## Supporting and Managing volunteers

There is little point recruiting volunteers if they are not then adequately supported, and then leave when they feel undervalued. So retaining volunteers is arguably an even more important task. Sadly there is no magic formula but the guidelines below should help.

### Volunteer Co-ordination

Ideally someone will take responsibility for recruiting, supporting and overseeing volunteers. Whilst some clubs combine these responsibilities with other roles (e.g. secretary), some have this as a distinct role: a Volunteer Co-ordinator who can dedicate time to this.

A Volunteer Co-ordinator is someone with great people, communication and organisational skills, and the “go to” person who makes others feel welcomed and included. They are the main contact for new and existing volunteers, and need to be “visible” to members.

A Role Description is available on the LTA website.

### Getting to know your volunteers

Try to get to know your volunteers and what’s going on in their lives, and giving opportunities for giving and receiving feedback. Understanding your volunteers will help you to:

* Revise roles to ensure they are still relevant and valuable
* Provide new opportunities for keeping volunteers involved and motivated
* Enable you to continually improve how volunteers are supported

### Keeping volunteers happy

Volunteers who feel appreciated and receive great support are far more likely to continue. The aim is for volunteering to be enjoyable and rewarding and that volunteers feel confident. If a volunteer enjoys what they do, they may introduce other volunteers through personal contacts. There are some quick tips to help:

* **Process** – ensuring thatyour policies and procedures are current and fit for purpose may sound dull but it’s essential and your volunteers will feel like their welfare is a top priority.
* **Check in** - regularly check in with a volunteer. See communication below
* **Flexibility** – try to be understanding if they are having personal difficulties and can’t commit as much time as you’d like
* **Growth** – wherever possible, try to offer training and development opportunities, and enable volunteers to hone new skills and meet new people.
* **Experience** - people are looking for something that stands out in the memory, so try to create ‘high points’ wherever you can. Ensure the experience is rewarding
* **Social** - many people volunteer to widen their social network. Whether or not this was their primary reason, providing regular social opportunities can really help them stay engaged
* **Listen** - be engaged with what they are doing and encourage new ideas and views
* **Thank you** - two tiny words that cost nothing but can go a long, long way.
* **Recognise** – recognise their skills and expertise by involving volunteers in decisions

### Communication

Setting aside some time to communicate with, and more importantly, listen to your volunteers will help them remain committed and motivated to your club. It will allow you to all be working towards your shared club goals together. Volunteers may have different ways they prefer to stay in contact so it’s a good idea to use a variety of methods if possible, such as:

* **Social media** - Facebook or Twitter (or other) can be great ways to keep your volunteers updated, as well as, interacting with them on a range of topics.
* **Meetings** - informal meetings, as a group or individually will give volunteers a chance to ask any questions they may have, and suggest new ideas and projects.
* **E-mail** - easily keep volunteers updated and help them stay in touch with each other.
* **Social events** - this is a great way to informally engage with your volunteers and participants. It is a great place for them to meet other volunteers

### Providing volunteers with references

Increasingly, volunteering can really bolster someone’s employability and providing references can be helpful. Please contact the Volunteering Team ([volunteer@lta.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@lta.org.uk)) if you need advice.

## Managing a committee

Whilst the exact structure varies, each venue will have a management committee that runs the venue and makes decisions in the best interest of members. The committee will almost certainly consist of a chairperson, secretary, coach, treasurer and then other roles as deemed appropriate and that offer a good representation of members.

Whilst there is no template of how a committee “should” be set up, sharing good practice with other venues can often help inform what’s most suitable. For advice or support contact the LTA Regional Team or the Volunteering Team: [volunteer@lta.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@lta.org.uk)

**The chairperson’s** role is to ‘chair’ or manage the meeting, welcoming everyone and steering through the agenda items. A good chair ensures everyone has the chance to speak and sparks a healthy debate about the running of and direction of the venue

**The secretary** liaises with the chairperson to draft agendas, pick up points carried over from previous meetings, and circulates agendas and notes.

### Agenda items

Regular items to appear on the agenda usually include: competition updates, treasurer’s report, membership update, volunteer and member concerns, safeguarding, key dates, event logistics, and facilities

### Fostering a successful committee

A key feature of successful venues is the ability of everyone to work together. While the size and make-up of the team will vary according to the size and type of venue/facility, there are a number of key elements that characterise all successful teams:

* Having a common vision with clear and definite goals
* Having people who work well together, with characteristics that complement each other
* Having a good division of roles with all team members treated equally
* Having a diverse range of people from different walks of life
* Having people who put the common good before their own
* Having a culture where it’s ok to make mistakes as long as people to do their best