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Events & Volunteering

A Practical Toolkit for Event Organisers
Seeking to Involve Volunteers



Giro d'Italia, Titanic Belfast

**Northern
Ireland**

Foreword

Volunteer Now and Tourism Northern Ireland are providing a resource to help event organisers involve volunteers in an effective and meaningful way and support the development of volunteering at national and international events across Northern Ireland.

We hope this toolkit will provide the practical advice event organisers need, either to start involving volunteers, or to improve their volunteer management. Further support and training is available from Volunteer Now and Tourism Northern Ireland.



Belsonic, Belfast

Introducing the toolkit

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Introducing the toolkit

Event organisers and local authorities across Northern Ireland are already involved in many sporting, cultural and heritage activities and events and need volunteers to help these to run effectively. Volunteers provide a warm local welcome to visitors and add value to the work of paid staff involved in running events.

Volunteer Now and Tourism Northern Ireland hope that this toolkit will support the involvement of volunteers at events.

The aim of Volunteer Now and Tourism Northern Ireland's partnership is to ensure that volunteers will continue to contribute to a world class visitor experience and that volunteering is embedded in future national and international events. It follows on from successful volunteer involvement at previous events including the World Police and Fire Games, Giro d'Italia, Irish Open, Tall Ships, BBC Good Food Show and Belfast City Marathon.

There are many legacy benefits anticipated from developing a volunteering programme within your event or locality. For example:

- A legacy of improved tourism capability and streamlined processes for enhancing local events.
- A pool of trained local volunteers.
- Better community involvement for your event.
- Increased awareness of the value of volunteering, leading to increased participation.

It is vital that every volunteer finds the experience engaging, rewarding and meaningful, and that all volunteer opportunities express the values of respect, equality and excellence.



What is a volunteer?

Before you involve volunteers for a 'one off' or 'occasional' role within an event, it is important to understand what a volunteer is, so you can identify suitable roles and understand the boundaries of their involvement.

Volunteering is defined within the Volunteering Strategy for Northern Ireland (2011) as:

“...the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment, or individuals outside (or in addition to) one's immediate family.

It is unpaid and undertaken freely and by choice.”

This definition refers to both formal volunteering (carried out with, or under the auspices of an organisation/group) and informal volunteering (carried out outside the organisation, often at neighbourhood level but outside, or in addition to, the immediate family).



Tip 1: Putting volunteering at the heart of your event

Planning for volunteer involvement

In relation to volunteering the most important question you need to consider is whether volunteer involvement would add value to your event. Volunteers can provide an extended range of services at your event, offer a warm welcome and visitor orientation, ensure local community involvement and support.

Questions that might help you to determine this include:

- What sorts of tasks would volunteers be expected to undertake?
- Where might volunteers be needed during the event?
- Do you currently have roles that are not being fulfilled?
- How many volunteers would be required considering the nature of their role, location(s)/venue(s) for the event?
- Can the event organiser fund the costs associated with volunteer provision; is there funding or existing resources available to adequately cover management costs, staff time; as well as volunteer uniforms, food, travel and recognition?



Tip 2: Creating a volunteer programme

When creating a volunteer programme there are several stages to be considered, which will allow you to design and recruit a pool of volunteers who are interested in providing the best possible experience to visitors at your event. It is important to remember that volunteers are not a free resource, and most elements of the process require time and money in order to do it well.

Volunteer policy

The cornerstone of a volunteering programme is the volunteer policy document. Your policy should be based on a clear set of values around the involvement of volunteers. It is important to discuss the reasons for involving volunteers with all your organisation's stakeholders.

It is a good idea to begin the policy development process by agreeing a value statement, based perhaps on your organisation's values and ethos and your reasons for involving volunteers. By writing this, you will deepen your understanding of why you are involving volunteers in the first place and set an important foundation for the principles for volunteer involvement at the event. Volunteers should add value to the work of paid staff and should not be used to substitute or displace paid staff. If your organisation is profit making the involvement of volunteers may not be appropriate due to minimum wage legislation.

