

Encouraging volunteering in the districts

PRELIMINARY CONSULTATION AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

Summary of consultation and research activities undertaken to develop an understanding of how volunteering could be supported and encouraged in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse

March 2017

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SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of consultation and research activities undertaken to develop an understanding of how volunteering could be supported and encouraged in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse.

The focus of these activities was twofold. We wanted to find out about people's existing experiences of volunteering to understand why people volunteer, what they do, how often and what environmental factors influence this activity. We also wanted to hear from groups and organisations who work with volunteers to find out how volunteering is already being supported in the districts and get their views on how this could be improved in the future.

Activities comprised a review of existing evidence, a public survey and workshops with stakeholders from community and voluntary organisations operating in the districts. We undertook this work between October and December 2016.

In total, we engaged 304 members of the public, 11 volunteering infrastructure bodies and 16 local charities, groups and organisations who rely on the generous contributions of volunteers.

Our research and consultation has led us to the following preliminary conclusions about volunteering in the districts and how we might encourage this activity more in the future:

- In 2015, 29 per cent of residents in South Oxfordshire said they had undertaken unpaid voluntary work. In the Vale, only 19 per cent of residents had done this.
- Existing research and literature on volunteering suggests that people volunteer at all ages. Volunteering is also more prevalent in rural areas. Studies show that volunteering is a highly personal activity where an individual's participation can vary over time and it is deeply connected to life circumstances, personal interests, as well as exposure to environmental factors such as an awareness of the volunteering opportunities that exist.
- There are many diverse examples of volunteering in the districts, however volunteering for community benefit is the most common type of activity.
- The most common reasons given for volunteering in South and Vale are giving something back to a community or group and a desire to help those less fortunate. There are also personal benefits, for example making new friends and gaining new skills.
- Most people identified their volunteering through word of mouth or responding to a personal invite.
- We found out that not having enough time, either due to having work or family commitments, deters many people from volunteering, or volunteering more of their time.
- Many volunteers and community and voluntary groups share a view that more could be done to broker volunteering opportunities across the districts and this could be achieved by setting up a volunteering website or local showcasing

events. There was also support for the promotion of workplace volunteering schemes

- Community and voluntary groups would like more support to help them recruit, train and manage volunteers more effectively.

This information has been shared with council officers, councillors and the groups and organisations who contributed to our study.

South Oxfordshire District Council committed a budget of around £100,000 for the 2017/18 financial year to support a new programme of activity in South Oxfordshire which will draw on this evidence and help more people to volunteer in the future. We expect this work to begin in the spring of 2017 and will continue for the life of the current Corporate Plan to 2020 and beyond. Information and updates will be published on the councils' volunteering pages on our website <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/>.

BACKGROUND

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are committed to supporting and encouraging volunteering in the districts. We think that volunteering can derive many benefits for local groups and charities, volunteers themselves and the wider community.

In the autumn of 2016 we undertook some preliminary consultation and research to find out how the councils could develop volunteering opportunities in the districts. We wanted to generate evidence which could feed into the development of a volunteering strategy which would set out projects for achieving this over the next four years.

Specifically, we set out to understand:

- people's experiences of volunteering in the districts; why they volunteer, what they do, how often and the environmental factors which influence this activity
- what is already being done to support volunteering in the districts and what more could be done

In conducting this research we tried to speak to as many people and organisations as possible who have experience of volunteering locally. We were especially interested in the views of community and voluntary groups who already work with volunteers to find out how the councils might be able to support them more in the future.

This report summarises what we learnt.

METHODOLOGY

We undertook several research and consultation activities to develop our understanding of volunteering in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. In doing so, we wanted to open up different perspectives on the topic by looking at what is already known about volunteering, hearing from volunteers themselves and speaking to voluntary and community groups who work with volunteers.

Background reading and review of existing evidence

To make the most of existing information about volunteering, we looked at national and local datasets to establish how much people already volunteer, reviewed existing literature on the topic and revisited notes of previous conversations with community and voluntary groups about the role of volunteering locally.

Public survey

To hear the views of people who already volunteer, we conducted a public survey. The survey asked people about their experiences of volunteering and what more they thought could be done to encourage and support this activity locally. *Appendix A* shows the questions we asked.

The survey was published on 24 October 2016 and closed on 21 November 2016. It was publicised on the council's website and featured on the councils social media feeds. We also asked OCVA and Community First Oxfordshire to circulate the survey to groups working with volunteers and wrote to people on the councils' consultation mailing lists¹.

Workshop with community and voluntary groups

To improve our understanding of the views and experiences of local community and voluntary groups who work directly with, and depend on the efforts of volunteers we held a half day workshop on 1 November 2016. Invites were sent to approximately 160 local groups known to us.

The workshop was facilitated by consultant Grant Hayward of Collaborent Ltd. It engaged participants in a discussion about the challenges and barriers they face when working with volunteers and the opportunities that exist for encouraging and supporting more of this activity in the future. The workshop included a presentation from the Leader of the Council on the vision for the councils to support volunteering, group discussion and networking.

Workshop with infrastructure organisations

The last activity we undertook was a workshop with infrastructure organisations. These are organisations who support community and voluntary groups in the districts, and who themselves play a role in supporting volunteering through these groups. 25 infrastructure organisations were invited to the workshop held 30 November 2016.

¹ <http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/consultationregister>; <http://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/consultationregister>

The workshop was again facilitated by consultant Grant Hayward of Collaborent Ltd. We spoke to participants about the challenges and barriers to volunteering we had identified through previous consultation and research and their views and ideas on how this activity could be supported across the districts.

EXISTING EVIDENCE

We found there was a significant body of research which provides insight into how and why people participate in volunteering activities.

National data

The Community Life Survey 2014 to 2015² provides the most recent figures. According to this survey, 27 per cent of people over the age of 16 volunteered formally at least once a month in 2014/15. The numbers of people volunteering in this capacity has reportedly remained stable since 2001.

There appears to be a difference between volunteering in urban and rural areas nationally. The number of people from rural areas who said they had volunteered at least once a month (37 per cent) was higher than that of urban residents (25 per cent).

Interestingly, survey data suggests that younger people, between the ages of 16 to 25 are the most active volunteers. 35 per cent of people in this age group volunteered informally in the same period. This is a higher rate of volunteering than for all other age categories.

The survey also provides some interesting data on employer supported volunteering. In 2014/15, only 2.7 per cent of people said they volunteered with the support of their employer.

Local data

The councils' biennial residents' surveys³ provide a statistical measure for volunteering rates in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. However because they used different question wording to that of the Community Life Survey, data is only roughly comparable⁴.

The last surveys, undertaken at the end of 2015, show that 29 per cent of people over the age of 16 had undertaken unpaid voluntary work in South Oxfordshire over the past 12 months. In the Vale of White Horse, the figure was markedly lower, with only 19 per cent saying they had done this (*Figure 1*).

In South Oxfordshire, younger adults between the ages of 25-34 volunteered less than all other age groups (18 per cent). In the Vale, residents aged 45 to 54 years were most likely to have volunteered (26 per cent), while residents aged 55 to 59 years were the least likely (11 per cent).

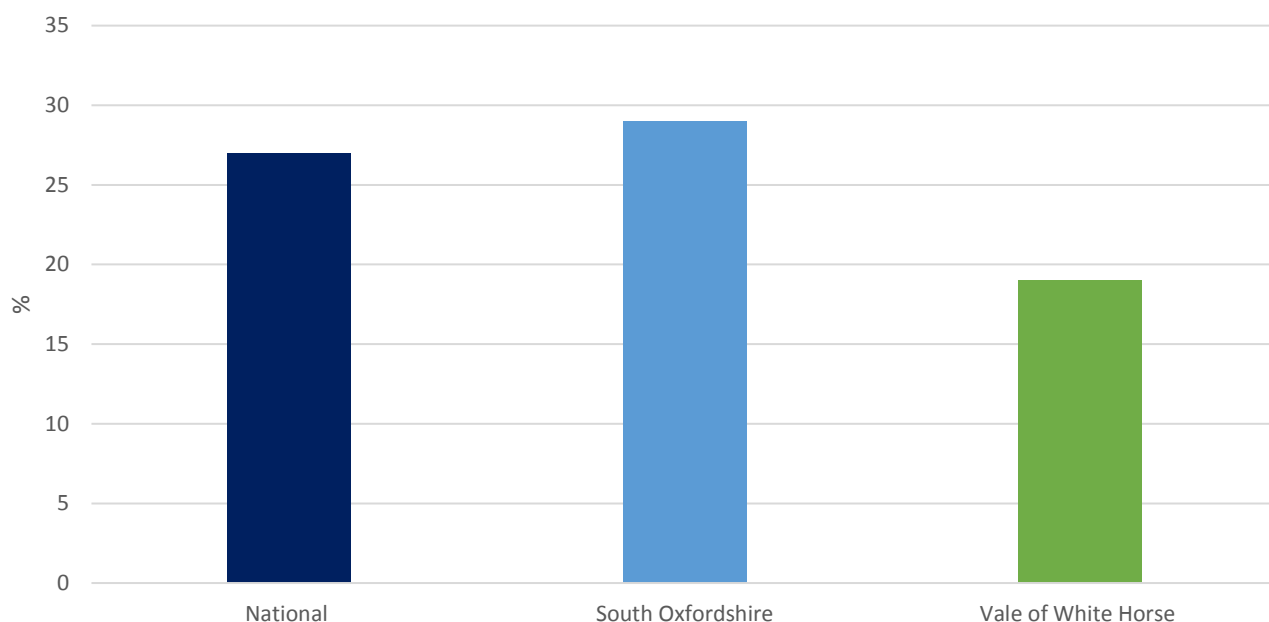
The main reason people gave for not volunteering more in both districts was work commitments followed by having to look after children.

