

Volunteers and Volunteering



VOLUNTEERS

This section aims to provide guidance and support to clubs wishing to review the way in which their club operates and for those seeking advice on recruiting, retaining and rewarding their volunteer workforce. The volunteer network is the backbone of any club, and the most successful clubs, in the majority of cases, have a strong, multi skilled, proactive and coherent committee.



We were delighted to find that 73.6% of respondents to our online survey stated that they would consider volunteering at their club, however, clubs frequently struggle to recruit the right members onto the committees and often because the roles are undefined and the roles and responsibilities are vague and as a result people are fearful of committing to the unknown.

Tap into the extensive skill set that your members have and deploy them to the right volunteer roles within the club.

It is fair to say that most clubs have a comprehensive skill set amongst its members and it is important that the club recruits the right people into the right roles to make the club operate professionally, effectively and efficiently.

The focus should be on the quality of the volunteer team and not the quantity, as too many cooks can spoil the broth! Equally, if the club has significant interest from members to volunteer, this should be embraced through sub-committees and working groups to help with the operation of the club on a day-to-day basis.

Volunteer Recruitment and Retention:

The Club uses appropriate means to advertise for volunteers, taking into account the principles of equal opportunities and diversity.

Before embarking on a recruitment drive for more volunteers and committee members, the committee needs to ascertain the committee structure and identify any physical or skills gaps within the current infrastructure. The club should then devise and develop an organisational chart showing the roles and the subsequent reporting lines into the President.

The following areas should be taken into consideration when recruiting a volunteer:

- Does the volunteer hold relevant and current qualifications for the role (if necessary)?
- Do they have the skills necessary to undertake the role?
- Do they have experience of working with the age group/level of player (if applicable)?
- Where was the previous experience gained?
- Does the volunteer agree to undertake any required training courses?
- Do they hold adequate insurance cover (if necessary)?

Potential volunteers should meet with the volunteer co-ordinator and/or a member of the club committee to assess their suitability for the role. A full job specification should be developed and made available for each volunteer role, complete with responsibilities and time commitment. A police check should be conducted if the role involves working with children in any capacity and references should be taken up.

An induction should be prepared and delivered by the Volunteer Co-ordinator / member of the club committee. This is when the 'Club Volunteer Welcome Pack' could be presented. A volunteer welcome pack is an important aspect of volunteer management. It gives the volunteer important information about their new role.

GET INVOLVED



Many clubs state that they find it difficult to recruit new members to the committee!

The majority of tennis club members don't know how to get involved or what's involved!

Can members volunteer without joining the committee?

Here's an example of what a welcome pack could consist of:

- A personal welcoming letter from your Club President
- A copy of the job description
- A list of members in the club, their roles, responsibilities and phone numbers
- Volunteer code of conduct
- Explanation of the structure and size of the club – as well as it's history
- Dates and times of practices and competitions
- Schedule of club fees and what are they used for
- Details of any fund-raising events
- Information on upcoming training course dates and costs
- Reimbursement information for out-of-pocket expenses

The new recruit will receive support and regular supervision sessions from the Volunteer Co-ordinator and/or the Club President (or from another named club committee member).

Role Descriptions (example):

PRESIDENT

- Well informed about the activities of the place to play, along with the financial position
- Able to keep the meeting to the agenda and make sure that all issues are covered
- Unbiased and impartial

SECRETARY

- Be the first point of contact for all enquiries
- Organising and attending all management committee meetings
- Ensure all delegated tasks are actioned

TREASURER

- Keeps up to date records of all the financial transactions
- Reports regularly to the management committee on the financial status
- Prepares year end statements of accounts to be presented to the auditor

If people know that a given volunteering role would take 2 hours per week to carry out, they are more likely to commit as they are aware of whats involved from the outset.

Set up a junior committee that is representative of the views of the junior members. An older junior could chair the group and feedback to the main committee, which is building confidence in the young members and developing the club volunteers of the future.

HEAD COACH

- Setting up and delivering quality, comprehensive tennis programmes, which include competitive and coaching progressions for all ages and abilities
- Excellent communication and people skills
- Excellent organisational skills

CLUB CAPTAIN

The Club Captain is responsible for all representative competition for all ages and abilities and to ensure that there is sufficient competitive events for all sectors. In most cases the Club Captain will work with sub sector captains, i.e. Men's Captain, Women's Captain etc.

CLUB CONVENORS

This role is often split into a Junior and Senior convenor role and is responsible for managing the interclub programme and to maximise the interclub opportunities for those members wishing to compete. The convenor is also the link between the Club Committee and the interclub players.

