

Report for: INFORMATION



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| <b>Contains Confidential or Exempt Information</b> | NO   |
| <b>Title</b>                                       | Libraries, Arts and Heritage Service Successful Volunteering     |
| <b>Responsible Officer(s)</b>                      | Mark Taylor, Head of Libraries, Arts & Heritage                  |
| <b>Contact officer, job title and phone number</b> | Mark Taylor, Head of Libraries, Arts & Heritage 01628 796989     |
| <b>Member reporting</b>                            | Cllr Claire Stretton, Principal Member for Culture & Communities |
| <b>For Consideration By</b>                        | Big Society Panel  |
| <b>Date to be Considered</b>                       | 24 March 2016  |
| <b>Implementation Date if Not Called In</b>        | N/A  |
| <b>Affected Wards</b>                              | All  |

#### REPORT SUMMARY

1. This report describes the procedures and practices of the Libraries, Arts and Heritage Service (LAHS) volunteering programme. It includes how we recruit, train, support and retain volunteers.
2. Volunteers work alongside staff and are always supervised. They offer some flexibility that allows the Service to extend services that would not otherwise be provided owing to limitations on staff capacity and time.
3. We currently have 280 registered volunteers, of which 246 are active (166 Library volunteers and 80 Museum and Heritage volunteers).
4. During April 2015-Feb 2016, volunteers gave the service 10,866 hours. In the period April 2014-March 2015, the figure was 11,148 hours. That is equivalent to approximately £86K on average per year worth of library or museum assistant paid time.

#### If recommendations are adopted, how will residents benefit?

Benefits to residents and reasons why they benefit

Dates by which residents can expect to notice a

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
|  | difference          |
| 1. LAHS volunteers are mostly Royal Borough residents. Volunteering for the LAHS service provides opportunities for young and older residents to be actively involved with the public service.   | Current and ongoing |
| 2. Volunteers/Residents' involvement helps embed the service in our communities and neighbourhoods.  | Current and ongoing |
| 3. The volunteer programme through its wider social connections helps shape the character and reputation of a service that is customer friendly. These social connections enable the service to better respond to customers' and residents' needs. | Current and ongoing |

## 1. DETAILS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### RECOMMENDATION:

**That the Panel notes the involvement of Volunteers in Libraries and Museum delivery and that they will continue to provide a significant contribution to the Libraries, Arts & Heritage Service**

## 2. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) AND OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The involvement of volunteers has created some flexibility and opportunities to set up new activities run by volunteers in our Libraries and Museum.
- 2.2 It provides important work environment and learning experiences for young volunteers. The volunteering experience gives all volunteers/residents young and older a sense of self value and social interaction in the public and work environment. It enables those seeking work to add to their experiences.
- 2.3 These developments contribute to the transformation of our Libraries and the Museum becoming valuable and vibrant community social spaces. It works well in supporting our work as a statutory whole life and cultural service.

## 3 KEY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 A new target accounting for the number of active volunteers will be introduced for 1 April 2016- 31 March 2017. This will give a clear volunteer activity level. This may result in the withdrawal of the target measuring the number of registered volunteers. Project volunteers are dependent upon grant income from external sources.

| Defined Outcomes | Achieved Outcome | Exceeded Outcome | Date they should be delivered by |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Volunteer hours  | 10,866           | >4%              | 31 March 2016                    |

| <b>Defined Outcomes</b>                           | <b>Achieved Outcome</b> | <b>Exceeded Outcome</b> | <b>Date they should be delivered by</b> |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Target-<br>10,411 hrs                             |                         |                         |   |
| Volunteer hours<br>Target-<br>9,940 hrs           | 11,148                  | >12%                    | 31 March 2015                           |
| Number of registered volunteers<br>Target-<br>240 | 280                     | >16%                    | 31 March 2016                           |

## 3.2 Recruitment

3.2.1 LAHS mainly recruits volunteers using the RBWM Libraries and Museum pages on the Borough website, monthly e-newsletters, and sometimes advertise in local newspapers such as the Maidenhead Advertiser, Windsor Express & Observer and the Around the Royal Borough quarterly Council newspaper. We also attend publicity meetings such as the Ascot Retirement Fair and the Big Society Fairs to promote volunteering opportunities.

