

**Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills,
Executive Director for Environment & Economy**

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	24 July 2018
Subject:	Volunteering in Lincolnshire

Summary:

This report provides an update on volunteering for Lincolnshire County Council and supporting volunteers across Lincolnshire. The report includes information on the opportunities for volunteering and the value and impact of volunteering and how their invaluable contributions will have been recognised during Volunteers' Week.

Actions Required:

Members are invited to consider and comment on the report and highlight any recommendations for further actions for consideration.

1. Background

What is Volunteering?

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) define volunteering as any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Everyone has the right to volunteer and volunteering can have significant benefits for individuals (source: <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/policy-and-research/volunteering-policy>).

People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons. For some it offers the chance to give something back to the community or make a difference to the people around them. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge.

Why is Volunteering important?

The most recent national information on volunteering is from 2015 found on the NCVO website - <https://data.ncvo.org.uk/a/almanac17/volunteering-overview/> .

This information highlights

- An estimated 14.2 million people formally volunteered at least once a month in 2015/16.
- Regular volunteers give on average 11.6 hours per month.
- The value of formal volunteering was estimated to be £22.6bn.
- NCVO distinguish between *formal* and *informal*, and *regular* and *irregular* volunteering and define them as:
 - Formal volunteering means giving unpaid help through a group, club or organisation.
 - Informal means giving unpaid help to individual people who are not relatives, and not through a group, club or organisation.
 - Regular volunteering as where people volunteer at least once a month over the course of a given year.
 - Irregular volunteering as where people have volunteered at least once over the course of a year.

The value of volunteering has been found to be:

For Volunteers:

- Tangible benefits accrued such as training courses attended; social events; certificates etc.
- Personal development and skills enhancement (confidence; self-esteem etc.); vocational skills; IT; public speaking; team work; employability
- Increased trust; higher rates of participation in public affairs etc.
- Increased social integration; helps counteract the effects of stress, anger, and anxiety

For Organisations:

- Identifiable outputs (number of cultural events supported; pathways cleared; guided tours; meals delivered; trees planted; family centres supported etc.)
- Services more reflective of cultural diversity within community
- Volunteers add value to what is done by paid staff by enhancing the quantity and quality of services provided

Volunteering within Lincolnshire County Council

The Council's vision is to engage with the community, to promote the opportunities for volunteering, to improve our services and to develop capacity within the third sector by providing opportunities for volunteers to participate in activities through the council (*Welcome to Lincolnshire County, A guide for new volunteers, November 2016*). LCC currently hosts around 1000 volunteers over 30 sites, without these volunteers many sites would not be able to deliver the quality of service required. They contribute a tremendous amount of skill, knowledge, ingenuity, commitment and drive to many services and projects.

Opportunities to volunteer are rich and diverse as can be seen through the various activities across the Council and include:

- **Archaeological and Historical Projects (Environment & Environment)** archaeological investigation and excavation, war memorial survey and research and traditional crafts workshops
- **Countryside Access (Environment & Economy)** checking local footpaths/bridleways or a promoted route to ensure they are open and easy to use. Replacing damaged way markers to ensure routes are easy to follow; removing vegetation overhanging gates, bridges and stiles
- **Lincolnshire Chalk Streams Project (Community and Education)** stream and bank maintenance – keeping on top of unwanted weeds on banks and in stream to help improve habitat and keep our chalk streams flowing
- **Heritage (Environment & Economy)** a variety of opportunities located at heritage sites within Lincoln, Gainsborough or Coningsby, including; Visitor Experience volunteers welcome visitors and point them in the right direction and Hospitality and Event volunteers to help set up and clear away before and after an event
- **Lincolnshire Youth Offending Service** Volunteer Drivers and Community Panel Members (CPMs)
- **Children's Services** running youth clubs, providing activities to the young people and engaging them in positive activities, helping produce marketing materials and promotion and an extra pair of hands when on trips and excursions

Volunteers are recruited and supervised on a day to day basis by LCC staff such as Volunteer Co-ordinators, Site Co-ordinators and Project Officers.

Investing in Volunteers quality standard

The Investing in Volunteers (IiV) accreditation is designed to improve the experience of volunteers and those who work with volunteers, enabling people to volunteer in a positive and supportive environment with proper management systems in place. In January 2016 Lincolnshire County Council achieved the IiV quality standard (for a period of three years), in recognition of its excellent practice in volunteer management. The accreditation was achieved without conditions, which, for such a large organisation with diverse service areas, is a significant achievement; in fact, only one other top tier authority in England (Warwickshire) holds the standard.