COMMUNICATIONS CO-ORDINATOR (MARKETING AND PROMOTIONS)

- To raise the profile of the club locally (in the community) and in the region
- Make sure the website and information on the website is kept up to date



- Regularly attend and have a good understanding of all aspects of the programme and activities

EVENTS AND TOURNAMENT CO-ORDINATOR

- Responsible for all tournaments and competitions that are held at the club.
- Seasonally monitor and evaluate competition opportunities and report back to the committee or management team

VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR

- This is not a common role, with the recruitment of volunteers being overseen by the President in most cases. However, if the club has the capacity and sees the value in such a role, we believe that such a role could add enormous value to the clubs volunteer structure.
- Recruit, recognise, reward and retain volunteers
- Ensure that each volunteer understands their job and their role within the organisation

SOCIAL CO-ORDINATOR

- Sociable!
- Motivated with an ability to motivate other key volunteers
- Bring all members together to develop and enhance relationships

FUNDING AND SPONSORSHIP CO-ORDINATOR

To proactively drive the clubs applications for funding from Gaming Trusts and for developing commercial partnerships to maximise the clubs revenue and sustainability.

Recruiting New Volunteers

Ensure your administration is in order before you go any further:

- Create simple, job specifications for each specific role
- Produce features/articles about a particular role in the newsletter and/or on the website which will help bring the roles to life for potential volunteers
- Make sure you have a clear, transparent policy which encourages new faces into voluntary roles
- Fixed term appointments help in open recruitment so people know they will have the opportunity to apply for roles in the future

The coach can often be the only membership recruitment method that a club has so why not reward them for their valuable contribution to the growth of the club?

Recruiting Young Volunteers

Juniors form an important part of your development plan and therefore should form an important part of the volunteer workforce. Given the chance, young people will take on the responsibility and bring energy and enthusiasm to their voluntary roles. The junior co-ordinator should encourage youngsters to get involved in running tennis and social events, to help at practice sessions and to be responsible for some administrative functions of the junior section.

You may wish to consider the following if you are recruiting young people:

- Reflect the different motivations that young people will have to volunteer
- If possible, include young people in designing your junior recruitment campaign
- Use new media platforms to communicate messages (e.g. on the website)

Valuing and Retaining Volunteers

We often reward the players with 'player of the season', 'most improved player of the season' and 'fair play' awards, but what do we do to recognise and reward the volunteers who ensure all that sport can take place?

For most clubs, volunteers are their lifeblood, and in some cases a club wouldn't be able to function without the tireless support they receive from their volunteers. So how can these efforts be acknowledged, and what are the best ways to reward volunteers for their contributions?

Ensuring people feel that their role and their actions are important can be enough, in terms of recognition, and should be seen as part of the recognition system. Actions that can be taken to support this type of recognition include the following:

- A simple thank you from a senior club committee member (the President where possible) can be enough and this can be done in front of an audience or directly to the person(s) concerned
- No such thing as a free lunch - it need not be expensive but it is a special event, which reflects the organisation's appreciation of the hard work which has taken place on a particular project or event. Great for team building too!
- Awards for long service to an organisation are admirable and much valued by their recipients. Reward people who make a special contribution to the achievement of targets.
- External awards - nominate volunteers for both club and external awards that recognise the contribution of volunteers
- Team branding – sweatshirts and T-shirts specifically designed for the volunteer group within a club can help to create a valuable team identity and to project a strong public image that these people are working hard
- A volunteer membership package – this could include a discounted membership fee for the year, discount vouchers for local sports shops or discounted tournament/match entry fees
- Expenses – think about reimbursing volunteers for the expenses e.g. travel and telephone calls



Recognising the worth of volunteers in more general terms is important, in terms of underpinning the recruitment and retention plans for volunteers. If members understand the importance of the 'back office staff', the roles and tasks they undertake and the fun they have in performing these roles, it will certainly be easier to recruit new volunteers in the future.

How can you do this?

- Create a display on a notice board and have a page on the club website, showing different roles – organisational chart suggested above
- Put features in external newspapers/newsletters.
- Appoint a volunteer co-ordinator, which ensures that members know how important volunteers are to the organisation

Most volunteers get intrinsic pleasure from volunteering, but we all like to be treated well and thanked when we have given our time up for free. It is an essential part of retaining your volunteer workforce – don't leave it to chance!

Some advertising ideas include:-

- Design a leaflet or flyer to attract attention and send it with a mail shot to parents and families or even past members to see if you can attract them back

There are few things in life that we buy without trying them first, so why do we consider a tennis club membership to be any different? Give people a trial which softens the financial blow and eases them into the club!

- Stage an active recruitment day to coincide with a popular event. At the active recruitment day make sure you have detailed role descriptions, offer flexible opportunities such as sharing roles and ask existing volunteers to talk about what they get out of volunteering

Assistance:

For any assistance or enquiries on implementing any of the above suggestions please contact your regional development manager.