For the latest volunteering news, support and information:

News

3rd BIG Volunteer Walk a huge success in spite of the weather!

THANK YOU to you, your wonderful volunteers and your amazing colleagues for turning out for our recent walk in spite of the ruddy awful weather – you were all complete troopers and I can’t fault your enthusiasm and community spirit; you make Rotherham proud every day but on 6th June you exceeded all expectations; you were FABULOUS!! Please pass on my personal thanks and those of our Chief Exec Janet Wheatley to members of your team for their support; we wouldn’t have an event if it weren’t for the creativity and commitment of Network members and the energy of your volunteers.

A huge THANKS too to those Network members who came forward and gave lots of time to the Working Group, it wasn’t just meetings either it was countless telephone conversations, emails, compiling a risk assessment, chasing groups, creating a display, creating lists! Then on the day you rallied to blow up balloons, fetch cake and fruit, set up tables, take photographs, talk to the media, I really couldn’t have done it without you, you were fantastic; a real credit to the organisations you work for and to the Network itself, thank you.

Thanks too to those of you who provided mascots for the day – how good were they again?!!
Images and Memories from the day: For information, we’ve already shared lots of lovely photos from the event via social media. Check out the [Rotherham Volunteer Coordinator Network facebook page](#) to see lots of photos including a Photo Gallery produced by *Rotherham Advertiser* and a film produced by *Sheffield Live*. There are more photos on the [VAR website](#) which we hope to build on in the coming weeks so please signpost members of your team there. If you have some good photos from the day please post these on our Facebook page and/or send them to this dedicated email account: thebigvolunteerwalk@gmail.com thank you. If you tweet, we are continuing to use #volunteerwalk to share media coverage of the event and photos from the day so please tweet and re-tweet, thank you. There’s also a live twitter feed on the VAR website – we didn’t achieve this on the day due to problems with internet coverage but it’s on the walk page if you’d like to take a look at how people have used it and are continuing to use it.
Big Volunteer Walk 2017 Evaluation: Network members will be evaluating the event as part of the next meeting on Wed 19th July 9am-11am at the Crisis office in Manvers so please give some thought to what worked and what could have worked better in anticipation of the meeting.

Growing Volunteer Involvement: Further to this meeting, we’d like to give more volunteers from your organisations and groups the chance to pass on their experience of the day and to possibly get more involved in the planning of The BIG Volunteer Walk 2018 if they so choose. It could be that you have a volunteer who has taken part for the past few years and who is familiar with the format and keen to share their experience of what worked or didn’t work from their point of view and have greater ownership. Or it might be that a volunteer from the team of 49,000 volunteers that are out there and not linked to the Network, comes forward with a view to being more involved. Either way we would like to invite volunteers from your organisations to come together for an informal meeting here at VAR on Thurs 14th Sept 10am-12noon, to share their views and possibly identify a role for themselves or be supported with your help to identify a role linked to The BIG Volunteer Walk 2018.

The BIG Volunteer Walk 2018 – Save the Date!: Whilst NCVO is in the process of collating feedback from up and down the country in terms of National Volunteers’ Week 2017, taking account of concerns linked to school holidays and Ramadan, it still seems likely that we’ll be looking at 1-7 June 2018 and whilst I’m loathed to say it this far ahead, my suggestion for next year is the afternoon of Tues 5th June 2018! Be sure to get this date in your diary!!!

Royal thank you from the Duke of York

Fifteen charities from across South Yorkshire, including nine groups based in Rotherham, attended a Reception at St James’s Palace hosted by the Duke of York himself. Groups recently received royal recognition for their work in communities across the region and Award Holders included Voluntary Action Rotherham.

To find out more about the Duke of York Community Initiative contact Sarah on 01709 834467 regarding a FREE session we are holding on 7th September at 10am at VAR.
VAR Volunteers attend Royal Garden Party

It was fantastic to see our very own volunteers, Ted Ring, VAR volunteer and 2016 winner of the Community Achievement Awards and David Selman, VAR volunteer and Board member, along with their lovely wives attending the Royal Garden Party in May.

Training

Motivating and retaining volunteers

19th July 2017 - This course focuses on motivation and retention strategies to support you to keep hold of your volunteers once you have... Read more...

Rotherham Kitemark – FREE Workshop

23rd August 2017 - Rotherham Kitemark FREE Workshop – Wednesday 23rd August 2017. Rotherham Volunteer Centre developed the Rotherham kitemark quality mark, with... Read more...

Opportunity for Safeguarding Training

Did you know that we can offer safeguarding training? If any groups would like to attend a safeguarding training session, please contact Julie Adamson (julie.adamson@varotherham.org.uk) and we may be able to arrange a session.