² Cabinet Office (2015) [Community Life Survey 2014 to 2015](#)

³ South Oxfordshire District Council (2016) [Residents Survey 2015](#); Vale of White Horse District Council (2016) [Residents Survey 2015/16](#)

⁴ In the national survey, people were asked whether they had given any unpaid help to groups or organisations at least once a month over the past year and were prompted by cards detailing different types of volunteering activity. In the South and Vale residents surveys, respondents were simply asked if they had been involved in any unpaid voluntary work over the past 12 months

Figure 1: percentage of people aged over 16 who volunteer*



*National and local data is not directly comparable

Other literature

Between 2009 and 2011, a major research project was conducted by NCVO, Involve and IVR which considered different types of participation, including volunteering. The project, 'Pathways through participation'⁵, reviewed existing literature and involved extensive qualitative fieldwork to consider the reasons why people participate in volunteering.

The study found that people participate for a number of reasons, usually in activities that have personal meaning or value or which are related to personal interests and this can vary over the course of a lifetime. Participation is usually triggered by personal life events (retirement, moving to a new area), an emotional reaction to something (anger at a decision, wanting to improve something locally) or external influence (hearing about something for the first time, being asked).

Conversely, the study found that a lack of free time, as well as people's confidence in their own skills and knowledge acted as barriers to participation. Sometimes people stopped participating when they had experienced negative interactions with groups or processes.

The project sponsors argue that policy makers looking to promote volunteering could do more to signpost people to the different opportunities for participation that already exist:

"We found that few people had a full picture of the range of opportunities available to them locally. Decisions about what to do and how to get involved tended to be almost entirely the result of personal contact (e.g. being asked by a friend) or finding information of direct personal relevance (e.g. an advert to join the parent-teachers' association of their child's school). Support bodies and other public and voluntary and community organisations also often had only a partial picture of local activities, groups and events, which limited the extent

⁵ NCVO et al (2011) [Pathways through participation: what creates and sustains active citizenship?](#)

to which they could help provide access to relevant and appropriate opportunities for individuals wanting to participate.”

Feedback from community and voluntary groups

In previous years, the councils have held annual forum events with community and voluntary groups at which volunteering has been discussed. The evidence gathered at these events, through facilitated networking discussions and a delegate survey led us to believe more could be done to promote and support volunteering in the districts. Recruiting, supporting and retaining volunteers were core concerns as well as an interest in promoting workplace volunteering schemes.

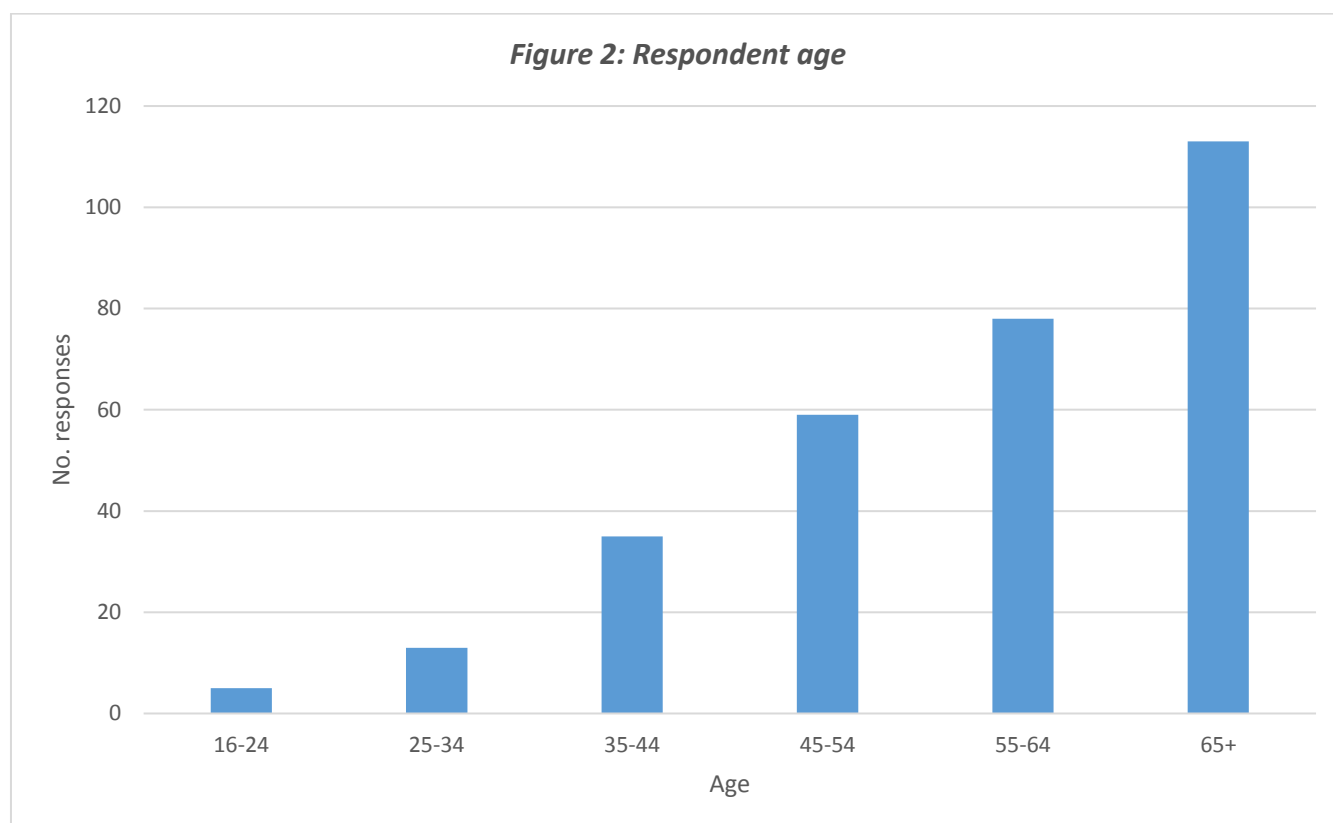
PUBLIC SURVEY FINDINGS

Response to the survey

304 people responded to our survey, of which 258 said they volunteer and 46 said they never volunteer. 58 per cent were female, 42 per cent male.

This response provides good evidence from which it is possible to understand people's experiences and views on volunteering locally. However, because the survey was available for anyone to complete and did not use sampling, the results cannot be interpreted as wholly representative of the local population.

One of the more interesting demographic patterns amongst respondents was age (*Figure 2*). The majority of respondents were aged over 55 years (63 per cent) whilst only 6 per cent were under 34 years. It is easy to mistake this for meaning that older people are more likely to volunteer, however reference to available local⁶ and national⁷ sampled datasets suggest that people volunteer at all ages. This means that older people were over-represented in this survey.



⁶ South Oxfordshire District Council (2016) [Residents Survey 2015](#); Vale of White Horse District Council (2016) [Residents Survey 2015/16](#)

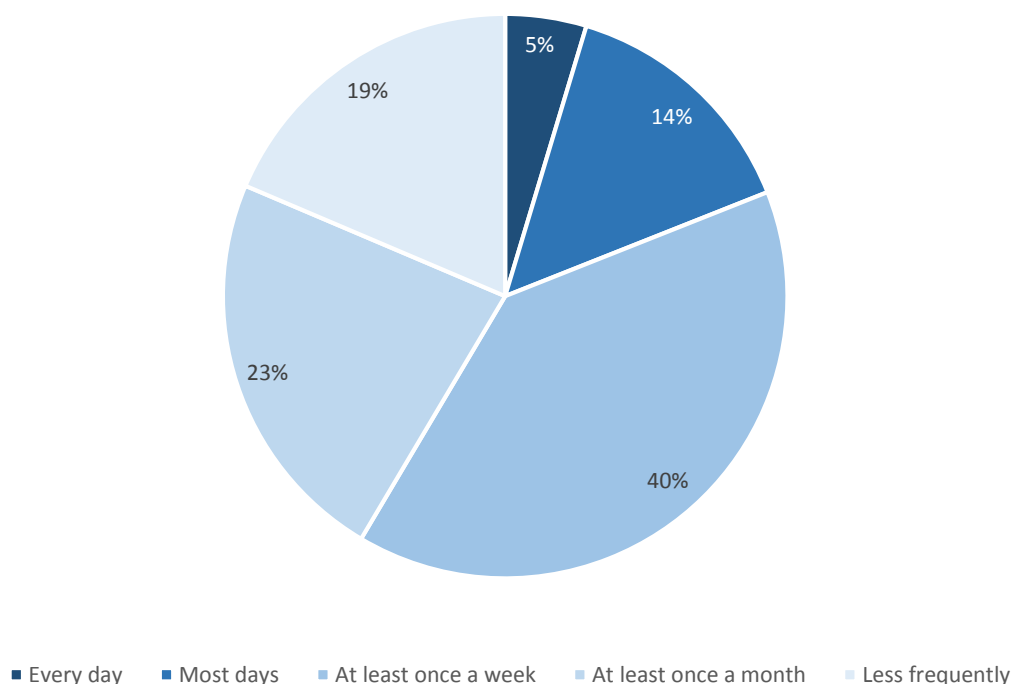
⁷ Cabinet Office (2015) [Community Life Survey 2014 to 2015](#)

Volunteering activity

How much do people volunteer?

