

# HOW TO...

## INCLUDE MORE PEOPLE IN VOLUNTEERING

**A key way of ensuring volunteering is inclusive, open and attractive to a wide pool of people is to provide a range of different opportunities for them to get involved.**

The ideas in this guide should help you to think about how you could start to create volunteering opportunities at your Club or Constituent Body (CB) that enable you to widen your pool of volunteers. If your key volunteer roles are already filled, it will help you consider ways to include more people whilst still retaining your existing volunteers. And if you struggle more generally with recruiting volunteers, it might give you some ideas for how you could make volunteering more appealing to new people or easier for them to say yes to.

Use these ideas in conjunction with the best practice contained in the [\*\*Volunteer Recruitment Guide\*\*](#) to create a powerful and inclusive plan for recruiting new volunteers.

## FOCUS ON SMALL, BITESIZE TASKS

**Many people would love to volunteer but can't fit a formal role into their lives due to family or work commitments.**

Make a list of the small tasks that could suit someone who can only help out now and again. Think about frequency and format; some jobs may only need to be done once a year, some might not need the same person to do them every week, and some might be suitable for doing online from home.

Inviting people to help with these things is a great way to include them in volunteering in a way that suits their circumstances whilst making a great contribution to your Club or CB. Whether you ask them in person, put a call out on social media or approach your local volunteering organisation, make sure you include important information such as how long the task will take and whether the volunteer can do it from home. That way people will know exactly what is expected of them and what they are signing up for.

## MAKE A HABIT OF ASKING PEOPLE TO HELP

A key barrier to people volunteering is that they haven't been asked to help and are not comfortable or confident enough to put their hand up. This can be especially true for people who are new to your Club or who feel they don't fit with the profile of the existing volunteer group.

Making a habit of regularly asking different people to help out, particularly with small tasks (see above), is a great way to introduce them to volunteering and help them feel included. For example, you could ask a different parent each week to help pack away after training. **Sometimes even using the term 'helping out' can make it sound more appealing!**

### QUESTIONS TO GET YOU THINKING

- If someone had an hour to give, what task would I share with them?
- If someone had a weekend to give, what task would I share with them?
- If someone had half a day to give, what task would I share with them?
- If someone had 30 minutes a week to give, what task would I share with them?



As more people experience helping out, the more likely it is that they will be open to doing so in the future.

## CREATE AN EVENT

In case you don't already do this at your Club, a great way to give people a taste of volunteering and to get lots done in one go is to set up an **annual volunteering day**. For example, at the start of the season, draw up a list of tasks, put on some food and drink, and invite everyone down to help get all the jobs done.

Events are a great way to connect with your existing members and to reach out to your local community and start to involve them in the life of your club. Fun days, fetes, sports days and rugby taster sessions are just a few examples of opportunities to invite the local community to experience what you are all about. Working with other local groups and organisations to put on such events can help you to build community relationships even further. Remember to showcase volunteering at every occasion – what things new people can get involved in and how they can sign up.



For more information on building connections with your local community, [see the guide here](#)

## CREATE SUB-GROUPS

Creating sub-groups of volunteers to look after different aspects of Club or CB life is a great way of opening up more volunteering opportunities and spreading responsibility beyond the main committee. Fundraising, marketing, events and even volunteer recruitment are perfect areas for a specific group of people to take on and can help you attract new volunteers who have particular experience or interest in that subject, especially those outside the Club/ CB who might not know a lot about rugby but are keen to build their skills or put their existing experience to good use.

## SPLITTING ROLES

There's no reason for each committee role to be taken on by only one person. Splitting a role in two – for example, recruiting two Co Chairs, or having a Secretary and a Vice-Secretary – is a good way to create opportunities for more volunteers, and enables you to match different people's skills and experience to different aspects of a role.

There are lots of ways to split roles such as by task or by when certain things need to be done (e.g. weekday or weekend). And whilst recruiting new volunteers can often be a challenge, you may find that by making a role less intense or more flexible it actually becomes a more attractive proposition or easier for someone to commit to.



### CASE STUDY

**Westbury RFC** historically recruited one person per volunteer role. However, as older members retire they are now recruiting teams to take on each role. For example, they have moved from having one bar manager to recruiting two bar managers who split the role. Not only does the Club now always have cover for the bar, they found that the role was more attractive to prospective volunteers as it was a more manageable proposition for someone who works full time.



## SPREAD THE LOAD

Spreading the load taken on by your existing volunteers amongst more people is another great way of creating opportunities to get involved.

