

Stoke Volunteer Managers Network

February 2024

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**Welcome to the February edition
of the Stoke Volunteer Managers
Network Newsletter.**

The Volunteer Managers Network is a space for people working with volunteers in and around Stoke-on-Trent an opportunity to share ideas, network and provide mutual support.

This newsletter enables us to reach those who haven't been able to attend our recent meetings, and to share any relevant information. Feel free to share amongst your networks with those you think may be interested.

If you're not already part of the network and you'd like to join, please email

volunteering@vast.org.uk

Vision for Volunteering & Celebrating Volunteers

A big thank you to those that attended our February meeting. We are looking for hosts for our 13th May and 18th November meeting. If your organisation would like host either meeting, please email volunteering@vast.org.uk

During the meeting we focused on the national Vision for Volunteering and explored how this might apply to us locally. The Vision for Volunteering is a ten-year collaborative project designed to create a better future for volunteering.

The Vision for Volunteering is a movement to create a diverse, innovative, ambitious, equitable and person-centred future for volunteering.

The Vision for Volunteering has five themes:

Awareness and Appreciation; A future where a culture of volunteering is part of everyone's life and volunteer roles are given the recognition they deserve.

Power; A future where volunteers (and the communities they serve) lead on change that matters to them.

Equity and Inclusion; A future where it's easy for people to give their time and energy to the causes they care about, they feel welcomed, and the benefits are equally distributed.

Collaboration; A future where collaboration is natural and spontaneous, where people do great stuff together because they want to.

Experimentation; A future where communities aren't afraid to try new things to develop their own, innovative solutions to engaging and supporting volunteers.

You can find out more [here](#) on the Vision for Volunteering website.

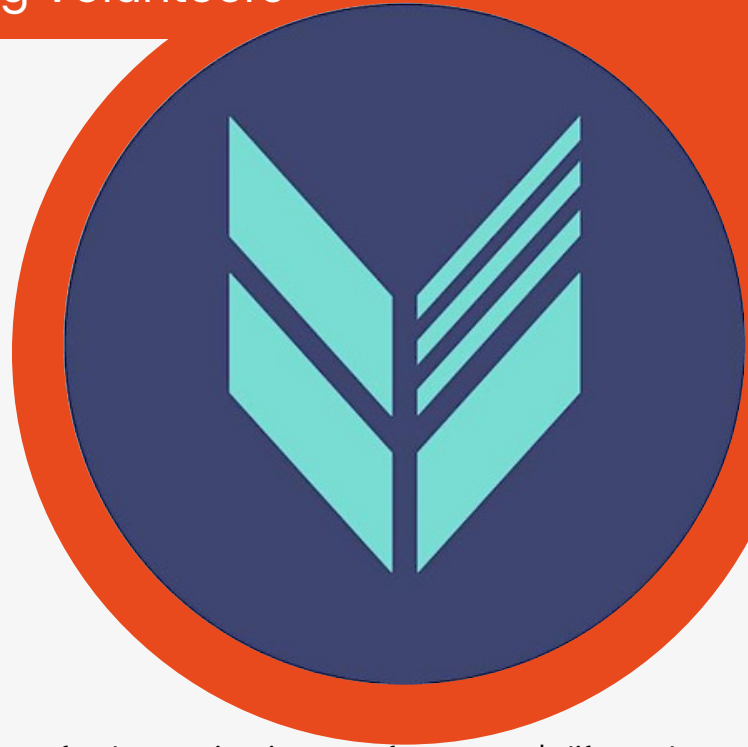
Celebrating Volunteers:

During the meeting, we also discussed the importance of celebrating volunteers. The hope is that celebrating them will boost volunteer retention and encourage even more people to become volunteers in some way.

Some of the ideas we discussed included:

- Quarterly coffee mornings
- Once or twice a year giving out thank you goodie bags. The bags would be personalised to the volunteer, and may include facts about their role. For example, you've drive 105 miles this month!
- Long-service awards. Middleport Matters recently had some pin badges made using this [website](#)
- Regular socials, for example bowling or a meal
- Making the most out of **Volunteers Week** (3rd - 9th June), or **International Volunteers Day** (5th Dec) to promote your volunteers
- Developing an internal newsletter to share good news stories
- Having a 'Meet The Volunteers' feature on social media, or in the premises.

It's important to remember that celebrating volunteers doesn't have a cost a fortune. A profound and thoughtful thank you can go a long way!





Facebook Group

Have you joined our Facebook group? Request to join [here](#) and help to grow the group by posting, commenting, and sharing volunteer opportunities. You can also get news and updates via **VAST Volunteering** on Facebook.

Friendly Reminder

If you have volunteer roles listed on the VAST Volunteer Noticeboard, please check they are up-to-date and contact volunteering@vast.org.uk if anything needs changing.

We are always more than happy to offer free advice on role descriptions to make them more attractive to potential volunteers.



EE Gives Back!

EE encourage their staff to give back to their community through volunteering. VAST helped match EE to a local organisation through our CSR Brokerage Service. As a result, EE spent the day with Gresty Street Community Allotments to transform a neglected area of the gardens.

You can read more about their experience [here](#).

Volunteers Forum

We are hosting our next Volunteers Forum on the 14th March from 11:30am – 2pm at The Dudson Centre. The event is aimed at volunteers, and will feature a lunch and an activity around mindfulness.

If you would like any of your volunteers to attend, please email volunteering@vast.org.uk and a member of our team can advise you further.

Please note spaces are limited for this event.



We would love to hear more good news stories involving the power of volunteering. If you have any you'd like to share, please send them to volunteering@vast.org.uk



VAST Volunteering Quality Standards

Our free scheme provides a framework which organisations can work towards accreditation based on their volunteering policies and procedures, and the way they work with new and existing volunteers.

Our vision for the quality standards scheme is to instil consistent volunteer-related best practice across the whole of the local voluntary sector through structured and proactive support.

You can find the information [here](#).

Training and Events

Introduction to Volunteer Management

This course is a perfect starting point for anyone who coordinates and/or supports volunteers in any capacity, or for anyone who would like to start involving volunteers in their organisation

For more information, and booking, please click [here](#).

VAST has a fantastic range of training planned for 2024 which you can view [here](#).



Future Meetings

We are changing the format of our meetings, to be either in person, or virtual rather than hybrid. This will make venues easier to find.

- 13th May, 1pm - 3pm. VENUE NEEDED!
- 29th August, 10am - 12pm, via Zoom
- 18th November, 1pm - 3pm, VENUE NEEDED!

If you have any suggestions for the agenda, or can offer a venue, please email volunteering@vast.org.uk