The extent to which people volunteer varies (*Figure 3*). Of the 258 people who said they volunteer, nearly one in five claimed to do this on a daily basis or on most days. Two in five volunteer at least once a week and a similar number do so less frequently.

Figure 3: Frequency of volunteering



What volunteering do people do?

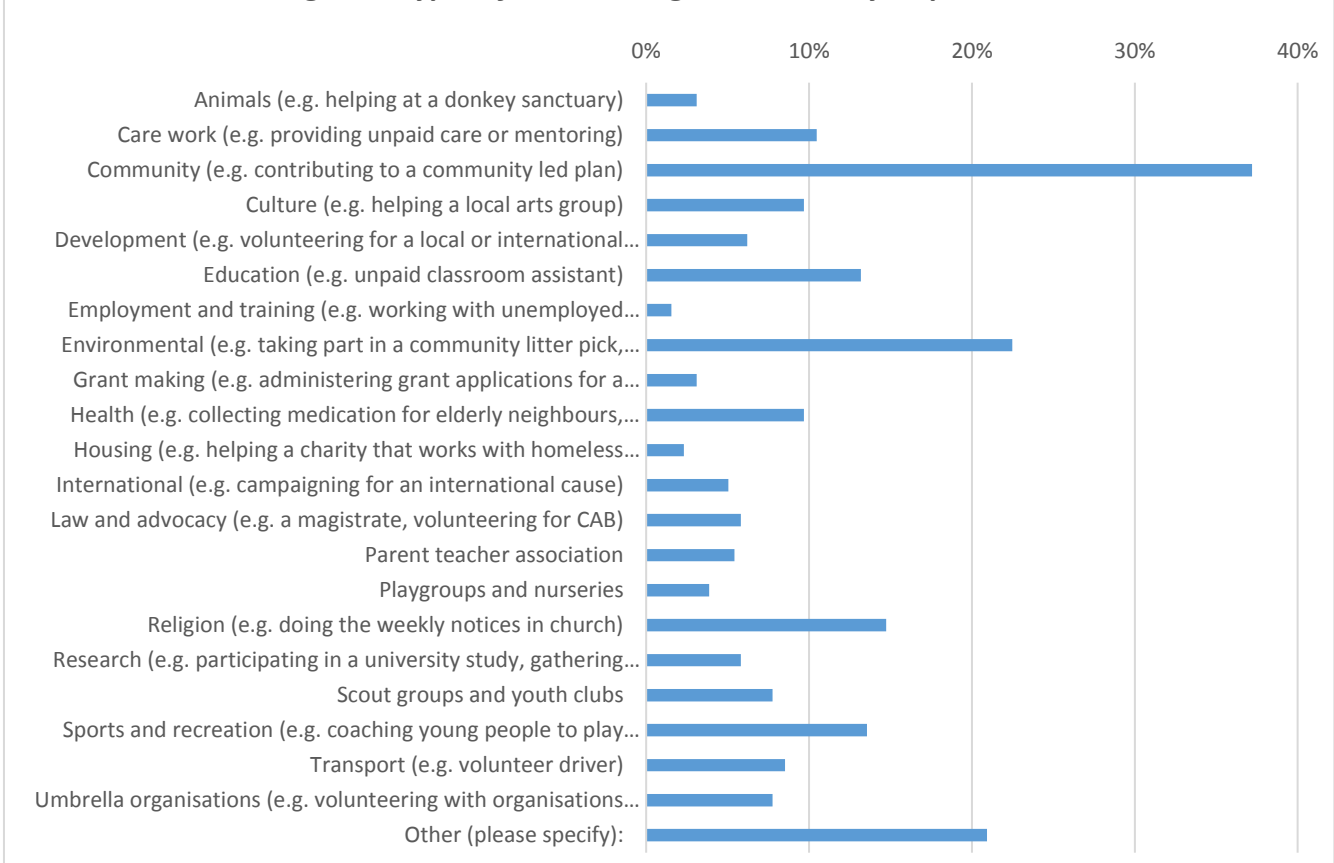
Respondents also participate in a wide range of volunteering activities. We asked people to define the types of volunteering that they do using categories adapted from the governments' Community Life Survey⁸.

Figure 4 shows that the most common focus of volunteering activity is 'community' (37%) followed by 'environment' (22%). Volunteering that has a religious, recreational or educational focus is also popular locally.

Respondents aged 25-44 are more likely to volunteer in connection to the activities of their children, i.e. 'parent teacher associations', 'playgroups and nurseries', 'scout groups and youth groups' and 'sports and recreation'.

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/community-life-survey>

Figure 4: types of volunteering undertaken by respondents

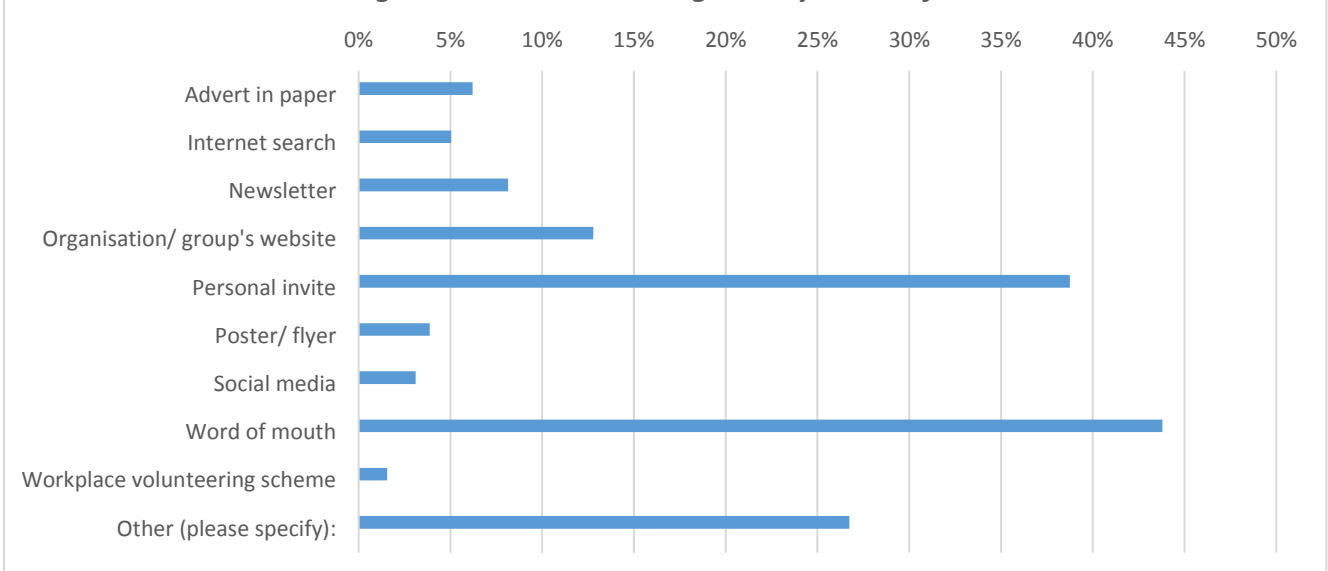


How do people arrange their volunteering?

Most respondents identified their volunteering by word of mouth or personal invite (*Figure 5*). This is the case across all age groups. Far fewer respondents said they arranged their volunteering after having found information through traditional media or social media.

Analysis of free text responses shows that a number of people actively seek out volunteering opportunities without being prompted. Others said they started to volunteer due to association with a particular group or organisation.

Figure 5: how volunteering activity is identified



Motivations and barriers to volunteering

Why do people volunteer?

We asked people to explain why they volunteer in their own words. The responses given were varied, there were a number of dominant themes as shown in *Table 1*. The most common reasons for volunteering time were a desire to give something back to the local community or groups and a desire to help others. Doing something in connection with a personal interest or belief, and having spare time were also motivating factors.

Table 1: Reasons why people volunteer (free text comments)

Comment type	Frequency
Desire to give something back to local community/ group	69
Desire to help others	55
It's connected to personal interest/belief	37
Have time to spare/ it's a good use of my time	30
Desire to make a difference	30
Being part of something/ it's nice to be involved with something	26
It's fun	22
It's an opportunity to share skills and knowledge	22
It's rewarding	18
Meeting new people	14
It helps with personal development	13
Desire to influence something	11
Moral duty	8
To cover for lack of public service delivery	8
Had previously been helped by community/ group	4
Improves health/ personal fitness	3

Desire to give something back to local community/ group

These comments show that volunteering is often driven by a sense of connection with local communities or groups. Where people have a positive interaction with their local community or group, they may be inclined to volunteer and give something back in the future. The prevalence of these comments may explain why people often organise their volunteering by word of mouth or personal invite (*Figure 4*). Note: comments in italics represent individual responses.

Contribute to my local community after living here for over 25 years

To put something back into the community in which I live

Giving something back to a community or organisation I or my family benefit from

I think if I belong to an organisation that is run by volunteers, then I should participate

If you have time, I think you should try to give something back to your community

Desire to help others

Altruism is also a significant motivating factor behind people's volunteering activity. Some of these respondents spoke of helping people less fortunate than themselves.

Like to give something to others

I like to help those less fortunate

It's connected to personal interest/belief

For some people, it seems that personal interests or beliefs guide their volunteering behaviour. This may be a connection to a particular cause, concern or be based on moral or religious conviction. These factors are unique to the individuals involved.

