

Notes and actions from the Outdoor Volunteering meeting held at Abriachan on 19 03 18

Present: Suzann Barr, Alan McDonnell, Liz McLachlan, Ross Watson, Imgen Furlong, Gail Duff, Alan Fowler, Ruairaidh Milne, Adrian Clark, Lynn McKelvey Caroline Vawdrey

Apologies: Stephen Wiseman, Tom Gilpin, Michelle Henley, Dan Jenkins

Discussion

1. **The benefits to volunteers and organisations of sharing volunteers**, so that a broader range of activities can be carried out at any one place.
2. **How often to have volunteer events?** Some places - eg Evanton Community Wood have found a weekly volunteering event beneficial to building up a regular team, which has a range of ages and skills. Suzann noted that their monthly meetings tend to have different people attending. Ruairaidh note that the Scottish Waterways Trust have scaled back their volunteering opportunities, as not enough people were turning up for regular days.
3. **Recruiting, Training and retaining volunteers** - Signpost will be running training workshops to help with this.
4. **Green Health Partnership and social prescribing** - The opportunities relating to these initiatives were discussed. See actions below. Signpost is working with four practices in Inverness to develop this approach further. Suzann noted that different area-based collaborations already exist -for instance in Caithness, Isle Martin and Balmacara. She also noted the benefits of the model of funding used by the Argyll Countryside Trust, which means that NHS staff are on board with any health-related initiatives that are undertaken.
5. **Recovery College:** This is at the ideas stage at present, but the group should be aware of the potential to provide a green/outdoor element if plans develop further.
6. **Health professionals attending with groups** - Suzann noted that occupational therapists attend with some of the groups - and that this provides them with an efficient way of interacting with a number of clients, and means that they can also see how they are in a more informal setting.
7. **Volunteer Scotland website:** Gail confirmed that the only way to get events on to this is by sending details to your local CVS group (eg Signpost, Ross-shire Voluntary Action) and they will input it to the website.

Action

Item	Action	Who
Working with the Green Health Partnership	Develop a strategic, coordinated programme of volunteer opportunities. Invite project officer to attend group - when recruited.	Alan, Suzann and Stephen working on this. All - to be aware of the potential offered Caroline
Signpost - training for recruiting, training and retaining volunteers	circulate work group members with details	Gail Duff
Social media	give further thought to specific training required	All
Volunteer Scotland events on website	Send details to your local CVS group and they will input it to the website.	All
Weekly volunteering opportunities	Group members to consider whether it might be feasible to organise and promote volunteering event every Saturday - between all the groups - Abriachan does the first Saturday of the month.	All

Next Meeting - Mid August at 12.30 at Trees for Life, Dundreggan, Glen Morriston. Date TBC via doodle calendar.

Please do invite any other groups that you think might be interested - including those that might use volunteering opportunities.

Themes that the Outdoor Volunteering group is focussing on in 2018

1. Improve communication and cooperation between groups with an interest in volunteering.
2. Make finding out about all environmental volunteering opportunities as easy as possible.
3. Publicise volunteering opportunities
4. Undertake skills and good practice sharing between organisations, and seek relevant joint training.

Develop links between the outdoor volunteering group and the Green Health Partnership.