to integrate health and safety into volunteer training through demonstration and information videos, verbal briefings and information booklets outlining site management, rules and regulations. All volunteers also get personal protection equipment and training to operate machinery that they may need to use on the camps.

Within WRG, there is a 'micro-management' organisational structure that involves more experienced volunteers helping the less experienced. The camps are partly funded by volunteers who cover the food costs for week long camps, with some funding from partnership arrangements. Volunteers also carry out fundraising, for example the 'Right Tool for the Right Job' appeal in 2004 fundraised to improve equipment and was completely volunteer-led.

canal camps
week-long holidays run by volunteers for volunteers

A Canal Camp is an enjoyable week's outdoor holiday spent working on the canals. It's a great opportunity to meet all sorts of new people from all walks of life, of all ages and from all over the country and abroad as well as learning new skills. It can also be used as an excellent opportunity for the residential aspect of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award. No previous experience necessary – you just need to be willing to have fun and get involved.

The work: No two canal work sites are exactly the same – every canal has its own distinctive features and building materials, as the original canal builders used whatever was available to hand to build the canal. Combine this with the many different jobs involved in restoring a canal and you will find that Canal Camps offer a wide variety of different types of work. Here are a few things you could find yourself doing...demolishing old brickwork and stonework, vegetation clearance, learning to lay bricks or mix concrete, clearing a canal lock of smelly black slimy silt or even driving a digger or dumper truck! Whatever you end up doing you will have a unique and memorable experience while helping us to keep the waterways alive for future generations.

camp facts
When? WRG run over 25 Canal Camps every year – mostly in the summer months from June to September, but we also have an October Camp and a camp running from Boxing Day to New Years Day. For up to date information on camps go to the WRG website www.wrg.org.uk or request a brochure (contact details below).
age: open to anyone aged between 18-70
cost: Between £49-£70 (this includes food and basic accommodation)
accommodation: best described as 'basic' – you will need to bring a sleeping bag and Karimata/airbed with you (don't worry we make sure you get to have a warm shower at the end of each day!)
transport: many people come by car, but if you arrive by train/bus we'll pick you up from the station in one of our big red vans.
working day: the working day usually runs from 9am to 5pm ... but don't worry there will be plenty of tea breaks! We try to organise social activities in the evenings (eg swimming, cinema, boat trips) for those who want to take part.

book now!
online www.wrg.org.uk
call us 01494 783 453
email enquiries@wrg.org.uk
or write to Island House, Moor Road, Chesham, HPS 1WA

canal camps

It was my first camp and I had no expectations; but had a brilliant time and made lots of friends. Hope to be back next year. Thanks to everyone for a lovely time!
- Rachel Beynon

Drive a digger

Learn new skills

Meet new people

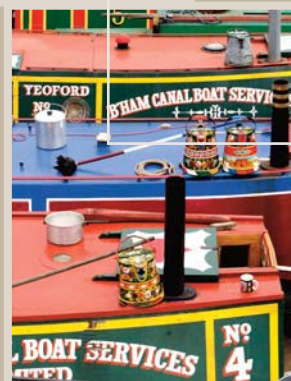
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volunteers restoring waterways

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