Visit Volunteer Now website for further information on:

- [Volunteers & the Law](#)
- [Volunteer Policy Framework](#)
- [Unblurring the Boundaries? Volunteering and other forms of unpaid work](#)





Volunteer role descriptions

When asking people to commit their time and energy to support your event it is important to give them clear information on what is expected of them and what tasks you're asking them to get involved in. You must also consider what tasks or roles are reasonable to ask people to do on a 'one off' or 'occasional basis'. Roles which require a significant amount of training may not be suitable for this type of volunteering. It is important that volunteers are not asked to carry out a role which would usually be carried out by a paid member of staff.

Volunteers get involved through choice and therefore the role needs to be enjoyable and rewarding. The role description is a way of communicating this and gives an accurate description of the activities and tasks involved.

Think about the language and develop a role description that will encourage inclusion, using active verbs and positive terminology. Avoid words that make people panic – “We URGENTLY, DESPERATELY need volunteers.” That will not entice people to join an organisation. Also take into consideration that not all volunteers will see themselves necessarily as ‘outgoing, enthusiastic, with a can-do attitude’.

Writing a role description is a key element of planning an event. It allows the event manager to picture and visualise the event, and to see how volunteering slots into the overall picture. Endeavour to make volunteering at your event inclusive and encourage and enable diversity across the whole of your volunteer team.

Helping people to volunteer at your event

Consider what barriers there may be to volunteering at your event, for example, access to site or transport to and from event. Can people with disabilities get involved? Is it easy for younger or older volunteers to get involved? Simple creative solutions and support mechanisms such as matching younger/ first time volunteers with experienced volunteers, offering a buddy to volunteers with additional support needs, encouraging and supporting family volunteering, approaching businesses to consider Employer Supported Volunteering, can really go a long way in making your event more accessible to volunteers from various backgrounds and with varied skills and abilities.

Visit Volunteer Now website for further information on:

- [Involving People with Disabilities as Volunteers](#)
- [Employer Supported Volunteering Guide for Employers](#)
- [A Plan for the Recruitment of Volunteers](#)

Tip 3: Getting the best out of your volunteer team

Developing a recruitment plan

Decide how many volunteers you need as this will influence the scale of your recruitment process. It is often appropriate to consider recruiting around 10%-15% more volunteers than you actually need. This is to allow for drop-outs and no-shows at your event, so that you are not left in a position of having too few volunteers. It is more than reasonable to expect a certain level of commitment from your group of volunteers, and to hold them to a standard that you ask for.

Once you know how many volunteers you need, and what role they will be involved in, you will then have to consider how you spread your recruitment message widely or target specific groups of people.

Finding your volunteers

Look at where you are going to advertise and the skills your volunteers will require as you may need a mixture of general and targeted recruitment. For example, you may make extensive use of social media but if you are looking for volunteers with a specific skill set i.e. sailing skills for Tall Ships Festival, then target sailing clubs!

You should be clear if people have to complete a volunteer registration form or

whether an email with an expression of interest is enough.

Is there anyone out there?

First impressions are everything. When you launch your recruitment campaign be clear about how prospective volunteers can get in contact and also clearly identify a contact person within your organisation.

Recruitment and selection

While attracting and selecting volunteers is not the same as staff recruitment, you should still aim to provide a fair and inclusive process. Procedures do not need to be overly formal, but it is still vital to lay down minimum requirements clearly in your policy to help ensure that they are consistently implemented. Less formal language to describe the recruitment process is essential to demonstrate the difference between a volunteer role and a paid employee. For example, talk about a volunteer registration form rather than an application form, an informal chat rather than interview. A volunteer handbook or information sheet about your event and the volunteer role(s) will help potential volunteers identify if the role is suitable, if they meet the requirements and therefore help people de-select themselves.

Example recruitment and selection process for occasional event volunteers



Volunteer Code of Conduct

A written Code of Conduct is an important document to provide to your volunteers. This outlines the boundaries of the role; what behaviour is acceptable and what is not acceptable behaviour whilst volunteering. Volunteers need to read and understand this document, and any issue that you encounter can be referred back to the Code of Conduct.

Safeguarding

Due to the one-off nature of the roles volunteers play at events it is unlikely that your volunteers will be involved in providing care or support to children or adults at risk. However, it may still be relevant to raise awareness of your event's safeguarding policy and inform volunteers how to keep spectators/participants and themselves safe.