Belief in the principles and opportunities the Scout Association provide for young people

A desire to preserve wildlife and maintain nature reserves

To support the NHS and primary care in particular

Help refugees settle in this country

Putting something back in to a sport that have got & continue to get much pleasure from

My Christian faith inspires me to - love God and love your neighbour as yourself

Have time to spare/ it's a good use of my time

Some participants said they felt volunteering was a good use of their spare time. This may be a particular factor amongst volunteers of retirement age or those out of work.

I have time to help others

Time to give back

[Volunteering] fills in my spare time when not working

Desire to make a difference

Others simply said they wanted to make a difference by volunteering.

I hope I can make a difference

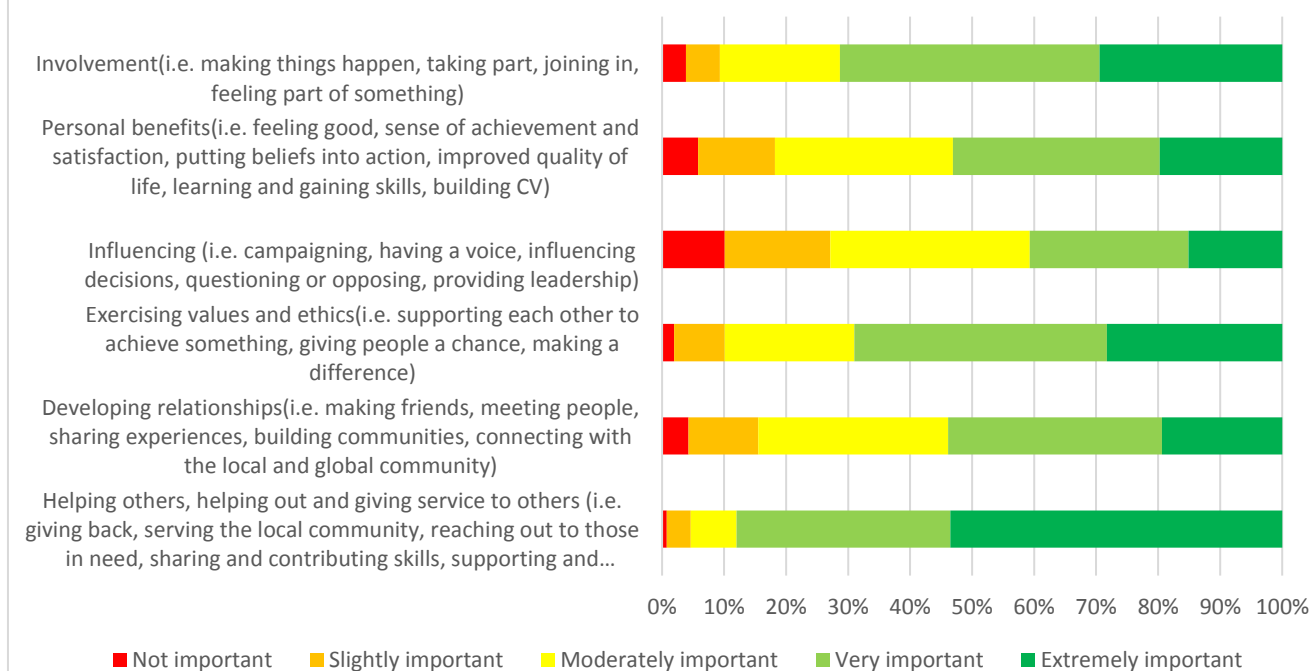
[I want] to make a difference to the people I work with/ to make the world a better place

[I volunteer] to make a difference by serving others

What kind of outcomes do people want to see from their volunteering efforts?

These comments are largely echoed by responses to a multiple choice question which asked respondents to say how important a number of factors were in influencing their decision to volunteer. *Figure 6* shows that helping others, exercising values and ethics and being involved in something were the most important outcomes that people desired. Volunteers appear to be motivated to a lesser extent by the relationships they might develop, desires to influence or personal benefits which can be attributed to this activity.

Figure 6: importance of different aspects of volunteering

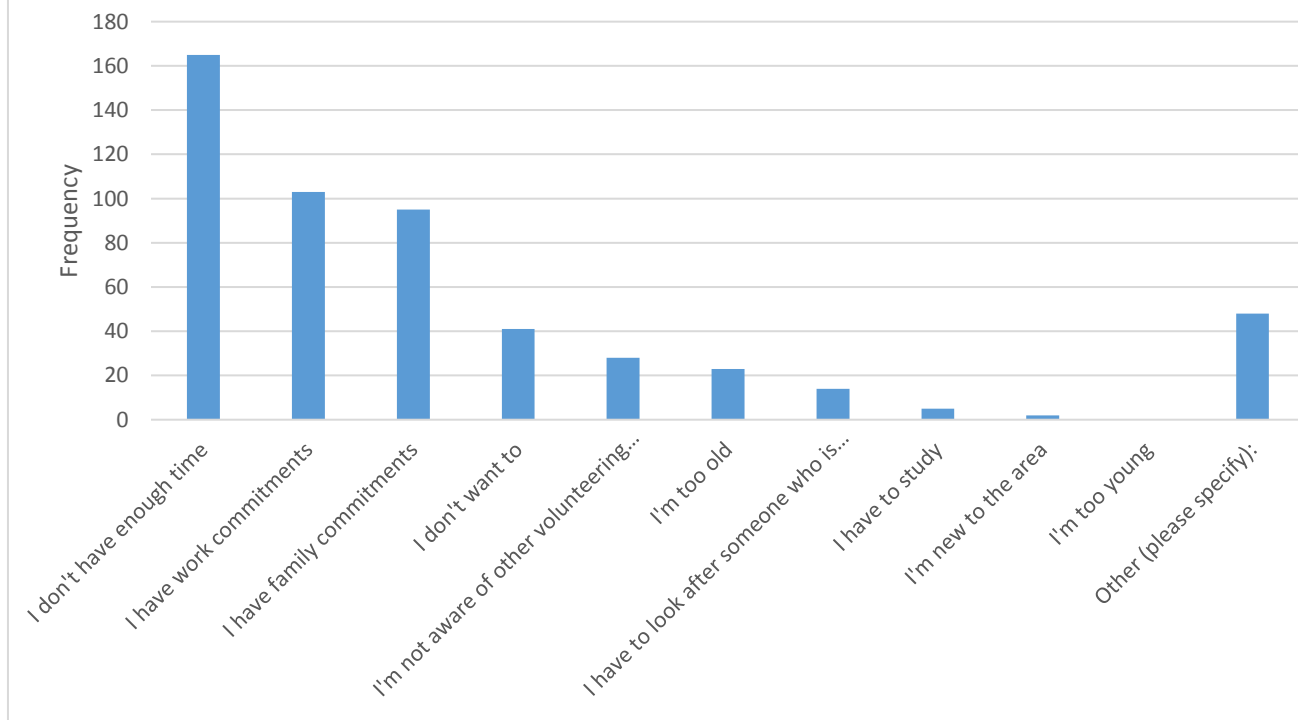


What stops people from volunteering/ volunteering more of their time?

Conversely, over half of respondents to this survey said they don't volunteer more due to a lack of time. Three in ten respondents also said family and work commitments prevented them from volunteering more of their time (*Figure 7*).

Only 28 people (nine per cent) said they didn't volunteer more because they lacked an awareness of opportunities to do so. 14 of these people did not currently volunteer at all.

Figure 7: Reasons why people don't volunteer more of their time



Views on measures for increasing volunteering activity

What do people think can be done to encourage volunteering?

When asked what could be done to encourage volunteering, many respondents (35 per cent) felt that it would be useful to increase people's awareness of the opportunities that already exist to take part in this activity (*Table 2*). Other suggestions were more sporadic and included making sure that volunteering opportunities fit with people's interests and life circumstances, supporting workplace volunteering schemes, communicating the benefits of volunteering, making use of local media and removing red tape.

Table 2: Unprompted thoughts on how to make it easier for people to volunteer in the future

Comment type	Frequency
Make people aware of volunteering opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of local media • Create a volunteering website • Word of mouth is the best approach to recruitment 	91 (12) (9) (6)
Be sensitive to the personal circumstances of potential volunteers	16
Support workplace volunteering schemes (paid leave from work to volunteer)	14
Do more to communicate the personal benefits of volunteering	13
Nothing can be done	12
Remove red tape	11
The council and politicians need to support volunteering	9
More should be done to value and retain existing volunteers	8
Provide financial subsidies or incentives for volunteers	7
Provide funding to help groups support volunteers	6
It's difficult as many people are just selfish	5
Make sure groups and organisations respond to expressions of interest from people interested in volunteering	5
Targeted work with young people needed	4
Offer training for volunteers	3
Get national charities or local community and voluntary sector infrastructure bodies involved	3
Prioritise different types of volunteering	3
Explore links with the job centre to encourage people out of work to volunteer	2

Make people aware of volunteering opportunities

By far, the most frequent comment made was that more could be done to showcasing the various volunteering opportunities which already exist in the districts.

Signpost to volunteer opportunities

Make volunteering opportunities more visible and accessible to people

Tell people of projects organisations that require volunteers and what volunteers might be expected to do

Making a wider group of people aware of opportunities [...] it needs to be across different groups and social classes)

Expanding on this, a dozen people suggested that local media would be the most effective way of publicising this information.

Perhaps more could be made of local community newsletters

Publish regular lists of hyper local volunteering opportunities in the relevant village newsletter, website, facebook page etc

Advertising the posts that need filling in the local papers, round and about and local radio

And nine people suggested that there should be a website listing all opportunities.

