

cultural volunteer ©

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WELCOME!

cultural volunteer (cv) is a free e-news and information service for arts management professionals. **cv** is published six times a year and comes to you from Lynn Blackadder, of Arts People and Projects arts management consultancy www.lynnblackadder.com. You can choose to read **cv** in email or as a Word attachment. I hope you enjoy **cv**, but if you don't wish to receive future issues, please return this email typing 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.

IN THIS ISSUE ...

cv is one year old and now has 650 subscribers in the UK and abroad. Happy Birthday to us! This month we will be reviewing **where cultural volunteering is** twelve months on. We'll also be finding out about London's **Shape Ticket Scheme**, advertising for **Art Fund volunteers**, and **arguing for the payment of legitimate volunteer expenses**.

WHY YOU SHOULD READ **cv** ...

cv is for arts management professionals who currently involve volunteers in their organisations, and for those who don't, but would like to find out more about volunteers.

cv aims to raise awareness of the resource cultural volunteers represent, and how to utilise it effectively.

cv actively campaigns for the recognition and progression of volunteers working in arts organisations.

cv can help you to better understand the nature of volunteering and how it relates to your organisation.

cv will regularly bring to your attention useful information, resources and commentary on volunteering in the cultural sector. Experts on volunteer management will feature, and we will explore topics raised by you in future issues.

FEATURE: Lynn Blackadder on Cultural Volunteering over the Last Twelve Months

When **cv** was launched in October 2002, I had very little idea how it would be received, or the range of organisations that might find it useful. I tested the first issue with a fairly diverse group of colleagues who worked either in volunteering or arts organisations. But I didn't expect that the subscription list would grow by 500 in twelve months (6 issues), and that the feedback would be so positive.

The readership

People subscribe to **cv** from all over the UK and other parts of the world including the USA, China, Australia, and The Netherlands. Subscribers work in large and small community organisations across the visual and performing arts, government departments and arts supports agencies, further and higher

education, voluntary sector organisations, and Friends groups. I have made the assumption that all subscribers involve volunteers, are thinking about it, or have an interest in ensuring that volunteers are well managed. Perhaps generally it's also an interesting read!

This range is not surprising given the Government's push in recent years for people to be better citizens by giving time to their communities. I believe it is also a recognition by arts organisations of how volunteering can reach and involve a wider audience base. It's a way of investing in local communities and helping them to help themselves: we know that culture can be a powerful social regeneration tool.

Innovative staffing initiatives

But volunteering is also a way of furnishing people with the skills required not only to improve the quality of their lives and in turn their communities, but to help arts organisations operate more efficiently. It is good news that, in order to inform their Workforce Development Strategy, Resource: the Council for Museums Libraries and Archives is about to carry out an extensive consultation with customer service staff and volunteers at all levels to establish the barriers to career development, and develop practical solutions to overcome them. Perhaps this research can be shared with other non-museum venues. For example, The Lowry in Salford, which has a thriving volunteer programme involving around 350 volunteers who steward theatre shows and provide other operational services.

Best practice should be made widely available, such as that being developed by the National Art Collections Fund (Art Fund) via a pilot programme in the south of England. The Art Fund is Britain's largest independent visual arts funding charity and is 100 years old this year. Last year it offered grants worth over £5.6 million to help museums and galleries throughout the UK acquire works of art of all kinds. Its national network of over 500 volunteers plays a crucial role in helping a small staff in London deliver a range of benefits to its 80,000 strong UK-wide membership, as well as raising the profile of the organisation and recruiting new members. There are 61 Art Fund volunteer Regional Representatives supported by volunteer committees, and the pilot programme – funded by the Lloyds TSB Foundation and The Monument Trust – has explored different ways of supporting volunteers in their work, including working with national support networks such as Arts & Business, REACH, and the national network of Volunteer Bureaux. The Art Fund will be producing a learning outcomes report which will be available in spring 2004. It also currently has vacancies for senior volunteers across the UK (see below for details).

Linked developments

There are relevant developments on other fronts too. The Voluntary Sector NTO has published its long-awaited and much needed volunteer management standards (available at www.voluntarysectorskills.org.uk). And the National Centre for Volunteering (soon to be Volunteering England) is continuing its work to raise the profile of managers of volunteers (paid and unpaid) in line with the other professions.

Over the past twelve months **cv** has been both a catalyst for bringing volunteer managers together, and a vehicle for organisations to raise issues of importance for them. So, as **cv** enters its second year I would encourage you to continue to share your experiences and concerns, and particularly any best practice that is available, so that we can all benefit and save precious time and money!

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES: The Art Fund

The Art Fund is looking for volunteer Regional Representatives in Cambridge, Staffordshire and Kent, and for a volunteer Regional Chairman for the Greater Yorkshire area.

Art Fund Representatives are the public face of the charity in the regions. Their main objective is to stimulate and entertain local members by organising fundraising arts events, the proceeds of which are

donated to the Art Fund and total around £120,000 a year. Representatives initially volunteer for up to three years. Volunteer Regional Chairmen have a less hands-on role, and help to coordinate and support Representatives' work.

The range of activities carried out by Regional Representatives varies depending on local circumstances, size of membership, and the time available to volunteers. Volunteering activity will in most cases involve some or all of the following activities:

- Enhancing the benefits of membership, including organising events.
- Raising the profile of the Art Fund by liaising with local museums and galleries, and news media.
- Managing Committee and other volunteer activities.
- Managing Committee finances, including keeping and submitting basic annual accounts.