This isn't about taking tasks away from people. Rather, it's about engaging with your existing volunteers and finding out if their role could be made more enjoyable or manageable.

Have a conversation with your existing volunteers and find out if they have too much on their plate, or if there are particular aspects of their role that they don't enjoy or feel well suited for.

Once you know this, you can focus on recruiting new volunteers for those specific aspects or tasks, and make your existing volunteers happier in the process.

## OFFER MENTORING OR BUDDYING

Teaming a new volunteer up with an existing volunteer through mentoring or buddying is a great way to ensure they feel supported and included from the outset. It can also be very effective as a method to train someone in their role and transfer knowledge within your volunteer group.

Ask the existing volunteer to check in with the new recruit once a week to start with, then once a month until they are up and running. Informal catch ups are often best, such as a quick phone call or over a tea/coffee. You'll be able to help with any questions that the new volunteer might have and make sure that they are enjoying their experience and feel confident in their role.

## IF THIS SOUNDS INTERESTING, HERE'S WHAT TO DO NEXT:

- 1 As a group of volunteers, consider the following questions:
  - Are there any volunteer roles that are not currently filled?
  - Are any current volunteers due to leave or step down?
  - How are your existing volunteers feeling? Is anyone overburdened?
  - Are there key moments coming up where you could do with some more help?
  - What opportunities are there to connect with new potential volunteers (e.g. a new cohort of juniors (and parents) joining the Club).
  - Are there any skills or experience that you'd like to bring into the Club/ CB?



- 2 Use the [Workforce Planning Tool](#) to map out all the jobs/ tasks that need doing around the Club/ CB, along with who currently does them. Consider whether some different skills or experience could be useful.



- 3 Work out which tasks could be taken on by someone new, and split these into individual tasks or on-going roles.



- 4 Use the ideas in this guide and the [Recruitment Guide](#) to build a plan for who you might target (both inside and outside of your existing membership) and how you will do this.



- 5 Recruit some willing buddies/ mentors from your existing volunteer group.



## CASE STUDY

# HOW THINKING DIFFERENTLY ABOUT VOLUNTEERING HELPED OTLEY RFC RECRUIT 50 NEW VOLUNTEERS

Otley RFC has around 250-300 members with an additional 200 juniors. However the first team is physically located a mile from the rest of the Club which has led to a feeling of disconnect in the Club. In order to tackle this issue, Otley have developed **a five-year vision and plan** to deliver it. Their aim is to bring the whole Club together – both physically and emotionally – under the vision of being ‘a welcoming, inclusive and successful family rugby club in the heart of Otley’s community’.

Once the five-year plan was developed, Otley recognised that they would need lots of support from volunteers in order to deliver it. By **thinking differently about how to structure volunteering** and what support volunteers might need they have managed to recruit 50 new volunteers, all working together to achieve the Club’s five-year plan. Volunteering was previously supported by one committee of 12 people; now Otley have a **committee, a steering group** and seven sub-groups each focused on a different aspect of the plan.



## HOW DID THEY DO THIS?

- The existing volunteer group decided to set up seven sub-groups, each supporting one of the seven pillars of their plan.
- For each sub-group, they worked out the roles that would be needed, what each volunteer would be responsible for and the key skills that were required.
- They then shared their vision, plan and clear requirements for the volunteer roles with the whole Club (members and parents of junior members), and invited them to sign up for one of the sub-groups.
- Because they had been clear on what was required for each role, they were able to match skills and experience where appropriate and could also consider whether the volunteers would enjoy the role.
- Once people started to sign up, this news was shared back to the wider membership which in turn encouraged more people to sign up.
- Volunteers were provided with the opportunity to buddy up with other volunteers, helping them feel more supported and lightening their individual loads.
- Four members of the existing committee stepped down to make room for new volunteers who could bring a fresh perspective and help drive the plan forward. This also meant that junior representatives could be included, ensuring all parts of the Club were reflected on the main committee.



## TOP TIPS

Otley RFC's top tips for increasing volunteer opportunities and recruiting more volunteers.

Have a clear context and be specific in what you are looking for people to do. Just asking for volunteers doesn't work.

Understand that time is one of the biggest barriers to volunteering so give people understanding and flexibility. Accept that not everyone is going to be at every meeting and have a clear process in place to keep people informed. If you are working on a five year plan there's plenty of time to move it forwards!

Keep members updated regularly with what is going on at the Club and what you are looking to achieve. If people know what's happening and what is required they are more likely to get involved.