A Web site identifying where volunteers are needed would be a helpful gateway

Have a website that lists local volunteering roles

A dedicated local website would be useful, not just an add-on to other sites

In contrast, six people said that word of mouth and personal invites may still be the best means of recruiting new volunteers.

People are more likely to volunteer if asked directly

My own view is that personal contact is the best way to get people to volunteer...literally asking folk straight out 'Will you help us?'

These comments are significant given that many of the respondents to this survey said they arranged their own volunteering in this way. In this respect, it does raise the question whether raising an awareness of volunteering using local media or a website would be an effective means of encouraging other people to volunteer.

Be sensitive to the personal circumstances of potential volunteers

Comments were also made about the fit between the expectations placed on volunteers and people's personal circumstances. These respondents felt that it was important to make sure that people are matched up with volunteering roles suitable for them. Solutions included making sure people are aware that a range of different volunteering opportunities exist and clearly communicating the time and skills required of each role.

Ensure volunteering can be flexible enough to meet people's lifestyles

It is difficult to find the right 'fit' between the volunteer's availability / skills / interests and the needs of the charity

More information is needed about how little time an individual needs to give to make a difference. People seem to feel it's too great a commitment; that once they volunteer it will take up too much of their time.

While I'm working 4 days a week I would like to volunteer but only maybe one day per month until I've fully retired. There should be clear information about which volunteering opportunities offer more flexibility

Although ongoing volunteering is preferable, create and promote more one-off volunteering opportunities as it encourages people to get involved in their community without giving up too much time, but having something relevant to them they may decide to become a regular volunteer.

Support workplace volunteering schemes (paid leave from work to volunteer)

14 people said that employers could promote and support volunteering. Suggestions included allowing people time off work to volunteer or introducing more flexible working practices making it easier for people to commit to volunteering roles outside of work hours.

Work place schemes are a brilliant way of people discovering the opportunities to volunteer and perhaps try something completely different.

Keep encouraging companies re corporate social responsibility so that staff can volunteer with their employers support.

Encourage employers to give days off for community volunteering

Flexible working

Do more to communicate the personal benefits of volunteering

Some people felt that more could be done to communicate the benefits to the individual volunteer. There were suggestions this could involve more publicity, perhaps drawing on the experiences of people who already volunteer.

If only people realised just what fun volunteering is, maybe more would try it!

Get the message across that people can get back as much or more than they put in in the way of enjoyment.

Promoting opportunities needs to include personal stories of the benefits

If those of us who do volunteer talk to other people about it and how much we get out of it that will help

Nothing can be done

12 people, however, were sceptical that anything could, or should be done to promote volunteering.

Those who want to will probably already have sought out opportunities to volunteer. There is a finite number of people with the volunteering mind set so I suspect that there is not much of a pool from which to find new volunteers

I don't think it is difficult for anyone to volunteer. There are many appeals for help eg. most charity shops are appealing for helpers

People are having to work more hours to make ends meet so they don't have time to volunteer

Remove red tape

Removing red tape was also a theme identified in the responses. A few people felt that some requirements, for example DBS checks and insurance represented a bureaucratic burden that could sometimes discourage volunteering.

There is in some instances bureaucracy that can get in the way - for example a Japanese student recently asked if they could join our NT group whilst in the UK for 2 months but the NT had rules against those on Student Visas volunteering

The extent of 'safeguarding' checks for working with vulnerable children and adults can be very off putting. Although necessary, the process could be made a lot simpler and easier.

One person said more could be done to support groups meet these requirements.

Support small groups with guidance re H&S, risk assessments etc so that communities may take action.

What do people think would be the most effective actions for promoting volunteering locally?

The last question in the survey asked respondents to rate several council generated ideas for promoting volunteering in the districts. These ideas were derived following earlier engagement with stakeholders.

Resonating with respondents' own comments and suggestions for bringing about this change (see above), the most popular action was creating a website, followed by events which could promote volunteering opportunities. Funding to support groups utilising the efforts of volunteers was the third most popular action suggested by the council.

Further analysis shows that a website and workplace volunteering schemes are thought to be the most important interventions by respondents aged 16-44.

Table 3: Ranking of council ideas for increasing volunteering

Answer Choice		Total Score	Overall Rank
1	A website promoting volunteering opportunities in the districts	1532	1
2	Events showcasing volunteering opportunities	1384	2
3	Funding to support groups or projects utilising the efforts of volunteers	1309	3
4	Work with young people to encourage them to volunteer	1194	4
5	Promoting workplace volunteering schemes	1189	5
6	Help with the costs of becoming a volunteer (e.g. training)	1036	6
7	Award schemes for volunteers that have achieved great things	784	7
		<i>answered</i>	301

Again, it's worth bearing in mind that many respondents to this survey said they organised their volunteering by word of mouth or in response to a personal invite and this may have a bearing on the effectiveness of awareness related actions.

WORKSHOP WITH COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY GROUPS

Who we spoke to

Representatives from 16 groups attended our workshop 'Need more volunteers? How can we help?' held on Tuesday 1 November 2016 at the council offices in Milton Park. A list of organisations who sent a representative is provided in *Appendix B*.

Challenges and barriers to encouraging volunteering

We asked participants to reflect on a handout which set out a list of challenges and barriers our evidence shows groups might face when working with volunteers. They picked out the three most important issues their group experiences and ranked them in order of importance.

Table 4 shows how these challenges and barriers were ranked in order of significance by participants. The most important issues for community and voluntary groups are finding the right people for volunteering roles and arranging training for volunteers.

Table 4: challenges and barriers that community and voluntary groups face when working with volunteers

Challenges and barriers	Rank importance
Finding suitable candidates for volunteering roles (especially trustees)	1
Organising training for volunteers (including funding to be able to offer this)	1
Lack of funding and resourcing to plan for more volunteers	2
Lack of appropriate support from infrastructure organisations	2
Having a basic volunteering plan or strategy to support planning for more volunteers	3
Ability to access volunteers from a variety of sources (e.g. organisations and locations)	3
Staff lack training to manage volunteers	3
Ability to develop interesting and attractive volunteering opportunities	4
Lack of advertising to promote volunteering roles and a brokerage service to help fill the roles	4
Requirement for DBS checks in certain situations	4
Connecting with businesses to encourage employee volunteering	4
Limitations of needing to recruit volunteers in certain locations	5
Following policies and procedures, including H&S, expenses, rights etc.	5
Supply of volunteers to meet the demand	5
Need for a volunteer brokerage service or a directory to promote employee volunteering opportunities	5

Finding suitable candidates for volunteering roles (especially trustees)

From our discussions with the groups that attended the workshop, it appears community and voluntary groups struggle to recruit volunteers with the right skills and experience. This means that some volunteer roles go unfilled, or if they do fill them, volunteers may not stay very long in the role if they are poorly suited to it or not enjoying it.

Finding trustees can also be particularly challenging as groups normally require candidates with a very specific set of skills and experience, are able to give up a significant amount of time, and in certain circumstances, be personally liable for the financial status of the organisation they are serving.

Organising training for volunteers (including funding to be able to offer this)

Participants felt that some volunteer roles require training in order for the volunteer to be able to add value to the work of the group or organisation. Examples given were sports coaching or becoming a volunteer manager. Many organisations struggle to find suitable and affordable training for volunteers, and often don't have the resources to pay volunteers to attend training.

Funding and resourcing to support planning for more volunteers

Groups told us that another challenge they face is planning for volunteers, for example planning how many volunteers might be needed to support upcoming activities or events and what skills they will need. Often they don't have the money or resources to do this.

A show of hands revealed that only four organisations has any form of volunteering plan or strategy. This demonstrates that without properly planning for volunteers organisations aren't taking up the opportunity to have volunteers supporting their work and may be missing out on this valuable help.

Appropriate support for volunteering from infrastructure organisations

Participants also claimed they find it hard to get appropriate support with volunteering from infrastructure organisations. Surprisingly, at least one delegate said that they hadn't heard of or worked with Oxfordshire's main voluntary support organisation.

Other challenges and barriers not on the handout

When participants were asked if there were any other challenges or barriers not included on the handout, mention was given to:

- Difficulty recruiting trustees due to legal liabilities that deter some people
- Interpretation and implementation of national strategies which might mean that there are missed opportunities for deploying national campaigns and initiatives locally
- Difficulty planning and covering for volunteers who suddenly resign.
- Uncertainty about how to work with unemployed or disabled people who want to volunteer
- The effects of the labour market on the availability of people with the right skills to volunteer their time

Opportunities for encouraging and developing volunteering

Participants were then asked to consider what their group or organisation needed to do to overcome these challenges and barriers and derive greater value from volunteering. They wrote their own ideas and suggestions under themes provided to them. Participants were asked to consider these themes generally, but also specifically in relation to what they thought the councils can do to help.

Table 5 details highlights of the comments and suggestions made by participants in response to these themes.