*Please note that for some roles an Access NI check may be required. For more information please see link to [Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy Standards on the Volunteer Now website.](#)

Tip 4: Keeping volunteers motivated

Managing and supporting volunteers

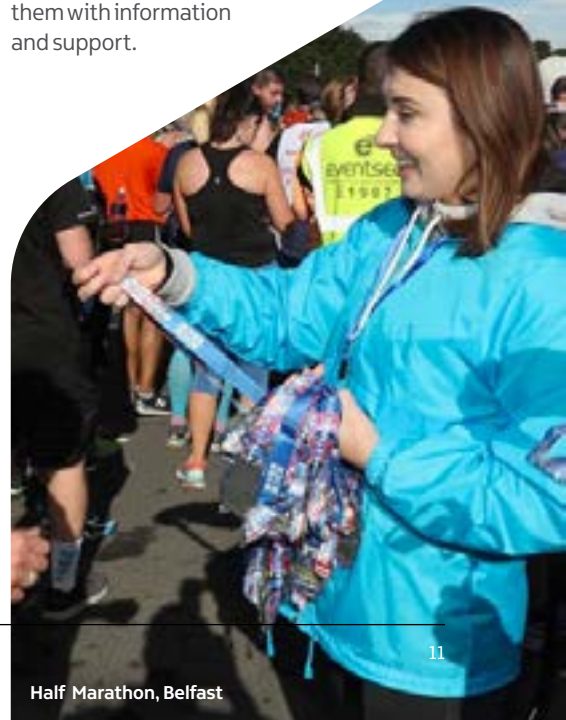
Providing the appropriate support and supervision for volunteers depends on the role and the individual. A pro-active approach is essential both to achieve the organisation's objectives and to ensure that volunteers' interests and motivations are met. An investment in time and resources is crucial to maintain a volunteer team. Regular and open communication is also vital in retaining the volunteers you have recruited.

Getting the best out of your volunteers

The person or group of people involved in managing volunteers during your event should have good people skills and preferably have previous experience of managing and supporting volunteers. Someone who can solve problems and find solutions, be able to deal with and resolve conflict and have good organisational skills. Whilst not essential, it is recommended that your volunteer coordinator has access to specialist volunteer management training, as managing volunteers requires a different set of skills to managing staff.

Put in place a structure so that each volunteer has a named person as their point of contact and to go to for support.

This structure can be a mixture of staff and volunteers. Events where volunteers are spread across multiple sites or across vast physical areas (for example route stewards/marshals at sporting events) benefit from a team leader structure and this can be offered by an experienced volunteer with the right skills set and additional training. A team leader will have responsibility to oversee a number of volunteers throughout the event, providing them with information and support.





Example support management at larger events

Main Operations Centre /
Event Control Room



Event Organiser / PSNI /
Fire Service / Emergency Services /
Volunteer Support Team



Team Leader
(can be staff or a volunteer)



Event Volunteer

Information is power

Informing volunteers of their responsibilities is a key duty of the volunteer manager. It is also important to be mindful of the group's capabilities. An email sent out three days in advance might be fine for most people, but for those not IT savvy, a phone call might be better. Some volunteers might need a print out of the directions that you are providing or a list of frequently asked questions to help them remember what they might be asked. Where possible, customise the solution to support the volunteer.

Other steps in managing and supporting volunteers that you may like to consider:

Induction – an induction checklist for each volunteer role is a helpful tool to ensure that all aspects of the role are covered. This checklist can be ticked off as each volunteer and area are covered.

Training – provide the training to volunteers that they will need for them to carry out the role during the event.

Briefing – on the day of the event to bring all your volunteers up-to-date on what will be happening during the day and clarifying what their role will be.



Contact during the event – keep in contact with your volunteers throughout the event to see how they are getting on. There may be issues need to be resolved, questions answered or they may have other queries. It's also an excellent opportunity to motivate the volunteers during the event and thank them for their hard work.

Regular meal breaks – devise a rota to ensure that volunteers can have regular breaks throughout the day.

Debrief after event – put some time aside after the event to get some initial feedback from volunteers on how they felt the event went.

Feedback – devise a questionnaire that can be sent to volunteers after the event to get some in-depth feedback. This information can then help you plan future volunteer involving events.

Visit Volunteer Now website for further information on:

[- Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard](#)

Continual volunteer development

If you are retaining your volunteers over a sustained period of time, you are clearly doing something well. Have you thought about volunteer progression, and what you might be able to offer to keep a volunteer interested?

