

## Volunteering in Coventry 2022

**Report from write-ups at the structured table discussions at the Voluntary Action Coventry Volunteering Awards 8 Nov 2022.**

**Attendees included: volunteers, volunteer co-ordinators, volunteer involving organisations, Voluntary Action Coventry staff and board members.**

### **Questions for consideration:**

- 1) How has volunteering changed in recent years, what issues are Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIO's) facing around recruiting/retaining volunteers?
- 2) What does the future of volunteering look like? How can organisations adapt roles to attract more volunteers? What can we do to raise the profile of volunteering?

## Analysis of market influences



<p>Political landscape has changed.</p> <p><b>Bigger fish</b> Wish there was less red tape re-funding. Excessive amount of hours put into funding applications for little pay off.</p> <p>We need to look at self-funding or explore other avenues. Bigger fish get all the funding opportunities. Is there a bigger pool of vcse now?</p>	<p><b>The Squeeze on charities</b> Cost of living rise squeeze on facilities, funding, running costs for charities and CIC's. People get second jobs instead of volunteering. If they have more income – they have no time to volunteer. Trustee recruitment needs changing to fit in with squeeze on time. Myth busting– a couple of hours of volunteer time can make a difference, Strike while the iron is hot – leaving volunteers waiting to start puts them off.</p>	<p><b>Don't forget the buzz</b> Volunteering can be addictive! Helping people makes you feel good. "Once I got the volunteering 'buzz' I was hooked". Gather volunteer testimonials. <b>Changing attitudes</b> Lost community values. Changing attitudes "why should we work for free?" You tend to see the same people volunteering in many places- if they didn't do it who would? Many volunteers don't identify as volunteers. Informal community care and acts for others. How to encourage them to come forward to volunteer formally?</p>	<p><b>Social Media</b> It's now absolutely vital and you need someone. Digital champions. Social media has made information more accessible and easier, but on the flip side this means it can be harder for organisations and volunteers have an infinite choice. Charities and CIC's need Social media – training people how to get the most from it.</p>	<p><b>Covid</b> Actually provided more volunteers. It's made people understand volunteering more and why people do it. People want to get more involved in their community Gave people the chance to connect / talk / get out.</p> <p>Telephone befriending Really took off over Covid and increased number of volunteers and people wanting to help</p> <p>The pandemic increased people's digital skills</p>	<p>DBS takes ages! Too many hoops to jump through</p> <p>Assuming everyone can be a fundraiser, data protection officer, safeguarding officer.</p> <p>Increased governance and legal requirements.</p>
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POLITICS	ECONOMY	SOCIETY	TECHNOLOGY	ENVIRONMENT	LAW
<p>Volunteering has changed due to the focus on 'value for money' in funding – competition culture. Organisational structures and reduced collaboration due to pressure. Emphasis should be placed on community, sharing resources Talking to people at events making as many connections as possible.</p> <p><b>Policy changes</b> Jobseekers were pushed into volunteering for fear of sanctions – doesn't happen so much now. Both volunteers and service users have benefits issues, childcare, transport, food, status. More people needing more help means we need more volunteers. Then need for advice services.</p>	<p><b>Free labour?</b> We are becoming over reliant on volunteers – temptation to push more on to them when organisations are short staffed - Free labour? Ethics We need to be far more flexible! Accepting that vols may not do as well or same as you but learning to see this not as a negative.</p> <p><b>Quick turnover caused by economics</b> Cost of living standards drop. Money to participate is limited. Young people want paying. Volunteering has had to change from passion to passion and practicality. Volunteers who do so for 'cv reasons often short term. Quick turnover.</p>	<p>Roles could be shaped more around volunteers - what can they do? Make vols aware of skills they have Make use of transferable skills Benefits, enjoyment, new friends, work prospects, satisfaction. An exciting rise in the idea of Peer support / mentoring – lived experience roles.</p> <p><b>Social barriers</b> Translation costs Language barriers Education for different communities / cultural awareness</p> <p><b>Motivation</b> People's motivation to volunteer varies and questions around whether this impacts their motivation and longevity</p> <p><b>Younger people</b> Volunteering needs to be promoted more – in schools, colleges, universities Tapping into younger people can happen through parents but can we achieve it generally? and how?</p>	<p><b>Skills gaps</b> Different marketing strategies needed for different audiences - time consuming</p> <p><b>Online recruitment challenges</b> How do you get across the essence of a role with a dry description? Use IT to profile orgs more.</p> <p>Need to be transparent about what roles entail – the commitment to ensure retention. Finding volunteers and matching people – job matching and finding the right person and skills</p> <p>Better comms between vol orgs more joined up to signpost vols between orgs where skills are needed. VAC needs to coordinate the volunteer bank more / better.</p>	<p>Covid - Ppl scared to come back. Adapting to health and safety surrounding volunteers was a challenge over Covid</p> <p>Student volunteering over covid majorly declined</p> <p>work from home? More resources to support remote volunteering More flexible – evenings?</p> <p>Remember what we learnt from the pandemic 'giving culture' in it together</p> <p>Covid changed the way orgs work – isolation, lack of resources, WFH rather than in office</p> <p><i>Mental Health</i> Set up facebook groups, telephone calls, social media</p> <p>Volunteering can be seasonal – Christmas, Dec, Jan</p>	

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<p><b><u>Building bigger picture awareness</u></b> Use of the 'third sector; creates a strong foundation for work equal to private and public sector - helps people to understand things are not free.</p> <p>Recruit celebrities / politicians to volunteer to encourage young people.</p>	<p>They see volunteering as a way of improving themselves and not supporting the charity. Volunteers have their reasons for volunteering and once those needs have been met they often move on unless 100% invested in the cause. Balance of helping people and the needs of the charity. A disparity between what orgs need from vols and what vols want to do. How do charities support people who are looking for short term placements? People move around a lot so there is the need for a national approach to providing incentives for volunteers/</p>	<p>Many young people struggle to find time, we need to show them how to fit it in Raise profile of volunteering in schools Young volunteers – tap into them and motivate them early on More young people involvement from schools Duke of Edinburgh type award for volunteering</p>	<p><b><u>Digital divide</u></b> Use of training facilities – learning to use IT – digital divide can be a big barrier for volunteers. We need to simplify the application process.</p> <p>Use of zoom – remote meetings.</p> <p>Get the commonwealth games vol database</p>		

## WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM...



**1**

There was an enormous Economic investment in City of Culture.

**2**

On a positive – this extended the variety of volunteering roles and inspiration.

**3**

But why did Culture Coventry get so many volunteers when other places lacked volunteers?

**4**

They offered good practice - money to support training, short term placements, they played on city pride, it was novel, people felt identity in the uniform – incentivising e.g. gold badges.

**5**

Making volunteers feel part of the wider team. Inclusive. Get feedback from volunteers and get them involved in the decision making.

## OPPORTUNITY?:



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**RETAIN  
VOLUNTEERS:**



**1**

Free dbs checks

**2**

Free parking? Bus / Taxi

**3**

Food

**4**

Vouchers  
Go CV card

**5**

Flowers, thank you cards