Table 5: What community and community groups think needs to happen for them to develop and derive greater value from volunteering

Communicating the benefits of and opportunities for volunteering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosting events, volunteer fairs and team building events for volunteers and staff • Treating volunteers as equals so they are recruited and managed in the same way as staff, volunteering should be considered a civic duty/the norm • Raising an awareness of volunteering and communicating better
Brokering volunteer placements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring infrastructure organisations support the sectors' needs • A local volunteer centre, support hub and links with local schools • Brokering volunteering opportunities with employers
Supporting young people to volunteer and supporting sports volunteering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting sports clubs with training costs, coaching courses etc • Making volunteering fun and engaging and ensure volunteers feel valued • Creating an information hub to match people with the right skills to volunteering opportunities
Engaging businesses and promoting employee volunteering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making business facilities available to charities • Council could offer brokerage / matching service to local charities • Organise a networking event at Milton Park to encourage closer working between local businesses and voluntary groups

A few things are worth noting about this discussion. There was no specific reference from participants of the need for a website, although they clearly wanted support in terms of information and events, including a coordinated approach to national campaigns. But there was an appetite for more local “hubs” where groups could get support and also connect with each other and other agencies. The topic of funding for training and other costs for community and voluntary groups was also mentioned, as was the need to make sure there are volunteering opportunities for everyone, not just younger people. Participants saw a need for the councils to encourage their own staff to volunteer as well as working with local businesses to promote workplace volunteering schemes. Following on from this discussion, we asked attendees to rank their ideas in terms of importance to them. The relative weighting of this is shown in *Table 6*.

Table 6: opportunities for encouraging volunteering activity, as identified by community and voluntary groups, in order of significance, based on the councils' ideas

Theme/ ideas and suggestions	Strength of agreement (overall score)	Rank importance for category
Communicating the benefits of and opportunities for volunteering		
• Having a council webpage which promotes volunteering, by providing information or signposting to other resources	89	1
• Using social media to promote volunteering opportunities	80	2
• The council attending existing local events and/or providing support and information to community and voluntary groups	72	3
Brokering volunteer placements		
• Supporting community and voluntary groups to work with volunteers through councils' grants schemes	93	1
• Supporting and promoting infrastructure organisations that provide volunteer placement support	74	2
• Encouraging and supporting community and voluntary groups to promote volunteering locally e.g. in shops, networks and groups	73	3
Supporting young people to volunteer and supporting sports volunteering		
• Providing a budget to overcome barriers such as sports coaching qualification, DBS checks, car insurance and travel costs for volunteer drivers	80	1
• Signposting young people/parents/schools to relevant volunteering information and opportunities at careers fairs and other school and college events	77	2
• Promoting sports volunteering opportunities to staff and communities	59	3
Engaging businesses and promoting employee volunteering		
• Encouraging links between businesses and community organisations	86	1
• Using a volunteer brokerage service to promote employee volunteering to business networks	79	2
• Promoting the council's staff volunteering scheme to local groups and communities and publish volunteering opportunities on a new intranet page	77	3
• Encouraging council staff to take part in the councils' existing employee volunteering scheme	76	4

The top priority opportunities from each theme are summarised below:

Having a council webpage which promotes volunteering, by providing information and signposting to other resources

When specifically asked about a website provided by the council, the subject was the second most popular idea overall in any category. It is clear there is a lack of awareness across the districts regarding a wide range of subjects such as volunteering opportunities, the benefits of volunteering, support available etc. However, much of this information is already out there, but hidden and disconnected. There is also criticism of some of the online tools, and in particular, the Do-It website. So there is a need for better online support, possibly a portal to other local and national resources where the most up to date information and tools reside. It's important not to duplicate what already exists, and it's imperative to gain a clear perspective of what is already available.

Supporting community and voluntary groups to work with volunteers through the councils' grants schemes

Unsurprisingly, the most popular idea of all was for the councils to support groups and projects through the council grant scheme. Participants also wanted the councils to continue to support and encourage local community groups to develop new ways of working, new income streams, and develop new and valuable volunteering roles. This should then also reduce the dependence upon the grants scheme over time and with the right support from funders like the councils.

Providing a budget to overcome barriers such as sports coach qualification, DBS checks, car insurance and travel costs for volunteer drivers

The most popular idea under this theme, and the fourth most popular overall, is the idea of funding coaching qualifications or other barriers to volunteering in this field. One of the barriers to becoming a volunteer is the costs which fall to the volunteer themselves, for example the costs of training as a sports coach or the costs of additional insurance needed to be a volunteer driver. This new scheme could be aimed at supporting potential volunteers with those costs (and would be on the basis that they go on to complete a certain number of hours as a volunteer within the district.)

Encouraging links between businesses and community organisations

Despite the apparent lack of interest in this topic from participants in the first exercise, the third most popular idea of all was for the council to encourage links between business and community organisations. For a wide range of reasons, businesses are increasingly keen to engage with local charities and community groups. Many of them either do not consider employee volunteering, or if they do, they don't appreciate the benefits and opportunities this presents them. There is a need therefore, to engage on two levels. One is with businesses generally to open a path for supporting the voluntary sector, which can also include employee volunteering. The other is to support, encourage and signpost those who either already run employee volunteering or would like to.

The workshop concluded with a final discussion that explored ways in which the participants could develop opportunities to work together and with others to open up new volunteering opportunities and support each other. A show of hands from the groups revealed that only a limited number already collaborate around volunteering. When asked for specific thoughts and ideas, those offered included the idea of 'hubs', where people and groups could connect and gather, which also came out in an earlier session. Another idea was for the councils to provide information to new residents in the area about volunteering and voluntary and community groups

The workshop closed with a summary of the outputs and an overview of the anticipated progress in developing the strategy for continued and potential new support.

General themes that emerged

Council officers, when asked for their recollection of the workshop felt there were several broad themes which emerged from their conversations with participants, namely:

- More support, coordination, information and brokerage support is needed from infrastructure organisations to support volunteering
- It would be helpful to have an easy to use and up to date online resource which groups could use to broker volunteering opportunities
- More funding is needed to support volunteer recruitment, training and ongoing management
- There is a role for council involvement and there are tangible projects the authorities could support

WORKSHOP WITH INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANISATIONS

Who we spoke to

Representatives from 11 infrastructure organisations attended our workshop ‘*Supporting and increasing volunteering*’ workshop held on Wednesday 30 November 2016 at the councils’ offices in Milton Park. A list of organisations represented is shown in *Appendix C*.

Challenges and barriers to encouraging volunteering

We asked participants to reflect on a list of challenges and barriers to working with volunteers as used in the workshop with community and voluntary groups and add any issues they felt should be included. As with the first workshop, they were required to identify the three most important issues their group experiences and then score them from one to five.

Table 7: challenges and barriers that infrastructure organisations think hinders work with volunteers

Challenges and barriers	Scored importance
Difficulties rewarding and recognising volunteers	51
Organising training for volunteers (including funding to be able to offer this)	50
Supply of volunteers to meet the demand	50
Ability to develop interesting and attractive volunteering opportunities	50
Finding suitable candidates for volunteering roles (especially trustees)	49
Having a basic volunteering plan or strategy to support planning for more volunteers	48
Attracting younger volunteers	48
Requirement for DBS checks in certain situations	48
Lack of funding and resourcing to support planning for more volunteers	47
Lack of opportunities for young/ unemployed/ vulnerable people to volunteer	47
Supporting volunteers with specific needs or challenges	45
Access to up to date advice, information, guidance	45
Following policies and procedures, including H&S, expenses, rights etc.	44
Ability to access volunteers from a variety of sources (e.g. organisations and locations)	43
Lack of advertising to promote volunteering roles and a brokerage service to help fill the roles	42
Lack of appropriate support for volunteering from infrastructure organisations	42
Problems using IT and social media	41
Staff lack training to manage volunteers	40
Dealing with difficult volunteers/ volunteer rights	39
Need for a volunteer brokerage service or a directory to promote employee volunteering opportunities	37
Interviewing potential volunteers	36
Uncertainty about how to refer volunteers who don't fit an organisations needs to other opportunities which might exist	36
Developing appropriate roles for people who volunteer as part of an employers' scheme	32
Accreditation (getting volunteer training accredited / accredited training for volunteer managers)	29
Managing groups of people who volunteer	28
Connecting with businesses to encourage employee volunteering	26
Limitations of needing to recruit volunteers in certain locations	22

Table 7 shows how these challenges and barriers were ranked in order of significance by participants. The most important issues for infrastructure organisations were difficulties rewarding and recognising the efforts of volunteers, organising training for volunteers, the supply of volunteers and the ability to develop interesting and attractive volunteering opportunities.

It's worth noting that most participants gave each challenge and barrier a high score making it more difficult to identify those that stand out. There were some contrasts to the previous workshop with community and voluntary groups however. For example, infrastructure organisations thought that the capacity of the sector to develop interesting and attractive volunteering opportunities was more important. But there was agreement with the need for training and funding.

Difficulties rewarding and recognising volunteers

The high score given to recognising and rewarding volunteers highlights the concern that groups say 'thank you' and acknowledge the volunteers time and effort. Discussion showed these organisations think this is needed more to retain volunteers.

Organising training for volunteers (including funding to be able to offer this)

Training for volunteers also scored highly. Participants felt that some volunteer roles require a level of training in order for the volunteer to be able to do the job, for example sports coaching or becoming a volunteer manager. However many organisations struggle to find suitable and affordable training for their volunteers, and often don't have the resources to pay volunteers to take up training.

Supply of volunteers to meet the demand

There are apparently more volunteering opportunities than there are volunteers to fill them, and this leaves many roles vacant.

Developing interesting and attractive volunteering opportunities

Infrastructure organisations are concerned that some groups find it hard to create interesting and attractive volunteering positions. Not all volunteering roles will be as interesting as others but the trick is to promote all roles well and then find the most suitable person to fill that role.