3.2.2 We have developed a structured volunteering programme that determines our recruitment practice. We have specific roles detailing the remit of duties and basic requirements for each role. The roles fulfil specific duties matching the needs and expectations of the service.

3.2.2.1 Library volunteering roles include: Lending Library volunteer, IT session leaders and/or assistants, Story and/or rhyme time volunteers, events volunteers, Reading Group leaders, Home Library volunteers, Summer Reading Challenge young volunteers, and Reading Hack young volunteers.

3.2.2.2 Museum volunteering roles include: Front of House volunteers, Curatorial volunteers, Oral History project volunteers, and For King and Country project volunteers.

3.2.3 Prospective volunteers obtain information about available roles from the website. They can then contact the Volunteering Officer (VO) for further details of these roles. The VO can be contacted for initial inquiry by email and telephone. They can also submit an online volunteering application and/or an expression of interest web-form. The VO contacts the individuals upon receipt of the online forms.

3.2.4 The next stage is when the VO or supervising officer (Museum officers) invites the prospective volunteer for an informal interview or meeting. Owing to the specific design of the roles, successful recruitment of any prospective volunteer is dependent on whether the requirements of the role chosen or on offer matches the experience and skills set of the prospective volunteer.

- 3.2.5 The training process we offer our volunteers involves a significant investment in terms of staff time and resources. This means we make recruitment decisions based on whether the prospective volunteer has the necessary role requirements or potential and if they are able and willing to commit between six months to a year.
- 3.2.6 Upon successful recruitment, a process is put in place to complete a Disclosure of Barring Service application, two references, followed later by a medical questionnaire. Volunteers are not always amenable to the medical questionnaire as it is found to be intrusive and not relevant to a volunteering capacity. However, for some roles, fitness to undertake the activity is a necessary requirement and may mean that the volunteer may be directed to a role more suited to their abilities rather than the one they have applied for.

### 3.3 Training

3.3.1 Upon completion of the recruitment process, all volunteers go through an induction that includes the VO or Heritage team member, introducing them to how the service works, offer them a general overview of the relevant policies and procedures that underlie the organisation of the service and the Royal Borough.

3.3.2 Specific roles provide relevant training programmes:

#### ***Lending Library –***

- Spydus 1, 2 & 3 (Spydus is the software that manages the Library's management & stock or customer information system). Each session takes 2.5-3.5 hours to complete and requires regular familiarisation afterwards. Volunteers start with Spydus 1 and usually take one to six months to familiarise and train for the further progressing sessions.
- Safeguarding training, Manual Handling training, and all other service-specific training are offered
- Service Pod training over a period of at least 6 sessions or until basic familiarity sets in – this is practical training during a volunteering session on the Library work floor. This exposes the volunteer to customer service practices, customer queries, reservations, shelving, helping with library displays, emptying book bins and drop boxes, etc.

#### ***Story and/or Rhyme time –***

- Story and rhyme time training
- Safeguarding training

#### ***Summer Reading Challenge, Reading Hack, and New projects for Young volunteers –***

- Basic Spydus or Spydus 1 training for summer reading challenge volunteers
- Training on how to facilitate reading and creative activities with children

#### ***Front of House Museum volunteers –***

- General introduction to include Health and Safety, safeguarding, security, fire and other risks on site
- Modes\* training (\*Modes is the museum database)

- Object handling training
- Customer service training
- Guildhall tour training
- Till training
- Autism awareness training

***Curatorial Museum volunteers –***

- Modes training
- Object handling training

***Oral History Project volunteers –***

- Oral History Society Training
- Sound quality training

***For King and Country project volunteers –***

- Research training,
- newspaper research
- database training
- Walks training

### **3.4 Support**

3.4.1 All Library volunteers are supervised and supported by location specific Library supervisors and regular interaction with the VO. This is their main contact and support. The VO liaises closely with Library supervisors about the progress and development of volunteers in their respective roles. We discuss and work at solving with the volunteer any issues involving further training and volunteering rotas, and their experience with volunteering.