Brokerage

Don’t forget to register your organisation on Volunteer Connect

Volunteer Connect Rotherham is our new online dedicated volunteer recruitment system for volunteer roles in Rotherham and is free for you to use. The system is easy and quick to use enabling you to advertise your volunteer roles, manage and track volunteers who’ve registered interest. You
can also login and proactively search our volunteer bank for volunteers who meet your requirements. If you are not already advertising roles with us, you can sign up and get started online.

To either get started or manage your organisation profile click here.

If you would like more information for organisations involving volunteers why not have a look at I Need Volunteers.

If you would like support to register on the system please get in touch with the Volunteer Centre who can guide you through step by step. Call us on 01709 829821 and ask for Kerry McGrath.

**Contacting volunteers on Volunteer Connect**

Just a quick note to say that you can only access volunteers’ full details if you ‘invite them to apply’ after they’ve expressed an interest. Here’s what you need to do...

- You will receive an e-mail notification when someone applies for one of your roles.
- Log in online through our website using your username and password in the ‘I need volunteers’ section.
- Click add/edit roles.
- Select a volunteer role.
- You will then see 4 boxes (your dashboard).
- In the bottom right hand box you will see any new applicants.
- Click on the applicant name.
- Scroll down and click ‘invite to apply’.
- Once the volunteer accepts your invitation, you will be able to view their full details and contact them/ send them an application pack etc.

Again, if you get stuck, just phone us. It will take minutes for us to talk you through it.

Kerry McGrath - 01709 834451.

**Do you have a group of people looking for volunteering opportunities?**

Did you know that we can deliver short talks to groups who are looking for volunteering opportunities to help them find out about what’s available and how to go about it all? If you would like us to deliver a talk to your group, please contact Kerry McGrath, email: Kerry.mcgrath@varotherham.org.uk.

**Good Practice Development**

**Rotherham Volunteer Coordinator Network**

Next Network Meeting Wed 19th July 9am-11am Hosted by Crisis Skylight SY 563 5BD

We will evaluate the BIG Volunteer Walk; gaging your views of what worked and what might have worked better moving forward. We will return to the hot topic of volunteer expenses and consider how we might tap into unclaimed volunteer expenses using Gift Aid. Please bring along any examples of policy and procedure in relation to gift aiding expenses.
New members always welcome. To find out more or to confirm your attendance contact Alison Thorp on 01709 834462 or email alison.thorp@varotherham.org.uk

The Walk feature could be popped under here please and then...

**How would you say ‘Thank You’?**

In the spirit of National Volunteer’s Week 1-7 June 2017 and Count Me In 2017 when we give over the whole month of June to celebrating and recognising the tremendous contribution that volunteers make, it seems only right to give over this feature to continuing this theme. Here are some further suggestions of ways that you might say THANK YOU:

1. **Thank you cards** – individual personalised cards thanking volunteers for their contribution. Great tool if you have less than 20 volunteers. Not so great if you have 300!
2. **Thank you email** – a great tool when you have too many to thank. Draft it and get the Chief Executive or Chair of Trustees to send it. What should it contain? A massive THANK YOU and maybe some statistics about the number of people all the volunteers have reached and something about the work they have achieved as a collective E.g. supported 27 art sessions, helped 25 young people complete application forms etc. Finally add something about the impact – 40 clients felt less isolated from attending the drop in.
3. **Office Coffee mornings** – get staff and volunteers together at a drop in Open Morning. Get them all to bring in homemade cakes and biscuits and share a cup of tea and a cupcake together. No costs involved and brings everyone together in an informal environment.
4. **Bring a Friend for Tea** – an office coffee morning with a twist. Invite volunteers in for an Office Coffee Morning but encourage them to bring a friend. A great opportunity to spread the word about your work to new people and also to sign up new volunteers. Do a short presentation (with cake of course) and tell them all about the amazing work of your volunteers and what more volunteers could achieve.
5. **Socials** – some organisations have small budgets to something a little more formal. An evening down the pub with some food and first drink on the house is a great way to say thank you if you have the budget.
6. **Post Work Drinks** – many organisations have a tradition of popping down the pub as a team once in a while. Invite your volunteers. It makes them feel part of the organisation and is a chance for staff to get to know them, especially if they volunteer outside the office.
7. **Organise a Volunteer day out** – there are many places of interest that offer free access to the public and some for community groups. In Southwark we have the magnificent Imperial War Museum – it’s free to enter so get everyone to bring a picnic to make a day of it. Dulwich Picture Gallery offers community tickets which get you into the paid collections for free. And though it’s a little journey away, Kew Gardens offer free admission to community groups.
8. **Your Website** - write an article about the great work of your volunteers and stick it up on your website during Volunteering Week, along with photos.
Some key things to think about:

- How do your volunteers want to be thanked? Ask them when they join.
- Think about the demographic of your volunteer group and plan events at sociable times e.g. after work, at the weekend.
- Don’t try and overdo it by inviting too many people to an event. If it’s a volunteer event, think about whether it should be kept just for volunteers.
- Go easy with the certificates – by asking volunteers how they want to be recognised and thanked it will be clear who wants them and who doesn’t.
- Not everyone likes a surprise – if you want to give special thanks to a long term volunteer, think about whether they would like to know in advance or whether they would like all the attention.