When participants were asked if there were any other challenges or barriers not included on the handout and given an opportunity to add to it, mention was given to:

- Whether groups are aware of support already available from infrastructure organisations
- Language used, for example "volunteer" and "volunteering" might put people off just wanting to 'help'
- Understanding why people volunteer

Opportunities for encouraging and developing volunteering

Participants were then asked to consider what could be done to overcome these challenges and barriers and help groups derive greater value from volunteering. They were asked to add their ideas and suggestions on flip chart paper under the themes of communicating the

benefits of volunteering, brokering volunteering placements, supporting young people to volunteer and supporting sports volunteering, encouraging volunteering in the workplace and working together to develop volunteering. Participants were asked to consider these themes generally, but also specifically in relation to what they thought the councils can do to help. *Table 8* details the comments and suggestions made by participants in response to these themes.

Table 8: What infrastructure organisations think needs to happen to encourage and develop volunteering

Communicating the benefits of and opportunities for volunteering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace the Do-It website (this is a national online brokerage site that is becoming increasingly unpopular and underused) • Bring volunteers together through networking events and forums (hold locally, and ensure timings and transport are right) • Raise awareness, promote infrastructure organisations and use a variety of media to communicate
Brokering volunteer placements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide free meeting rooms/facilities • Provide information in one central place on what an organisation does • Hold local forums for the voluntary sector in towns across the districts
Supporting young people to volunteer and supporting sports volunteering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives to deliver free sessions, e.g. free room hire or equipment and training sessions • Council could broker links between schools and businesses/charities
Engaging businesses and promoting employee volunteering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create work experience opportunities through supplier procurement e.g. contractual requirement to provide work experience and apprenticeships • Encourage businesses to recognise particular needs of voluntary and community groups, and the difference that good volunteers can make. • Use OxLEP future skills research to feed into this, especially youth opportunities
Working together to develop volunteering
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online portal identifying those looking to work with others on, say, a project or apply for funding • Opportunities to buy into training as a collective of groups to reduce costs • Need for regular local / regional networking events (Didcot, Henley, Wallingford, etc.)

Unlike the initial feedback at the first workshop for groups, many references were made to the need for some form of online resources. Specific mention was made to the need for an alternative to the Do-It website. There was criticism of this national volunteering website as it is not providing the support needed to the sector, is underused by both groups and potential volunteers and government funding for Do-It will be removed this year, forcing a local brokerage solution to be found. There is strong support for an alternative online option to be found, ideally run countywide with a local focus. There was discussion around a solution that allows searching via postcode to find local opportunities, the ability to search beyond their own district boundary as many people wish to volunteer outside the area where they immediately live and the ease of having one system that means they only need complete one form.

The desire for a volunteer brokerage service to have a local physical presence was also raised, just as the groups and community organisations had. The idea of pop-up spaces in unused shops, for example, was suggested. The point was also made for the need to understand and communicate what is already available in terms of support for voluntary groups and volunteers that are available from infrastructure organisations.

The need to provide support to infrastructure organisations for them to offer more volunteer training was discussed. The ability for infrastructure organisations to offer free sessions to volunteers and groups and even have use of free room hire was proposed.

It was suggested that the councils should broker better links with schools, businesses and charities to help promote volunteering. Participants also suggested that the promotion of work experience should be included in their future volunteering strategy.

There seemed to be more interest and understanding of the opportunities to engage with businesses including employee volunteering than there was at the workshop with community and voluntary groups. It was suggested that the councils could include support for volunteering within the contract they place with suppliers. This is being done by a number of Housing Associations.

The need for networking opportunities was raised again here, as well as the wider opportunities to work together on topics like resource sharing.

Following on from this discussion, we asked participants to rank the councils pre-determined ideas for encouraging and developing volunteering opportunities. These were the same ideas put to community and voluntary groups in the previous workshop. *Table 9* shows the popularity of these ideas with infrastructure organisations.

Table 9: opportunities for encouraging volunteering activity, as identified by infrastructure organisations, in order of significance, based on the councils' ideas

Theme/ ideas and suggestions	Strength of agreement (overall score)	Rank importance for category
Communicating the benefits of volunteering		
• Using social media to promote volunteering opportunities	71	1
• Having a council web page which promotes volunteering, by providing information or signposting to other resources	64	2
• The council attending existing local events and/or providing support and information to community and voluntary groups	61	3
• Developing key messages and brand	56	4
Brokering volunteering placements		
• Supporting community and voluntary groups to work with volunteers through council grants scheme	74	1
• Encouraging and supporting community and voluntary groups to promote volunteering locally e.g. in shops, networks and groups	71	2
• Supporting and promoting infrastructure organisations that provide volunteer placement support	59	3
Supporting young people to volunteer and supporting sports volunteering		
• Signposting young people/parents/schools to relevant volunteering information and opportunities at careers fairs and other school and college events	74	1
• Providing a budget to overcome barriers such as sports coaching qualification, DBS checks, car insurance and travel costs for volunteer drivers	73	2
• Promoting sports volunteering opportunities to staff and communities	61	3

Engaging businesses and promoting employee volunteering		
• Encouraging links between businesses and community organisations	74	1
• Encouraging council staff to take part in the councils' existing employee volunteering scheme	61	2
• Promoting the council's staff volunteering scheme to local groups and communities and publish volunteering opportunities on a new intranet page	60	3
• Promoting employee volunteering to business networks through a brokerage service	51	4

The top priority opportunities from each theme are summarised below:

Using social media to promote volunteering opportunities

Use of social media, including Facebook and twitter, was one of the most popular ideas. It was recognised that use of social media can be a cost effective and efficient way of reaching a large audience very quickly and something that these groups are keen to support. Interestingly, participants at this workshop didn't think that having a council web page to promote and signpost volunteering opportunities was as important. It was felt there are already a lot of websites, some of which are better than others, but that a central resource would be most useful for groups wanting to advertise jobs and for those looking for a volunteering opportunity.

Supporting community and voluntary groups to work with volunteers through council grants scheme

As with the participants at the volunteering workshop, a popular idea was for the council to support groups and projects working with volunteers through the council grants schemes. Suggestions include grants for those in need of training volunteers and volunteer managers and co-ordinators, including infrastructure organisations, who could deliver this free of charge or subsidised. Funding could also be given to support groups to develop a strategy for developing volunteering. The idea of funding certain costs to increase sports volunteering also brought out the suggestion that the councils could fund DBS checks for other forms of volunteering.

Signposting young people/parents/schools to relevant volunteering information and opportunities at careers fairs and other school and college events

Signposting young people, their parents and schools to information about volunteering opportunities scored very highly. Young people are interested in volunteering but like adults need to find the right position in the right organisation. Schools and colleges can support this, for example through promoting volunteering at careers fairs. Many schools and agencies already do this, and the councils support this work, but clearly there may be scope here to work even more with young people and those organisations who support them.

Encouraging links between businesses and community organisations – make connections through local businesses

Also popular was a proposal the council could encourage links between business and community organisations. As discussed in the volunteering workshop summary, businesses are increasingly keen to engage with local charities and community groups for a variety of

reasons. Many businesses either do not consider employee volunteering, or they don't appreciate the benefits and opportunities this presents them. There is a need to the councils to implement their own employee volunteering programme and encourage others to do the same. There are also opportunities to work more closely with local organisations who are developing ways to broker employee volunteering.

Council officers took the opportunity to feedback early indications from the residents' survey, and some outputs from the volunteering groups workshop to participants, and time was used to discuss some of the findings.

Infrastructure organisations were informed that groups say they need more support from them that in some cases they are not getting. In response, infrastructure organisations said they are providing different forms of support in different ways to groups, mainly due to less funding being available to them. There was agreement that infrastructure organisations need to promote their services more widely to ensure groups are aware of what they offer and that better communication and networking would be effective in helping groups develop volunteering. Further discussion of feedback from the groups brought a suggestion that infrastructure organisations could have a stronger local focus in the districts and there was commitment to do this.

The session was closed with a summary of the outputs and an overview of the anticipated progress in developing the strategy for continued and potential new support.

General themes that emerged

Council officers, when asked for their recollection of the workshop felt there were several broad themes which emerged from their conversations with participants, namely:

- A good online facility is needed to support good brokerage of volunteering opportunities that help place the right volunteers into the right roles
- There is a desire for locally based organisations to support volunteering locally, however this can also be done effectively by county based organisations who can offer a wider perspective and support these smaller groups.
- There's a need for infrastructure organisations to work more with each other, and with the councils, through networking, events and more informal sessions
- Volunteer management, including training and recruitment, and supporting a volunteering brokerage service to ensure the right volunteer gets the right role, are difficult to achieve and these areas need more support
- There is a role for council involvement and there are tangible projects the authorities could support

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

Nationally, just over a quarter of adults volunteer formally every month. A large number of people also volunteer locally, however data from the councils' most recent residents' surveys suggest there are far fewer volunteers in the Vale of White Horse than in South Oxfordshire.

Interestingly, national data suggests that rural residents volunteer more than urban residents. Although the councils do not have equivalent information at their disposal, it would be interesting to see if this is the case locally.

In developing a volunteering strategy, the councils should set targets for increasing the number of people who volunteer and this could be benchmarked against existing national and local data. Given the discrepancy between volunteering rates recorded for South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse, achieving greater parity between the two districts might also be a worthwhile objective, as well as making sure that urban areas also benefit from this activity.

Previous studies into volunteering also suggest that people volunteer at all ages. At an individual level, participation in this activity may change over time and is primarily influenced by a person's life circumstances and interests, but environmental factors (for example being asked to help out) can also shape this behaviour.