3.4.2 There is an informal volunteer review that we strive to fulfil at least once every two years. This is carried out by the VO or the Library supervisor. There is a short standardised list of questions getting feedback from volunteers about their experience of volunteering, and suggestions for improving the service, how and if their expectations have been met and identifying further training needs if necessary.

3.4.3 The VO meets and emails volunteers regularly. Volunteers are always able to communicate with the VO if they have something they want to discuss. Volunteers as a whole are not keen on formal modes of reviews, as it is likened to formal work. We therefore make sure that we keep it informal and face to face.

3.4.4 The VO supervises all young volunteers in the Libraries in terms of training, rotas, and maintenance of standards of behaviour. The VO nonetheless relies on the assistance of the Library supervisors for the daily support of young volunteers during their volunteering sessions across the locations.

3.4.5 Museum and Heritage project volunteers are supported by Museum Officers on a day to day basis. They liaise about rotas and training needs and volunteering experience. They also take part in regular volunteer surveys. There is a plan to develop a Volunteer Skills Audit to ascertain current volunteer skills and skills they would like to build.

### 3.5 Retention and the generation of goodwill

#### 3.5.1 Appreciation of LAHS volunteers –

- Annual Appreciation social for LAHS volunteers with entertainment and refreshments. We invite the Lead Member to say words of thanks at this event.
- Appreciation cards signed by our Head of Service, Service Managers, Team Leaders and VO, enclosed are 1 or 2 vouchers enabling the free rental of audio-visual materials
- Appreciation cards signed and sent by location specific Library supervisors and staff to respective volunteers
- Limited number of free LAHS events tickets reserved for volunteers
- There is a plan to extend staff privileges (i.e. reduced rental costs for audio-visual materials over six months old) to LAHS volunteers. This is currently under consideration as we explore aspects of costs and missed income generation.
- Nominations for the Annual RBWM Volunteer Awards
- Associate Membership of the Friends of Windsor & Royal Borough Museum for Museum and Heritage volunteers
- 1 x Volunteer outing a year organised by the Friends of the Museum for Museum volunteers
- A voice on the Museum Working Group for Museum volunteers
- 4 x meetings a year for Museum and Heritage volunteers
- Volunteer Suggestion box

3.5.2 The service puts emphasis on meeting volunteers' expectations. We do this by offering opportunities for training and creating new projects that fit into the LAHS business model. We ensure that we respect and ask only for what volunteers are able to commit to. This happens by the social interaction we have with our volunteers whenever we (VO and Library supervisors and Museum Officers) see them. This allows everyone to negotiate what they want to do and how volunteer time and skills can be optimised. This process ensures we do not burden volunteers, instead generating the goodwill and enthusiasm we rely on.

## 4. FINANCIAL DETAILS

### Financial impact on the budget

4.1 **Salary cost of Volunteering Officer £12,870.50 per annum**

4.2 **Cabinet Office grants for supporting young people to volunteer for the Summer Reading Challenge and Reading Hack gave:**

**£1,800 (2014)**

**£2,100 (2015)**

4.3 **Financial benefits of volunteers:**

| <b>Financial Year</b> | <b>Volunteer hours</b> | <b>*Savings if employees' time was deployed</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---|
| 1 April 2014-31       | 11,148                 | £86,731   |

|                             |        |         |
|-----------------------------|--------|---------|
| March 2015                  |        |         |
| 1 April 2015-29<br>Feb 2016 | 10,866 | £84,538 |

\* £7.78/h Retrospective Entry rate on Grade 2 pay scale for Library/Museum assistants

## 5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 To ensure there is clear boundary between volunteering and paid work, the service follows the following rules and process practice

- Volunteers are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses like travel if they are asked to volunteer at a location they do not normally go to. Library volunteers are not reimbursed for travel or parking expenses otherwise. Museum volunteers can, upon special agreement, claim parking and travel expenses in Windsor and travel. Few do so in reality.
- Volunteering relationship starts with a Volunteer agreement, not a contract
- Volunteers have roles, as opposed to job descriptions
- Volunteers and the service have mutually agreed expectations not obligations

## 6. VALUE FOR MONEY

6.1 In Section 4.3, we note the service has saved >£70,000 in staff costs for >10,000 hours during both financial years 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. This reflects value for money as volunteering hours help us economise, enabling the channelling of resources in areas where we can apply our paid professional staff more urgently and optimally.

