



How to work with volunteers

Hand-out 1/13 from Workshop W4

<https://www.john-truscott.co.uk/Resources/DIY-Workshops-index>

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Why people offer as formal or informal volunteers

Why people fail to offer as formal or informal volunteers



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Other reasons why people offer as formal or informal volunteers in church

Other reasons why people fail to offer as formal or informal volunteers in church



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Volunteering roles in your church – tick/adapt those that apply and add others

Sunday roles

- Leading and preaching
- Young people's group leaders
- All-age team
- Musicians
- Choir
- Prayer ministry
- Lesson reading
- Intercessions
- Servers / Communion helpers
- Welcomers and stewards
- Tech: audio and visual
- Refreshments
- Building: heat, light, opening up
- Flowers
- Banners

Mid-week roles

- Small group leaders
- Small group hosts
- Young people's group leaders
- Sports activity leaders
- Course leaders
- Pastoral visitors
- Seniors group leaders
- Toddlers group leaders
- Playgroup staff
- Pastoral visitors
- Mid-week services
- Treasurer and finance team
- Outreach team
- Community events
- Catering / hospitality
- Cleaning
- Maintenance
- Grounds
- IT support
- Church office
- Church council / Trustees
- Meeting secretaries
- Elders / deacons
- A range of committees
- Event planning
- ... and many more

Informal volunteers

- Lifts to church
- Lifts to events
- Washing up
- Washing/cleaning
- Litter picking
- Befriending
- Shopping for shut-ins
- Visiting care homes
- Magazine/leaflet distribution
- Financial giving
- Praying
- ... and many more



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Group questions

Select from the following list.

- 1 What made you think or surprised you in the lists for the volunteering outside church?
- 2 What do you feel are the key reasons why people do not offer in *your* church? This may be one listed above or something different or specific to your church.
- 3 Which reasons people give for not offering are merely excuses, and which might be genuine and need to be respected?
- 4 What do you see as the main differences in patterns of offering between those aged in their 20s and 30s, and those in their 60s and 70s?
- 5 The Covid epidemic had a huge impact on volunteering in many churches. Why was this so? What might be done to overcome this to some extent?
- 6 Given the main reasons why people do not offer for service in your church, is this their fault or the church's fault?

It may well be worth having a discussion on Q6. We often blame people for lack of commitment when the real culprit may be your church through lack of clear teaching, lack of a personal approach to invite people, or lack of support for all your volunteers.



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Volunteers v paid staff

Many (especially larger) churches now employ youth workers, community workers, administrators, music directors, pastoral assistants and others. Is this a healthy approach? What are the dangers?

A good case can be made for paying staff in the following situations:

- when the post requires a full working week, or most of one;
- when the post requires set availability times;
- when the post requires a specialist;
- when the post requires a pioneering leader;
- when church members are time-poor;
- when leaders are diverted from their priorities.

But there are dangers;

- a denial of body ministry;
- confusions over roles;
- tensions between staff and volunteers;
- poor staff management;
- the cost;
- tradition.

For more detail on these points, see Training Notes TN37, *To pay or not to pay*, in the Resources section of the website.



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The three faces

Church-centred

Notes to make:

People-centred

Notes to make:

Kingdom-centred

Notes to make:



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Seek good fits

Instead of 'gifts' alone for the second face approach you might consider a selection from this list:

- knowledge base
- skill set
- natural talents
- spiritual gifts
- enthusiasm drive
- human impact
- life experience
- Christian character
- availability
- teamwork.

Two available schemes are **SHAPE.....**

- S: Spiritual gifts
H: Heart's desire
A: Abilities
P: Personality
E: Experience

... and **NETWORK**

Personal experience

Character traits

Ministry convictions

Others' observations



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Church environment

A church vision I can own

A church leadership I trust and respect

A discipleship challenge I can respond to

An approach that is personal

A role I can develop within



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CHRIST CHURCH, CHRISTMINSTER

Member of the Newcomers Team

Responsible to the team leader and then to the Outreach Group

Last updated August 2024 due for revision by August 2025

Why do we have this team?

- To ensure that every Sunday newcomer or visitor receives a genuine but appropriate welcome to put them at ease and make them glad they came.
- To be the first point of personal friendship and pastoral care if they return, up until the point where they join a Christ Church group of any kind.
- The aim is *not* to be the sole welcomers, but to encourage the whole congregation to look out for and welcome strangers as we seek to become a truly caring church.

Who do we relate to?

- We are each responsible to the Newcomers' Team Leader, who is accountable to the church's Outreach Group.
- We are a small but dedicated team who rely on each other and work closely together.
- We complement the work of the Church Wardens* and the Stewarding Team who have a separate but related role in ensuring the smooth operation of all church services.
- We aim to pass people on to leaders within the small groups network, and so liaise closely with the Small Groups Co-ordinator.

What are our main responsibilities?

- To look out for visitors at Sunday services, to put them at ease in whatever seems an appropriate way (realising that this will be different for each person), to give information about the church if required, to give them a welcome leaflet, and to introduce them to leaders and others if this seems appropriate.
- To remember names and faces, so that people are recognised and welcomed personally on a second or subsequent visit. This includes occasional visitors and relatives of church members.
- To tell the team leader about any such contacts so that an accurate weekly record can be kept.
- To pray for the team's work.
- To encourage other church members to notice and talk to newcomers.

* or denominational equivalent



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CHRIST CHURCH, CHRISTMINSTER

Member of the Newcomers Team

What do we expect of you?