Developing Volunteering Opportunities

We’ve recently been reminding organisations that some of their volunteer roles have expired on our website. This means that the advertising dates that were originally set for your volunteer roles, have passed and so your role(s) might not be live on our website anymore and you won’t be receiving any applications. Thanks to all of those who have been in touch already, or jumped online and extended the dates, or closed the roles. There are still some roles that need amending, or closing- we can help! It takes just a few minutes to make the alterations, so give us a call and we can talk you through what you need to do. We don’t want to you to miss out on some fabulous volunteers!

What you need to do....

- Log in online through our website, using your username and password, in the ‘I need volunteers’ section. (you can reset your password if you need to).
- Go to ‘add/ edit roles’....
- Extend the ‘advertising dates’, or close the role by clicking the ‘closed’ box. *It’s also helpful if you write the word (CLOSED) in front of the opportunity title.
- Click save.

Policy, Response and Campaigning

What does the Queen’s Speech mean for Charities?

This year’s Queen’s speech was missing some of the usual pomp and pageantry following the snap election, but there will be plenty for MPs and peers to get their teeth into during the next two years. What does it mean for charities? Click here to read more.

Strategic Development of Volunteering

Silver Service: Barriers to volunteering amount the over 75s ...and how to overcome them
Rates of volunteering fall sharply in the over-75s, yet evidence shows that older volunteers may benefit the most from it. In this post I draw on findings from IVR’s evaluation of the first year of Abbeyfield’s Residents as Volunteers project, which specifically aims to recruit over-75s from their residential homes to volunteer both inside and outside the home. I will discuss what barriers exist and how they have been overcome in the project so far. Click here to read more.

**How to set up Employer Supported Volunteering as a Charity**

Employer supported volunteering (ESV) has primarily been seen as private sector businesses setting up programmes to support their employees in volunteering for charity organisations. The arrangement is usually mutually beneficial for all parties: the employer, the employees who volunteer and the charity they volunteer for. The how-to guide on setting up an employer supported volunteering programme as an employer covers the key things any type of organisation should consider – this guide covers the additional points to consider as a charity organisation thinking of setting up an employer supported volunteering programme for your employees.

**Best of the Web**

**Life Chances Fund – new themes launched**

The Life Chances Fund (LCF) was launched in July 2016 with the objective of helping those people in society who face the most significant barriers to leading happy and productive lives. The fund contributes to outcome payments for Social Impact Bonds. Read more...

**Cascading Leadership Programme**

Applications are currently being accepted for consultants and partners for the free King's Fund's Cascading Leadership Programme. Charities working toward improving health and wellbeing can apply to take part in a two-day training and development programme (worth between £900 and £3,120) which will help them to develop a range of leadership and consultancy skills, alongside deeper strategic leadership skills. Read more...

**Old Possums Practical Trust**

Old Possums Practical Trust makes a number of grants each year to further the aims of the Trust: - to increase knowledge and appreciation of any matters of historic, artistic, architectural, aesthetic, literary, musical or theatrical interest. Read more...

**Groundwork Community Award**

Do you know a community group that deserves special recognition for making your local area a better place to live? Groundwork's Community Awards will honour those small groups making a big difference to our quality of life. Read more...

**Services**

Does your organisation carry out DBS (previously CRB) checks?
VAR is a registered body authorised to undertake DBS checks on behalf of all organisations. This means that we have undertaken the relevant training to be able to process applications efficiently and professionally. All information is handled in a sensitive and confidential manner. We offer training to organisations to ensure forms are filled in correctly before they are sent to us which ensures a speedy service for all involved.

**Extremely competitive price**
Our DBS checks include a small administration fee which is dependent on the type of check required or the organisation asking for it. There are no hidden or extra charges for returned or reissued forms.

**Speedy and efficient service**
We don’t wait to send them out in bulk, and applications can be processed the same day if they are correctly filled in. Current turnaround time can be as little as 2 weeks.* (*Dependent on the DBS)

**Simple, hassle-free sign up process**
No commitment upon sign up, or minimum/maximum applications to meet. Full guidance provided every step of the way, including on eligible positions.

Please contact Allison Carr (allison.carr@varotherham.org.uk) or 01709 834460 for an information pack.

**Contact Us:** Liked it? Loathed it? Let us know what you thought of this newsletter and submit your volunteering news, issues and items for the next issue:
Send us an Email, Tweet us on Twitter, Find us on Facebook, Phone us on 01709 834460, Visit our Website
You’ve been automatically subscribed to this newsletter as a member of Rotherham Volunteer Centre. If you wish to no longer receive it, please email us.