Experienced volunteers who show good leadership qualities could be asked to take on more responsibilities. They may want that extra challenge, and appreciate the extra trust placed in them. As always, good communication is key; don't put a volunteer in a position of added responsibility without first checking that they are willing and able.

Try and adapt a role to suit a person's interests. There might also be accredited courses that you might like to offer to a volunteer, who would like to upskill themselves. Always be on the lookout for relevant courses or training opportunities that provide your volunteers with a chance to grow. It lets them know you are thinking about them not in a purely operational manner, and it offers a progression route that can keep people interested over a length of time.

Volunteer Now Enterprise Team can offer you a health check against the IIV standard. It involves a consultation with a quality standards assessor who will benchmark your volunteer programme against the practices in the UK Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard.



Tip 5: Keeping volunteers safe

Health and safety and insurance

As an event organiser you have a duty of care towards your volunteers and you should endeavour to provide a safe and enjoyable experience to those who commit their time and skills to your event.

Health and safety

A health and safety policy is the foundation on which to develop procedures and practices. It also announces the organisation's commitment towards good health and safety standards.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, require employers to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the health and safety risks to employees and non-employees arising from their work activities, and this includes events.

For more information on health and safety visit:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/employers-health-and-safety-responsibilities

Managing risk

When deciding how much information or training to give volunteers, consider the role and the past experiences the volunteer has. It is important to take appropriate steps to reduce the potential for accidents.

Risk assessment is now a common requirement of all health and safety legislation; the emphasis is to prevent accidents, rather than just reacting to incidents and making improvements after the event. It is advised that a risk assessment is carried out for all the volunteer roles before these are advertised and volunteers are recruited, as this may inform your selection. This exercise will help flag up relevant health and safety information that should be passed on to volunteers during the briefing/training.

Training is a vital part of your risk management approach and it's your mechanism to ensure that volunteers are aware of what they are expected to do and how to keep themselves and visitors/participants safe.

Insurance

All groups and organisations that involve volunteers should consider what types of insurance they need to put in place to cover them for that involvement.

When purchasing insurance, a volunteer involving group or organisation should:

- Ensure that the policies explicitly mention volunteers and covers them.
- Check if there are upper and lower age limits for volunteers.
- Ensure that the roles and activities that the volunteers will be doing are covered. You may need to notify your insurer if and when there are new roles that step outside your original agreement.
- Conduct a risk assessment for each of the roles that volunteers will be performing, because this will help your insurer to tailor your policy to suit your needs.

Visit Volunteer Now website for further information on:

- [Volunteers & Insurance](#)
- [Risk Assessment & Volunteers](#)

Tip 6: Resources required for a volunteer programme

The volunteer manager and your event team

A volunteer manager should be an empathic, patient, diplomatic person but equally be assertive, determined and creative. This person may not yet exist in your team but if you're looking for a member of staff or volunteer to fill this role then start by looking for one or two of these qualities and with time and support this person can develop and grow into the role.

It is essential to the success of your volunteer programme, no matter how small it may be, to give careful consideration to the recruitment of the right person for this role and support them in learning the skills needed in this specialist area. It is vitally important that volunteering is recognised and valued by the rest of the organisation so that volunteers' experience is consistent and enjoyable throughout.

Invest time in understanding volunteering, the reasons why people volunteer with your organisation/event, what you can offer volunteers that is unique to your event and organisation, don't leave it just to one person to do a good job.

Volunteers are not a free resource

Recruiting volunteers takes time and effort. This may mean investing in resources such as:

- Staff/volunteer time to recruit, select and manage volunteers
- Recruitment and selection costs associated to staff time, hosting selection interview days, administration costs, Access NI costs
- IT software/systems to help manage volunteer rotas and communications
- Clothing such as uniform or protective/ specialist equipment for volunteers
- ID badge and lanyard
- Volunteer handbook or information pack
- Training
- Reimbursement of expenses
- Food and refreshments
- Recognition

Expenses

Whilst unpaid, volunteering should not leave volunteers out of pocket, otherwise it can be difficult to involve a diverse range of people. It is good practice to reimburse a volunteer for all the out of pocket expenses they incur, where possible.