- 1 To be on duty whenever you are at church on Sunday (there is no rota), if possible being present 15 minutes before the service begins and staying to talk to newcomers and visitors afterwards. Your first responsibility is to newcomers, even when your friends want to talk to you.
- 2 To make it a priority to attend termly team meetings for training and sharing news, and the occasional Sunday lunches for newcomers.
- 3 To commit yourself to the team for one year in the first instance, and to review this with the team leader at the end of this time.
- 4 To be regularly on duty (present at church at least two to three times a month on average), able to talk to strangers in a natural way, to be very sensitive in how you do this so that no one feels put under any pressure, to remember names and faces, and to be knowledgeable about the church so that you can answer questions confidently.
- 5 To be careful about giving wrong impressions if talking to people of a different gender if on their own, and although not to be too formal, never to be over-familiar in any inappropriate way. You should be fully aware of the contents of our Safeguarding Policy.
- 6 To share our vision for being Jesus Christ to every person you meet, helping people to move one more step forward in their knowledge and experience of him.

What can you expect of us?

- 1 This is an unusual team that works behind the scenes and is not officially listed, so you will be expected to do this work without the public recognition that we seek to give to other teams. However, the church will pray for the team (without naming individual members) through our monthly prayer leaflet and occasional intercessions in services.
- 2 The Minister and leadership recognise the vital importance of your work and want to encourage you in every way they can. So, for example, one PCC member / Elder (etc.) each year is asked to take specific responsibility for the team and to represent you on the Council / Eldership. This year Peter Piper acts as this link, and he will check how things are going with you from time to time. He will also present a report from your team at least once during the year.
- 3 The church has a training budget, and is happy to pay fees for selected training events or to purchase resources that your team leader feels would help you all.
- 4 Once a year your team leader will speak to you about your involvement on this team and ask whether you wish to continue or whether there are other tasks within the church which might help you to move on in practical discipleship.
- 5 If changes in personal circumstances mean that you wish to come off the team, either for just a few weeks or permanently, we quite understand this and will do all we can to support you.

August 2024



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A team rather than a rota approach

The key elements of this approach are:

- You serve not solo on a rota every other month (say), but as a 24/7 member of a team with others, even if your sessions on active duty are solo.
- The team has a leader so you feel in a secure place.
- You are invited to join the team in person by the leader.
- You are expected to review your membership of the team each year so there is no expectation that you have to serve a life sentence.
- The church holds some kind of database of its members' skills, gifts and experience, with one person in charge of this.

Example – The church's Intercessions Team

The role, and this should be set out on about one side of A5 paper, is to lead the congregation in prayer for others each Sunday. You were invited to join this team by its leader, who is herself a volunteer, because of your passion for prayer, seen in your contributions during your regular attendance at central prayer gatherings.

You are only expected to fulfil this role about once every other month, but you are listed as a team member. You meet up with other members regularly for training, new ideas and to assess recent services. More importantly, you know who is leading in prayer each week and are encouraged to pray for them as they prepare. You seek to encourage other team members and learn yourself from the way they lead.

You tell people, "We lead intercessions", not "I lead the prayers".



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The affirmation they deserve

Scoring scheme - use the boxes

- 5 Our present performance is excellent
- 4 We're pretty good
- 3 We're OK but need to improve
- 2 We really need to take action here
- 1 We do very little under this heading
- 0 We do virtually nothing

Taken from Training Notes TN31 on the website, *Affirming volunteers*.

- 1 **Christian teaching and discipleship**
public preaching, one-to-one, reading ...
- 2 **Prayer**
from leaders, the team, prayer partners
- 3 **Due recognition**
not to pander to pride, but: commissioning, intercessions, certificates
- 4 **Re-envisioning and ongoing communication**
big picture context, updated information, efficient organisation
- 5 **Training**
induction, in-service, external – a church budget to show commitment
- 6 **Practical help and resources**
equipment, funds, baby-sitting, sabbaticals
- 7 **Encouragement by saying thank you**
regular recognition (not just at the annual meeting!), real interest, team parties
- 8 **Feedback and correction**
quick reviews through to appropriate appraisals
- 9 **Team support**
team get-togethers, sharing experiences, having fun doing the job together
- 10 **Short-term contracts**
move people on to new challenges to stretch faith and test gifting (but say goodbye)

Total out of 50 Points with low scores



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WEBSITE RESOURCES

Here is a range of resources on the website all relating to volunteering in some form. Some of the material in this DIY aid has come from some of these.

Volunteering strategy

- Article A43: *Every member on active service – How to mobilise your church*
- Training Notes TN15: *How not to delegate!*
- Training Notes TN36: *Square pegs in round holes*
- Training Notes TN37: *To pay or not to pay?*
- Training Notes TN100: *Why some offer why some don't*
- Training Notes TN126: *The small-church administrator*
- Training Notes TN139: *Church workers in teams*
- Training Notes TN148: *Serving in a post-Covid church*

Volunteers: management

- Article A6: *Job descriptions – Advice and examples for staff and volunteers*
- Article A45: *How to lead a team at church – Practical help for beginners*
- Article A47: *15 principles of volunteering – By examining five ministries*
- Training Notes TN17: *Suggested questions for an annual review*
- Training Notes TN144: *360-degree reviews for churches?*
- Training Notes TN153: *How not to manage volunteers!*

Volunteers: care of

- Training Notes TN24: *Church members can burn out too*
- Training Notes TN31: *Affirming volunteers*
- Training Notes TN55: *So, who should be in the dock?*
- Training Notes TN85: *Preparing a Lone Worker Policy*

Volunteers: succession

- Training Notes TN131: *Helpful handover documents*
- Training Notes TN133: *Planning the next step*