Regional Chairmen and Representatives get together at training days and for special meetings and parties – locally and in London. For more information about these positions please contact Lynn Blackadder at lynn@lynnblackadder.com.

FEATURE: Richard Matthews, Volunteer Co-ordinator at Shape, talks about their innovative volunteer programme that helps elderly people and those with disabilities participate in London arts events

"Shape has been enabling access to the Arts for disabled people since 1977, and for the last 15 years we've been running the Shape Ticket Scheme. This is a specialised Arts booking service offering discounted tickets to disabled and elderly members," says Richard Matthews.

"What makes this programme innovative is our volunteer driver / escort service. Our volunteers drive members to theatres, galleries, concerts, museums and various seasonal events. It means that elderly and disabled people can get out of the house for an evening, when they probably wouldn't be able to otherwise. They can benefit from the huge range of arts and theatre in London. It's also a chance to make friends with the volunteers."

A success story

"Many people find the Shape Ticket Scheme a lifeline. For example, an elderly lady who's visually impaired recently joined up as a member. She hadn't been out of the house to go to the theatre for over 20 years. One of our volunteers took her to see Calamity Jane in August. She rang up and was enthusing about what a brilliant time she had. Then last month the same volunteer took her to see Anything Goes."

How does the programme work?

"We now have about 1,200 members and 140 volunteers. Most of our volunteers are drivers / escorts. We post them a list every six weeks, which gives details of the members who need volunteers to take them to shows. Volunteers choose a member to take, based on where the member lives and whether it's a show they'd like to see. The volunteer drives to the member's house, picks them up, drives them to the show, watches the show with them, then drives them home afterwards. Shape pays for the volunteer's ticket."

How do you recruit volunteers?

"We recruit our volunteers:

- by advertising in local London papers and magazines
- by asking for volunteers on our website
- through word of mouth – volunteers talking to friends
- by advertising in local community groups, and in doctors' surgeries and libraries

- by giving presentations to community group open days

The most successful way to recruit is by making presentations and talking to people face-to-face. People can ask you questions there and then, and it's more real and personal than a poster or a leaflet."

Advice for other arts organisations who want to involve volunteers

In Richard's view, it's very important to:

- have a clear role description and guidelines for volunteers so they know exactly what they're doing
- communicate well with volunteers – let them know they're appreciated, and be efficient in responding to phone calls and emails
- recruit face-to-face where possible
- pay volunteers' expenses – in our case, that means paying for tickets, parking and travel costs

If you'd like to exchange information with Richard, you can contact him at: richard@shapearts.org.uk

Richard was interviewed by Fiona Thompson, a freelance arts writer. You can see Fiona's work at www.wordspring.co.uk.

ANALYSIS: Lynn Blackadder on Why You Should Pay Volunteer Expenses

Ethics

Reimbursing volunteers with out-of-pocket expenses incurred during the course of volunteering seems to me the very least organisations can do to recognise the efforts of volunteers. Volunteers give their time freely, and you can't assume that they will also be happy to be out-of-pocket as a result. Expenses are not wages; they are the personal cost of volunteering. Often you will find that few people will want to claim expenses: some people have annual travel passes and will bring a packed lunch. But, some people will not be able to get to the place of volunteering unless you pay for their travel, and in some cases childcare. And a policy of paying expenses is a basic statement of how much you value your volunteers.

Some organisations simply cannot afford to pay expenses, but there might be funds available to help you do it. For example, you could try and get sponsorship, or apply to a private trust or fund. Friends Associations might make a donation towards paying expenses for volunteer projects.

Legitimate volunteer expenses can include:

- Travel – return travel, and even taxis for people with mobility issues. You might want to stipulate that volunteers coming from outside a certain radius might not be able to claim.
- Subsistence – around £3 per day is generally deemed to be appropriate.
- Childcare – this will vary.
- Mileage allowance – guidelines applicable for employees that can generally be followed for volunteers are available at <http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/rates/mileage.htm>

Rights and Genuine Reimbursements

Volunteer expenses must be receipted if you are to protect your volunteers and your organisation. Volunteers on benefits have to be very careful about what they claim so that it is not seen as income, hence the requirement for the receipt. It's important from an organisation's perspective that unreceipted sums of money are not handed out on an ad hoc basis as this could be seen as a salary.

Getting it Right

Here are some practical tips to help you set up and administer an expenses scheme. Remember all payments must be genuine reimbursements, i.e. the expense must have been incurred whilst volunteering:

- Develop a policy stating maximum amounts for claiming, and the procedure.
- Appoint one or two people in the organisation responsible for issuing expense claim forms and paying expenses. Design a simple form to which volunteers can attach expenses.
- Make sure your payment procedure can cope with volunteers who need reimbursement daily, and those who will want to claim on a less regular basis, say, once a week or month.
- If a volunteer genuinely can't produce a receipt (machines do swallow them up / run out of tickets etc) pay the expense, but have a procedure for documenting these instances that will highlight how often this is happening and why. You need to do this to protect your organisation and your volunteers.
- Keeping accounts of what is spent on expenses relative to the numbers of volunteers you have will help you budget for the following year.

More information is available on the Inland Revenue's web site at http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/charities/chapter_3.htm#350.

NEXT ISSUE

In January we will be responding to a query from the USA about **how arts organisations can compete with 'human' charities for volunteers**. And we will also be telling you about how volunteers support the **Cheshire Rural Touring Network**.

FEEDBACK

cv is keen to respond to your interests and needs. If you would like to forward your news and views, comment on content, or suggest a topic for discussion, please email lynn@lynnblackadder.com.

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