Whilst this should be a straightforward matter, there is good practice guidance which can help. Develop a Policy on Volunteer Expenses which explains what can be reimbursed. Ask volunteers to complete an expense claim form and provide receipts against expenditure. The most important thing is to be open and honest with your volunteers from the start. Be clear about what expenses will and won't be reimbursed. Be clear about limits on the amount that can be claimed for expenses such as meals. They will then be able to make an informed decision about their volunteering.

Which expenses should be reimbursed?

In general, any reasonable expense incurred as part of the volunteering activity should be reimbursed. This includes but is not limited to:

- Travel, including to and from the place of volunteering
- Parking costs
- Meals and refreshments
- Equipment such as protective clothing or a uniform

What is reasonable?

Some expenses will be necessary and have a set cost, such as protective clothing or a uniform. It may be worth considering buying these items centrally and distributing them to volunteers if possible.

For expenses such as meals and refreshments, it may be useful to set a limit, provide a voucher or directly provide a meal.



The role of technology

If your event involves large numbers of volunteers or you involve volunteers across a multitude of sites and for various events across the year, make sure technology is working for you. The right software and IT systems will enable your operations to run smoothly and organise volunteer shifts and communicate with volunteers more easily.

There are a few volunteer software programmes in the market that have been specifically designed to help organisations manage volunteers. Consider their value for money, the impact it will have on managing volunteers more effectively in your work load and the impact it will have on your event/organisation. At Volunteer Now we use software which proved very useful when recruiting 5000 people for the World Police and Fire Games back in 2013 and for managing communications and organising shifts with over 300 volunteers involved in various events throughout 2018.

For more details on this database visit www.betterimpact.com

Collaborating with other organisations

With any event, collaboration with other organisations is key. Approach other volunteer schemes in your area, similar event organisers or even companies and business with similar values as you. Be creative and open to exploring the possibilities and you'll soon realise that there are lots of resources, expertise, skills, equipment, contacts and marketing campaigns, that you could be sharing and benefiting from.

Why not ask for a business to sponsor your volunteer uniform or provide the food needed for volunteers? Ask for corporate sponsorship for your volunteer programme including recognition for volunteers. You could also ask an employer to get involved in your event through Employer Supported Volunteering.

Visit Volunteer Now website for further information on:

- [Volunteers & Expenses](#)
- [Sample Job/Role Description for a Volunteer Manager](#)



Tip 7: Keeping in touch

Communicating – how much is too much?

If your volunteers are involved all year round at a number of events, you might want to consider a monthly / fortnightly newsletter. It can be a good routine to keep volunteers informed of up and coming events. If you don't have the capacity to produce a newsletter just for your volunteers you could share your regular members newsletter and add a "Volunteers News" section. You may want to consider using social media for keeping in touch through a private group where you share information with volunteers and can answer questions.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Remember the safe storage of contact details for volunteers is your responsibility and you must be aware of your obligations under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Many of the GDPR's main concepts and principles are the same as those contained under Data Protection Act however there are new elements and significant enhancements.

For more information read:

- <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/freedom-information-and-data-protection>
- <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>



Tip 8: Time to say thank you

Recognising your volunteers

Time and time again, after speaking with volunteers, receiving feedback from online surveys and emails, volunteers consistently remark that the reason they keep volunteering with a certain organisation or event is because they feel valued; they understand the impact of their role and they feel recognised for their efforts. It may be a simple thank you, or a text or an e-mail after an event, but if it is done with sincerity and with a personal touch, it can make all the difference in the world. In this way, rewarding and recognising your volunteers is an absolute must in terms of good management practices; it is also a key tool in your ability to retain volunteers. You will not need to recruit as many people if well motivated and appreciated volunteers keep coming back.

Types of recognition

Recognition takes many forms. Very often it can take the form of an event, such as a coffee morning, a lunch or an informal get-together, or even just a thank you letter from the organisation. Here are some ideas for how you can recognise your volunteers:

1. Volunteers' Week

Volunteers' Week is an annual celebration of the fantastic contribution millions of volunteers make across the UK. It takes place from 1st-7th June every year. Consider holding an event that highlights your volunteers' efforts during this week and join in with the national campaign. There are ready made resources that you can use and request at the following links:

- <https://volunteersweek.org/>
- <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/faq/how-can-i-recognise-my-volunteers/>

2. Council volunteer award ceremonies

Councils across Northern Ireland often recognise and value volunteering in their communities in a range of ways from volunteer thank you events held by the Mayor/Chairperson to annual volunteer award ceremonies. Contact your local council office to find out more and how you can recognise your volunteers at some of these events and initiatives.