Volunteering activity is also diverse. The time that people spend volunteering and the types of things they do is highly varied. In our survey, people were identified across 21 different categories of volunteering from working with animals to campaigning on international issues. However, volunteering for community benefit is by far the most prevalent type of volunteering in the districts.

People also volunteer for different reasons. Many respondents to our survey said they volunteer for altruistic reasons, for example giving something back to their community or a desire to help those less fortunate. But there are also personal benefits, for example making new friends and gaining new skills.

Given the personal nature of volunteering activity, the councils should avoid shoe-horning people into any particular type of participation. But there may be opportunities to develop support which is tailored to the specific needs and interests of different groups in the community.

There is also potential to link the councils' volunteering strategy to the achievement of other local objectives. For example, where people are volunteering in their local community, this might be contributing to local social or economic development. Similarly, volunteering may also be a way of combating loneliness or developing the skills and confidence of people to find work.

When we asked people how they arranged their volunteering, many said they had either heard of the opportunity through word of mouth or been asked to help out by someone they know. Far fewer people said they had arranged their volunteering due to exposure to opportunities being advertised in traditional or social media.

The councils may wish to see whether there are opportunities to support existing volunteers to promote their work and encourage others to help out. This could involve creating networking opportunities or backing local volunteering champions.

We found out that not having enough time, either due to having work or family commitments deters many people from volunteering, or volunteering more of their time. This is particularly the case for people of working age or those with younger children.

The councils should explore ways of helping people overcome barriers to volunteering. This could involve, for example, supporting employers to create workplace volunteering schemes or encouraging people to volunteer in connection with the activities of their children.

In both the survey and workshops, participants shared a common view that more should be done to broker volunteering opportunities across the districts. Volunteers said they would like more information about the volunteering opportunities in the local area whilst the organisations we spoke to said they would like more support to be able to find suitable volunteers.

The creation of a district or county-wide volunteering website listing available volunteering opportunities was the most popular action mooted in the survey and at the workshops. This stemmed from a recognition that existing online resources were either hard to find or did not act as a one-stop shop for people who might be interested in volunteering their time. Events showcasing volunteering opportunities was also popular with survey respondents.

Furthermore, the conversations we had with organisations attending our workshops revealed that community and voluntary organisations feel they need much more support with recruiting, training and managing volunteers. Often they lacked the financial resource or knowledge to be able to do this.

The findings clearly show that there is significant need for developing resources that will help broker volunteering opportunities. In line with the feedback received, one solution would be the development of a district-wide volunteering website which could be promoted widely. This may attract new people to volunteer beyond the usual suspects.

There may also be merit in the councils working with infrastructure organisations to review existing grants programmes with a view to ensuring there is funding and support available to help community and voluntary groups recruit, train and manage volunteers.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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APPENDIX A – PUBLIC SURVEY QUESTIONS

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are looking at ways to encourage more people to volunteer in the districts.

If you're already a volunteer we'd like to hear from you. By completing this survey and telling us about your experiences of volunteering, you'll help to inform our understanding of this activity so we can identify solutions which may support other people to volunteer in the future.

If you don't already volunteer, you can still complete this survey and tell us what can be done to help you do this in the future.

Click the 'next' button below to get started.

Please note all responses to this survey will be treated in the strictest of confidence and whilst we will publish a report detailing key findings, it will not be possible to identify individual respondents from this.

The survey closes midnight, Monday 21 November.

If you would like more information about this survey or our ideas to support volunteering in the districts, please contact volunteer.support@southandvale.gov.uk

For the purposes of this survey, we take volunteering to mean "spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone who they're not closely related to." ([NCVO](#), 2016)

1. On average, how often do you volunteer? *

- ☐ Every day
- ☐ Most days
- ☐ At least once a week
- ☐ At least once a month
- ☐ Less frequently
- ☐ Never

2. What is the focus of the volunteering you do? Please note examples are to help selection only - they are not an exhaustive list *

- ☐ Animals (e.g. helping at a donkey sanctuary)
- ☐ Care work (e.g. providing unpaid care or mentoring)
- ☐ Community (e.g. contributing to a community led plan)
- ☐ Culture (e.g. helping a local arts group)
- ☐ Development (e.g. volunteering for a local or international development charity)
- ☐ Education (e.g. unpaid classroom assistant)

- ☐ Employment and training (e.g. working with unemployed people)
- ☐ Environmental (e.g. taking part in a community litter pick, campaigns to take action on environmental issues)
- ☐ Grant making (e.g. administering grant applications for a charity)
- ☐ Health (e.g. collecting medication for elderly neighbours, taking part in clinical trials)
- ☐ Housing (e.g. helping a charity that works with homeless people)
- ☐ International (e.g. campaigning for an international cause)
- ☐ Law and advocacy (e.g. a magistrate, volunteering for CAB)
- ☐ Parent teacher association
- ☐ Playgroups and nurseries
- ☐ Religion (e.g. doing the weekly notices in church)
- ☐ Research (e.g. participating in a university study, gathering information for a charity)
- ☐ Scout groups and youth clubs
- ☐ Sports and recreation (e.g. coaching young people to play football)
- ☐ Transport (e.g. volunteer driver)
- ☐ Umbrella organisations (e.g. volunteering with organisations that provide support for other charities)
- ☐ Other (please specify):

3. How did you identify your volunteering? *

- ☐ Advert in paper
- ☐ Internet search
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ Organisation/ group's website
- ☐ Personal invite
- ☐ Poster/ flyer
- ☐ Social media
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Workplace volunteering scheme
- ☐ Other (please specify):

4. In a few words, can you tell us the main reason why you volunteer *

5. And how important are the following aspects of volunteering to you? *

	Not important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Helping others, helping out and giving service to others (i.e. giving back, serving the local community, reaching out to those in need, sharing and contributing skills, supporting and encouraging others)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Developing relationships (i.e. making friends, meeting people, sharing experiences, building communities, connecting with the local and global community)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exercising values and ethics (i.e. supporting each other to achieve something, giving people a chance, making a difference)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Influencing (i.e. campaigning, having a voice, influencing decisions, questioning or opposing, providing leadership)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal benefits (i.e. feeling good, sense of achievement and satisfaction, putting beliefs into action, improved quality of life, learning and gaining skills, building CV)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement (i.e. making things happen, taking part, joining in, feeling part of something)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Which of these, if any, are the reasons why you don't volunteer more of your time? *

- ☐ I'm too young
- ☐ I'm too old
- ☐ I'm not aware of other volunteering opportunities or lack knowledge of groups and organisations I can help
- ☐ I'm new to the area
- ☐ I have work commitments
- ☐ I have to study
- ☐ I have to look after someone who is elderly/ ill
- ☐ I have family commitments
- ☐ I don't want to
- ☐ I don't have enough time
- ☐ Other (please specify):

7. Can anything be done to make it easier for people to volunteer in the future?

8. Please rank the following ideas for increasing volunteering locally in terms of the impact you think it would make [Drag important items to the top of the list or re-order by number where 1 is most important]

Work with young people to encourage them to volunteer

Promoting workplace volunteering schemes

Help with the costs of becoming a volunteer (e.g. training)

Funding to support groups or projects utilising the efforts of volunteers

Events showcasing volunteering opportunities

Award schemes for volunteers that have achieved great things

A website promoting volunteering opportunities in the districts

To help us develop a better understanding of responses to this survey, please can provide a few details about yourself. Please note this information cannot be used to identify you personally and all data will be processed in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

9. Gender

- ☐ Male
☐ Female

10. Age

- ☐ 16-24
☐ 25-34
☐ 35-44
☐ 45-54
☐ 55-64
☐ 65+

11. Ethnicity

- ☐ White
- ☐ British
- ☐ Irish
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Asian or Asian British
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Pakistani
- ☐ Bangladeshi
- ☐ Any other Asian background
- ☐ White and black African
- ☐ White and Asian
- ☐ Black or black British
- ☐ Caribbean
- ☐ African
- ☐ Any other black background
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Any other Ethnic Group
- ☐ I do not wish to disclose my ethnic origin

12. Employment status

- ☐ Employed - full time
- ☐ Employed - part time
- ☐ Full time student
- ☐ Long term sick or disabled
- ☐ Looking after home or family
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Self employed
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Other

13. Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

14. You told us that your day-to-day activities are limited because of a health problem or disability. How does this affect your ability to volunteer? Is there anything that can be done to make it easier for you to volunteer?

APPENDIX B – ORGANISATIONS ATTENDING OUR WORKSHOP WITH COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY GROUPS

Oxfordshire Play Association

MS Therapy Centre Oxfordshire

Wantage Silver Band

Train

Friends of Hill End

Network Navigator

Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire

Beacon Festival

Long Furlong Community Association

Earth Trust

Style Acre

Sweatbox

Didcot Community Bank Management Team

Oxfordshire Sport and Physical Activity

The Watlington Club

SOFEA (South Oxfordshire Food and Education Academy)

APPENDIX C –ORGANISATIONS ATTENDING OUR WORKSHOP WITH INFRASTRUCTURE /UMBRELLA GROUPS

CAB (Citizens Advice Bureau)

OCVA (Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action)

CFO (Community First Oxfordshire)

SOHA (South Oxfordshire Housing Association)

Didcot First

Sovereign Housing Association

BIVC (Berinsfield Information and Volunteer Centre)

Didcot Rotary Club

Abingdon & Witney College

Abingdon Vineyard Church & Preston Rd Community Centre (one rep for both)

South & Vale Young Carers