**Shared Interest Group**: Volunteering

**Venue:** The Zone, Skelmersdale

**Attendees**

Deborah Reardon Women’s Institute

U3A

Ormskirk Historical Society

Cherith Withington Birchwood Centre

Gerald Gallimore Hesketh Bank and Tarleton Helpers

Sharon CGL Inspire

Tilly Postlewaite Hesketh Bank and Tarleton Helpers

Dawn Iverson Health Watch Lancs.

Liz Wainwright The Civic

Sheila Byrne Hope Street

Mike Price Amplify Youth

Shunna Whittle Lancs Volunteer partnership

A Milligan Queenscourt Hospice

**Apologies**

Kathryn Mac Donald Ormskirk and District Family History Society.

Tess Reddington SWILICAN

Aimee Hesp Citizens Advice Lancashire West, Volunteer Recruitment & Training Manager

**Helen Juste WLCVS**

* Context - CVS journey to this point, reconnecting with members while seeking to work together to improve the local infrastructure by developing a VCFSE network.
* Network Update, findings from the survey results, area-based networks, possibly delivery of 2 network meetings per area on an annual basis.
* Thematic groups update – These may evolve in different ways depending on the wants and needs of the group members. Potentially four meetings a year, to promote collaborate working.
* Provided an update on what had taken place so far. Looking at a steer to come from the organisation to identify key aims and a way forwarding that would be meaningful to those attending.

**Mike Price - Amplify - presentation**

Overview of organisation/ challenges/ opportunities

Focus on D of E programme

**Sheila Byrne – Hope St - presentation**

Overview of organisation/ challenges/ opportunities

Focus on challenges around volunteering. Also, the successes.

**Anthea Thomas WLCVS**

Provided an overview of Volunteer support

Provided an update on the training programme currently being provided

**Helen Juste WLCVS –** introduced groups exercise to try and identify a way forward that would be beneficial to the organisations present.

**Group Exercise-** looking at thechallenges organisations face around volunteering / Aspirations / How the network can help find solutions. Groups discussion.

**Challenges**

* Diversity of Volunteer Pool
* Cost of living crisis impact on availability
* Fragmentation – disparity
* Staff within the organisation need to understand the benefit of volunteers and support them.
* Red Tape/ procedures and training can be overwhelming/ off putting.
* Transport to and from opportunities can be an issue – expenses need to be paid
* The Time commitment can often be beyond expectations.
* Volunteers support - capacity of the organisation to provide this
* DBS Checks – cost to the organisation
* Saying no to volunteers who don’t fit the organisation’s needs – increases capacity issues and can put a strain on existing resources. Ability to easily signpost somewhere else.
* Worthwhile activities
* Retention – keeping volunteers interested and motivated/adhoc roles
* Premises

**Aspirations**

* Join a reward scheme to recognise the value/ reward volunteers (Blue light/ Charity Worker Discount)
* Improve relationship with DWP- appropriate individuals referred for volunteering opportunities.
* Diversity Volunteering Pool (encourage ex-service users (individuals who have previously accessed support services)to volunteer for other organisation – help them to move on.
* Quantify the value of volunteering- helps volunteers see the impact they have
* Improve community engagement- corporate value – projects for business to support.

**Opportunities for the Network**- How can it help moving forward?

* Pooling Volunteers- sign posting between organisations
* Collaborative working on key areas of shared interest
* Improved Training
* Shared case studies- learning from each other
* ESV- Employee Supported Volunteering
* WLCN -Volunteering Shared interest Group – safe space to share information- what’s worked/ what hasn’t. learn from others what not to do. Safe practises/ reduce risks/ improve volunteer experience and retention.
* CVS- encourage volunteers- signpost to organisations
* CVS- training programme in crease availability
* Focus on the volunteers – who are they, recovering from poor mental health need a safe space to gain confidence and self-esteem, retired needing a new purpose or area of interest, maybe lonely/ isolated. Unemployed looking to gain new skills and find a way back into work. Looking to improve skills or change careers into something more fulfilling. Young person – gaining skills and experience. (many reasons- specific case studies can show how volunteering can be rewarding and also develop the individual)

**Moving on identifying a potential format to support organisations**

Main areas of work identified that would have shared benefit

* Shared learning – programme of presentations. Showcasing good work and innovative solutions to common issues.
* Explore benefit of reward schemes on retention of volunteers.
* Look at available training programme- does it include everything that is needed by the organisations – anything that could be provided by a member organisation?
* Pooling of volunteers – signposting to other organisations
* Case studies – explore the benefit, how they can be utilised in securing the right volunteers for the opportunities available.