3. Millennium Volunteer Programme

The Millennium Volunteer (MV) programme is open to volunteers aged 14-25 who want to have their commitment, skills and experience recognised. MV has been designed to be as simple as possible and to work around a young person's studies, job or hobbies. The programme is supported and endorsed by the Department for Education. Young people achieve certificates when they complete 50, 100 and 200 hours of volunteering.

- <https://www.volunteernow.co.uk/volunteering/youth-volunteering/>

4. International Volunteer Day

To catch on to a more global theme, International Volunteer Day (IVD) mandated by the UN General Assembly, is held each year on 5th December. It is viewed as a unique chance for volunteers and organisations to celebrate their efforts, to share their values, and to promote their work among their communities.

- <https://www.unv.org/internationalvolunteerdays2018>



Tip 9: Learning from other organisations

Case Study - Ulster Aviation Society

Equality of Opportunity

Volunteering at the Ulster Aviation Society's heritage collection of aircraft and artefacts can be a very rewarding experience and a way to enhance an interest in aviation, as well as an opportunity to develop skills or knowledge, and meet people with similar interests. It has also proved particularly beneficial in helping individuals with mental or physical health issues.

With a wide range of backgrounds and capabilities, volunteers can be involved in anything from aircraft restoration and maintenance to creating displays, conducting guided tours, helping out at air shows or other events, or with administration.

From a membership of almost 500 we have about 50 active volunteers ranging in age from 16 to 93. Some volunteer more than 25 hours per week over 4 days, while others attend for a few hours on a particular day. Volunteers choose how they will donate their time and can call on the wealth of experience that exists within the current volunteering team, while offering their own talents to the pool of knowledge.

Prospective volunteers are asked to sign a number of important policy documents including health and safety before they are permitted to volunteer, while those under 18 are interviewed with a parent or guardian present who will also sign the policy registers. Volunteers will be offered training in areas such as first aid and mandatory training sessions including fire risks and emergency evacuation.

Anyone interested in volunteering can call at the hangar when open but we reserve the first Saturday in every month from 12 noon - 5.00pm especially to talk to those who may be interested.

By **Alan Chowney, Ulster Aviation Society**
Management Committee
www.ulsteraviationsociety.org



Case study: Northern Ireland Open

Volunteer-led support for volunteers

I am a member of Galgorm Castle Golf Club and first started volunteering with the Europro and then the European Challenge Tour competitions seven years ago. These events have become the Northern Ireland Open and attract players from all around the world. A few years down the line I was asked to become the Volunteer Manager – a role about which I knew very little and so naively said yes. Maybe because I was a school teacher, the committee thought I would be good with people and have good organisational skills. I do love the role, but it is far more complex than I initially had imagined. I do my best to help people get involved at our event, reply to all queries within a matter of hours and get to know and understand the volunteers' own stories and motivations for volunteering. In this way I can get the best out of each individual and collectively build a great team.

The first year we ran the NI Open we provided a jacket and lunch to all volunteers but that was about it. Since then, each year, we try to improve the volunteering environment and we are getting better at recognising the work and how pivotal to

the success of our event the volunteers are. I also make a point that club members and other organisers stop to chat with volunteers and thank them for their support. When someone commits to a minimum of two days volunteering at our event, they get a branded European Challenge Tour uniform, lunch, tea and coffee throughout the day, role-specific training, a complimentary round of golf on the course and free drinks at the conclusion of the tournament. This year we are hosting our first volunteer "thank you" day. There will be a competition for golfers and a draw for those who do not play. We will have a few exciting prizes to let them know how much we appreciate and value the support they give to our event.

Seven years ago, we started with a team of 70 volunteers doing marshalling and scoring roles and this has now grown to 120 men and women. We have a lot of return volunteers and each year they also bring along new people which really helps to keep the team diverse and dynamic. Our volunteers' ages range from 16 to 76 and you don't have to be a golfer or know much about golf to volunteer with us as you will quickly learn all you need. If I can think of a reason why our volunteer programme has been so successful it is almost certainly the fact that, from the very beginning, we make it clear to volunteers that they play a key role in making this event happen. I believe that gives them ownership of the event and a sense of pride. This year organisers of the European Challenge Tour and the Chief Referee commented on how happy and friendly our volunteers were. A job well done by all!