6.2 Young volunteers are recruited in higher numbers. Their involvement in new activities such as Scratch Code club, Saturday Lego and Board Games Club, and Lego Robotics Club brings them into the Libraries. The use and knowledge of resources offered in Libraries is enhanced. This has implications for visitor numbers, issues, and use of Library facilities. The wider value is that we expose young people to opportunities to develop their skills and life experience. Therefore enhancing prospects in education and reducing care needs in service sectors such as young people's social welfare. The service supports activities associated with Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and Arts Award with minimum staff involvement after training. In the past three years, five Library volunteers and one Museum volunteer successfully converted to staff members. This was after one year to two years of regular volunteering.

6.3 Older volunteers in their purposeful time volunteering in the Libraries and Museum have opportunities to enhance their active cultural lifestyles. Our volunteering offers regular social interaction and a sense of belonging to external social structures. This contributes to general well-being and reduces isolation. This has wider value for money effects in terms of health and older people's social welfare.

This benefit extends to housebound customers too. Our Home Library volunteers regularly visit, deliver books and maintain regular social contact with them. Home Library volunteers have on occasions been able to notice and report to library

supervisors if their housebound customer has become ill or if their condition has worsened. We therefore have the potential to communicate to the appropriate service to respond with care.

## 7. SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT APPRAISAL

N/A

## 8. RISK MANAGEMENT

| Risks  | Uncontrolled Risk | Controls                                      | Controlled Risk |
|--|-------------------|---|-----------------|
| Loss of volunteers impacts on delivery of the LAHS | Medium            | Continuous recruitment and retention activity | Low             |

## 9. LINKS TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The provision of volunteering opportunities helps the LAHS to put **Residents First** whilst by involving them in the support of the Service we are **Delivering Together**. In enhancing the service through the support of volunteers the Council is providing **Value for Money** and through the investment in training for the volunteers we are **Equipping Ourselves for the Future**.

## 10. EQUALITIES, HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMUNITY COHESION

We recruit openly to include all the protected characteristics as covered under the Equality Act 2010.

## 11. STAFFING/WORKFORCE AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS

Staff hold very positive attitudes towards the application of volunteers as they see their involvement wherever feasible, helping the service to be flexible and extend. It also allows them to concentrate on more specialised and less repetitive tasks when they are being supported by volunteers to ensure the quality of service to customers is enhanced.

## 12. PROPERTY AND ASSETS

N/A

## 13. ANY OTHER IMPLICATIONS

N/A

## 14. CONSULTATION

N/A



## 15. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

This activity has been ongoing for the last three years and is expected to continue under the current policy for the LAHS.

## 16. APPENDICES

N/A

## 17. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

N/A

## 18. CONSULTATION (MANDATORY)

| Name of consultee | Post held and Department                            | Date sent                | Date received | See comments in paragraph:                         |
|-------------------|---|--------------------------|---------------|--|
| <b>Internal</b>   |   |                          |               |  |
| Cllr Stretton     | Principal Member                                    | 8 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2016 | 14/03/16      | Signed off for dissemination for Big Society Panel |
| Simon Fletcher    | Strategic Director Operations and Customer Services | 8 <sup>th</sup> Mar 2016 | 14/03/16      | Cleared for dissemination for Big Society Panel    |
|                   |   |                          |               |  |
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|                   |   |                          |               |  |
| <b>External</b>   |   |                          |               |  |
|                   |   |                          |               |  |

## REPORT HISTORY

| Decision type:  | Urgency item?  |
|-----------------|--|
| For information | This report is for the information of the Big Society Panel and will be shared with the Culture & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel. |

| Full name of report author | Job title                  | Full contact no: |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
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