Recognising Volunteers

LCC recognises the value of volunteers' contributions and that volunteers bring a range of expertise to particular tasks or projects. At service level, volunteers are celebrated and recognised for their contribution in varying ways; examples include reward schemes, coffee & cake mornings, T shirts and free entry to events. On a corporate level, LCC recently recognised as part of Volunteer Week the effort and contributions that LCC volunteers make including a letter of thanks from the Leader to all volunteers, a news release from Councillor Mrs Woolley and a case study of a volunteers journey will be included within the next issue of the County News.

Corporate Volunteer Engagement Policy

The responsibility for driving forward the Council's strategic approach towards volunteering falls to the Community Engagement Team (CET) within the Economy and Environment Directorate. The CET facilitates the Volunteer Development & Support Group (VDSG) which involves officers who manage volunteers in the review, development and promotion of corporately consistent processes and procedures relating to volunteer recruitment, induction, training and volunteer management.

The VDSG also has responsibility for Volunteer Engagement policy and supporting documents ensure robust recruitment and management of volunteers. There are two main documents and a training package:

Volunteer Welcome Book a guide designed to give the volunteer an insight into the way the Council works and how this could affect the volunteer; to support the person in carrying out their activities. The guide provides information for the volunteer including; expenses, training and supervision.

Supervisor's Handbook provides comprehensive advice and information on the processes involved in the recruitment, selection and management of volunteers. The handbook is backed up by a Paperwork Pack which provides templates of all the documentation required by staff managing volunteers.

Volunteer training package provides all volunteers with four core training topics have been developed specifically for volunteers covering Information Governance, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity and Health and Safety.

Emergency Planning

Lincolnshire County Council, through the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Service, takes the lead responder role in the Co-ordination of the Voluntary Sector in the response and recovery to civil emergencies on behalf of the Lincolnshire Resilience Forum. A memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets out the agreement between Lincolnshire County Council and the Voluntary Sector in responding to and recovering from emergencies in Lincolnshire and is activated when an emergency is declared. Voluntary Sector organisations that have signed up to the MOU include The British Red Cross; Lincolnshire 4x4 Responses; Lincolnshire Community & Voluntary Service (LCVS) and Voluntary Centre Services (VCS);

For emergency response and recovery situations, the Voluntary sector will be co-ordinated by the Community and Volunteer Co-ordination Cell, which is currently chaired by members of the Community Engagement team. At such times, the Spontaneous Volunteers Policy will ensure effective and robust co-ordination of volunteers.

Spontaneous volunteers are individuals who are unaffiliated with existing official response organisations, yet, without extensive pre-planning, are motivated to

provide unpaid support to the response and/or recovery to a disaster (LCC Co-ordination of Spontaneous Volunteers Policy and Procedures)

Supporting Volunteers across Lincolnshire

There is currently in place a two year grant funding agreement (GFA) to a value of £220,000 per year, to support volunteering activity across Lincolnshire. Managed by Voluntary Centre Services (VCS); the GFA is due to expire 31 March 2019. The single GFA to VCS enables joint working with Lincolnshire Community & Voluntary Services (LCVS) to ensure consistent county wide coverage.

The aim of the service is to support volunteering; including targeted support to volunteers, and those who want to volunteer, and support for small to medium voluntary & community organisations that will, and do, host volunteers.

The service is funded to deliver:

- provision of support targeted towards people who may be less able to access volunteer opportunities themselves (1324)
- provision of mentoring for people during their volunteering experience to support retention (included in the figure above)
- provision of on-line training packages, support tools & templates for volunteers and for small to medium voluntary & community organisations (105)
- provision of support for small to medium voluntary & community organisations (894)
- development of Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) in Lincolnshire (encouraging organisations to release staff to volunteer, normally a one off group activity) (28 employers & 82 employees)
- Development of micro-volunteering to increase the range of opportunities available (482).

The total number of the voluntary and community groups supported was 890 and over 1900 people were supported to access volunteer opportunities. This number is reported in the Councils Business plan.

Examples of the different types of external volunteering opportunities around the county managed through the VCS and LCVS are included as appendix A.

2. Conclusion

Volunteers make a difference in a whole range of settings and organisations from small volunteer led community groups and charities, larger national and international charities and the NHS and other public sector organisations such as LCC.

Volunteers can add great value to organisations to help to achieve aims and strategic objectives.

Involving volunteers can help to:

- Engage a more diverse range of skills, experience and knowledge.

- Raise awareness about the organisation, its profile and what they do.
- Build relationships and support within Lincolnshire communities.
- Provide opportunities for social inclusion, skills development and potential routes to employment.
- Inform the development and delivery of activities, projects or services by bringing in new opinions, ideas or approaches.
- Support service or projects in a more effective and efficient way which can help to save money and resources.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

No

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

4. Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Examples of the different types of external volunteering opportunities around the county managed through the VCS and LCVS

5. Background Papers

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
LCC Volunteer Engagement Policy	https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/community-and-living/volunteering/volunteer-policy/

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