

Volunteering – summary notes from Federation meeting workshop March 2014

Factors that motivate plot holders to volunteer

- Socialising
- Helping solve a site problem
- Outrage at the cost of paying someone
- Feeling useful
- Being in charge of something

Steps committees can take to encourage volunteering

- Understand peoples' skills (and whether they want to use them), preferences, physical strength, availability
- Do a skills audit
- Understand people's interests, e.g. helping set up a wildlife area
- Arrange refreshments
- Give a clear description of what result is needed and why it will benefit the site
- Adjust the degree of instruction to the individual – do they need detailed guidance or can they manage the task themselves?
- Have a volunteering co-ordinator
- Make use of existing friendship groups between plot holders
- Make personalised face-to-face requests for assistance with a specific tasks
- Thank people
- Circulate a list of tasks to sign up to along with the annual rent letter
- Ask people to sign up for tasks during a public event (so that they see others signing up)
- Recognise efforts, e.g. in newsletters
- Keep a list of those who do/ don't help. For those who don't: chase; make it a condition of tenancy
- Raise rents and offer a discount for those who do communal work
- Invest in good equipment and communal areas
- Arrange social events, e.g. barbeques, Guy Fawkes night, central bonfires
- Explain the cost of using professionals for tasks
- Change the culture – expect everyone to participate
- Include a social element to group tasks, e.g. lunch
- Have an open day and invite local residents
- Establish work buddies
- Be careful not to give a job that doesn't seem worthwhile
- Nurture additional involvement:
 - Suggest additional responsibilities during a recurring activity
 - Ask them to give feedback and suggestions for improvement
 - Ask them to help out (try out) committee tasks
 - Get a sense of their interests and offer options

[Link](#) to Federation paper on Organising Work