By Jackie Neill – NI Open
Volunteer Manager
www.niopen.golf

Case study: North West 200

Involving young volunteers

Our volunteer team is diverse and there's a wide range of skills set but we have identified that we don't seem to attract as many younger volunteers as we would like. Last year I decided to target a couple of groups specifically to try and recruit younger volunteers and made contact with the Ulster University. Originally, I was looking to recruit volunteers to assist with Meet & Greet and Hospitality at the VIP Marquee so got in touch with the International Travel and Tourism Management course tutor. He invited our team to come and do a presentation to their class about the event and how to volunteer to their class of students. It soon became apparent that not only would they be happy to volunteer in Hospitality and Meet & Greet roles, but they had their own ideas of how they could help our event and meet their goals around their course work and portfolio.

The students suggested they could develop and conduct a survey to gather information from visitors about their reasons for visiting the area, where they came from, how did they travel over to the event and how many nights they were staying for in the area, where they ate, etc. This enabled us to collect valuable data about the trends of our visitors and has informed the planning of our future events.

Not only has this benefited our event but also other partners who got involved such as the Causeway Coast and Glens Council and Tourism Northern Ireland.

Ten volunteers between 18 and 21 got involved in this piece of work and gathered data from just under 300 visitors over 4 days and have each volunteered an average of 20 hours during the event. Half of them have returned and are volunteering again with us. Slowly but surely, we have seen an increase in participation from younger volunteers and we will keep actively targeting students and youth groups to get involved in various other roles, such as flag marshals and course set up.

What this exercise has shown us is that with a bit of time and thought put into developing a target recruitment plan you can achieve more than you originally set out to and find new volunteer roles that can enhance your event.

By Cathal Cunning – North West 200
Volunteer Manager
www.northwest200.org



Tip 10: Have a checklist

Can you answer the questions below?

- Why do you want to involve volunteers at your event?
 - What do you want volunteers to do?
 - What skills/qualities do you want volunteers to have?
 - How will you ensure that volunteers are safe in their role(s)?
 - How will you find your volunteers?
 - How will you “sell” your volunteer role?
 - How will you select which volunteers you want?
 - How will you manage volunteers after they have been selected?
 - How will you thank your volunteers?
 - How will you retain your volunteers?
- Do's**
- Take time to choose your volunteer manager – someone who is a good communicator, a people person, empathetic and organised.
 - Make sure everybody else across your organisation understands volunteering and engages with volunteers in a positive way.
 - Give good preparation to phone/face to face interviews: plan interview forms, follow up procedures, and have good quality admin records. Plan an interview phone schedule that will fit the needs of the volunteers, do all you can to get volunteers 'over the line'.
 - Give thought as to what the next step for these volunteers will be – will the next time these volunteers hear from you be in three months?
 - Keep communicating. A regular stream of small pieces of information is better.
 - Collaborate with other event organisers and invest in partnerships that will add value to your event and help you tap into existing volunteer groups.
 - Plan the resources you need before starting your recruitment process ie staff/ volunteers to support new volunteers, financial, risk management, equipment, support with out of pocket expenses.
 - Recruit in a timely fashion - not too early that your volunteers will have forgotten about you before the event begins, or so late that they can't say yes.
 - In your volunteer advertisement highlight what people get from volunteering at your event and what's in it for them. Remember you are selling an opportunity that should enhance their lives and stand against a plethora of other exciting volunteering opportunities on offer.



Resources

These resources are available to download from the publication section of Volunteer Now's website.

- Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities Planning Document
- Event Site Planning Document
- Volunteer Programme Action Plan Sample (WPFG 2013)
- Volunteer Role Descriptions Sample (Tall Ships 2015)
- Volunteer Handbook Sample (Gran Fondo 2016)
- Risk Assessment Sample (Irish Open 2017)
- Volunteer Expenses Form Sample
- Sample Questions for Volunteer Interview
- Sample Code of Conduct
- Millennium Volunteer Certificate Sample

Volunteer Now and Tourism Northern Ireland would like to acknowledge the work of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in England for developing the "UK Volunteering Toolkit for Games inspired local schemes in 2012". This guidance was referred to when developing this toolkit.

Useful Links

www.volunteernow.co.uk

www.tourismni.com

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