Development Conference 2020 - Volunteering session (Saturday) – notes

These notes provide an overview of what was recorded on the flip charts during this session. There are many common themes highlighted. The key is to think of the following;

- Does this relate to our club?
- How could we approach this differently?
- Could I speak to another club for inspiration?
- What have we tried before? Could we repeat or amend it?

What are the positive thoughts (what's good/ what do we do well) about volunteering within orienteering?

This looked at what clubs currently do well. There were many good examples from various clubs, the notes have been grouped together to provide the summary.

- Regulars who like to do the same job
- Reliable volunteers
- A positive volunteer culture within orienteering
- Welcoming clubs
- Lots of roles offering various opportunities to volunteer
- Squad system for areas/ jobs
- Co-ordinator for key roles
- Good age mix
- The social opportunities
- All members allocated to helper teams
- Using team leaders to manage groups/ different members/ volunteers
- Have points for helping at each event and for competing for the club = rewards/ prizes
- Social events – club trips
- Club afternoon during large events
- Communication through Facebook and What's App
- Managing to attract volunteers for starts and car parks for example
- We have a good development structure for planners, controllers and organisers
- Ability to adapt to volunteer needs/ wishes

Incentives/ rewards for volunteers

- Mentoring systems within the club
- Free runs for volunteers
- Awards for contribution to the club
- Club awards ceremony (dinner/ trophies) inc friends of recognised
- Rewards schemes – discount entry / kit

What are the negatives or thoughts about what we could do better for orienteers?

There's a mix of negative thoughts with areas to focus on to develop.

- Failure to get senior club officials (committee)
- Failure to involve bystanders
- Don't often rotate the volunteer roles
- Often the same people doing the same roles
- Struggle to get enough volunteers
- Lack of recognition/ rewards for non-member volunteers such as partners of club members
- Getting people to do the big jobs.
- People often drafted in by organiser according to who they know
- The same people always asked
- Lack of personal approach to new members/ potential volunteers
- Regulars sometimes inflexible regarding their jobs
- Ageing workforce
- Lack of succession planning
- Abuse of volunteers
- Volunteer fatigue
- Social can become a clique
- Not matching volunteers with jobs
- Lack of keenness to take on key role
  - Possible lack of confidence
  - Perceived lack of skill ability
- Engaging with non-orienteering family members to help
- Limited numbers within the club

How can we take the positive and negatives and put them into;

- Recruiting
- Recognising & Rewarding
- Retaining

Recruiting

- Ask members for help (be proactive) – personal approach, key roles certainly need this
  - If you don't ask you don't get, from any members, some may surprise you.
  - Know your members
  - Have the correct and check their contact details
- Ask in plenty of time – Think ahead, don't leave it to the last minute
- Have a system for easy volunteering (roles/ signing up)
- Use low key events to introduce skills (starting point)
- Contact outside organisations and use their volunteer registers/ groups
- Have assistant roles for succession planning
- Make sure jobs are doable
- Don't rush people
- Matching people to roles depending on their skills and or their desires
- Have a specific volunteer coordinator in place
- Role descriptions, have clarity in what you're asking people.

- o   Provide volunteers a choice
- Advertising the skill benefits of volunteering eg D of E and computing.
- Newsletter – have a strong volunteer focus, (not just we need volunteers) facts, information, perks etc.

Recognising & Rewarding

- Say thank you – came up lots of times
- Have clubs awards
- Helper vouchers in place at events
- Reward them by giving them more interesting volunteering to do (eg key contact person)
- Recognise all the jobs/ roles big to small
- Ethos of belonging – provide club kit
- Provide free/ discounted runs
- Post event recognition across PR, events notes, social media
  - o   List them by name
- Certificates for all junior volunteers
- Social events for volunteers

Retaining

- Say thank you – came up lots of times
- Create a positive culture of volunteering (helping out) within the club
- Have a debrief after events
- Ensure volunteers have a good experience
  - o   Ask them how their experience was (follow up), what was important to them?
- Having training in place, as a group or a mentor system for 1 to 1 support.
- Accessible training links with the website or British Orienteering
- Ensure regular encouragement is given
- Introduce a volunteer league
- Protecting from abuse
- Provide snacks/ drinks at events
- Good communication pre event in plenty of time, make sure the club leads the conversation
- Checking on volunteers during the event
- Can your volunteers take a lead on training/ supporting others?
- Do the right people (volunteers) want the responsibility to train/ mentor/ support other new people?