

A STRATEGY FOR VOLUNTEERING



THE
NARTHEX

1. Introduction

The Church has historically relied on volunteers, to enable it to function, so that the clergy are free to minister to the people, who are the body of the Church. Without volunteers everything would grind to a halt. Everyone has a contribution to make to the smooth running of the Church as we all have something to offer and there are opportunities for each one of us to participate.

At the Cathedral of St John the Baptist, we want volunteers to help to help cover the many different facets of church life. We also want to enable them to gain something from the act of volunteering, be it in the form of an entry on a CV; learning a skill; being with people of a like mind or feeling wanted and appreciated.

There are many 'church based' activities, such as Special Ministers of the Eucharist; Altar Servers, Choir, Readers and Stewards at the masses and prayer groups. Within the church community however there are also many groups carrying out activities, which are just as important in the service of the Lord and the enhancement of the weekly worship. These groups include Children's Liturgy; Embroidery; Flower Arranging; Cleaners and Collectors.

Other church based groups are 'national' or diocesan and include CAFOD; Justice and Peace; St Vincent de Paul Society; Friends of the Cathedral and The Walsingham Association.

In the Narthex, which opened in 2010, there are volunteers in the kitchen, as well as full time staff (such as on Sunday mornings after the masses, to prepare coffee and teas); also in the Refectory to wait at tables. The Repository (shop) also benefits from a dedicated team of volunteers who serve visitors to the Cathedral.

Opportunities for service as a volunteer are many and varied and we will explore how we expect that volunteers will be 'served' themselves in the coming pages.

2. Aims and Aspirations

There are seven main aims to volunteering in the service of the life of the Cathedral, which are: -

- i To serve the Lord.
- ii To serve our fellow parishioners and the public in general.
- iii To preserve the heritage of the Cathedral and grounds for future generations.
- iv To educate parishioners and the wider community, in the broadest possible sense.
- v To help volunteers to gain skills and qualifications that they otherwise might not have had the opportunity to acquire.
- vi To provide volunteers with opportunities to meet other people, not necessarily from within the community; to give them a purpose and pride in the service that they undertake and enable them to enjoy serving others in whatever capacity they wish.
- Vii To ensure that all of those volunteering come from as a diverse background as possible, thus reflecting the community within the Cathedral congregation and the wider community.

3. Meeting our aims and aspirations

In brief terms we explain the way in which our aims we propose that our aims will be met and cover each of these in more depth later in this paper: -

2 (i) **Serving the Lord**

There is specialised and ongoing training for Altar Servers; Special Ministers of the Eucharist; Readers and Stewards. This is provided by the Clergy, the Master of Ceremonies and the Chief Steward.

2(ii) **Serving our fellow parishioners and the public in general**

There is specialised and ongoing training provided by those with the community who have the knowledge and skills and outside professional trainers where required.

2(iii) **Preserving the heritage of the Cathedral and grounds for future generations**

There are opportunities for volunteers to work in the Cathedral, ensuring that the fabric is maintained in good order as Cleaners, Flower arrangers, Gardeners, Embroiderers and those with other appropriate artistic skills.

2(iv) **Educating parishioners and the general public, in the widest possible sense**

This takes the form of books; DVD/CD; presentations; tours; displays in and around the Cathedral and Narthex; school visits and collaboration with other churches in the Norwich area.

2(v) **Helping volunteers to gain skills and qualifications that they might not have had the opportunity to acquire before**

As in 2(ii) above we offer specialised and ongoing training provided by those within the community who have the knowledge and skills and outside professional trainers where required.

2(vi) **Providing volunteers with the means to meet other people, not necessarily from within the community; to give them a purpose and pride in the service that they undertake and enable them to enjoy serving others in whatever capacity they wish to undertake**

This is achieved by ensuring that in performing the tasks that they undertake on behalf of the community, volunteers are equipped to fulfil their role. They are also given help and encouragement and asked for their views and ideas, so that they may be of service to all those with whom they come into contact.

2(vii) Ensuring that volunteers come from as a diverse background as possible, thus reflecting the community within the Cathedral congregation and the wider community

We encourage members of all ethnic minority backgrounds, and different nationalities to play an active part in the life of the Cathedral community. We encourage others of all faiths and none to feel that they are welcome as volunteers in our community, so that our aims can be achieved. We try to ensure that those with disabilities are encouraged to become volunteers, thus ensuring that their insights and experiences are utilised to the full.

4. Planning

Appointments

A Narthex Manager (a salaried post) has been appointed to co-ordinate activities in the Narthex and to manage its financial and cultural affairs.

We have a designated Volunteer Co-ordinator (a voluntary post) to help in the recruitment, retention and organising of the volunteers where this is appropriate. Most of the existing voluntary groups at the Cathedral recruit and organise themselves, but are encouraged to operate within the terms of this plan, to ensure that the aims and aspirations are met.

A Catering Supervisor (a salaried post) ensures that all food hygiene and health and safety legislation is correctly observed. The Supervisor ensures that any volunteer staff working in the environs of the kitchen only carry out those tasks for which they are detailed (e.g. the making of coffees after the Saturday evening and each of the Sunday services) and that any volunteers working in the refectory are fully conversant with the appropriate legislation.

In due course a Learning Officer (a salaried post) will take forward work started by the Narthex Development Manager on the education programme in the city, the county and the East of England.

Recruitment of volunteers

A concerted programme to recruit new volunteers commenced at the start of 2010 with poster campaigns at the Cathedral and advertising in the weekly newsletters and editions of *The Herald* (a bi-monthly publication for the Cathedral congregation).

There was also a successful campaign to encourage parishioners to 'spread the word' amongst their friends (not necessarily Catholics) who may have skills which they can offer, to enlist as volunteers.

5. Training

A training programme is offered as briefly outlined in 'Meeting our aims and aspirations' on page 4. Where there are people with the appropriate skills and knowledge to carry out the appropriate training, it is offered 'in-house' (**IH**). Where it is not possible to train 'in-house' outside expertise is enlisted (**ET**).

Volunteer Training Programme

- Induction (IH)
- First Aid (ET)
- Diversity Training (ET)*
- Food Hygiene (ET)
- Customer Care (ET)*
- Fire Drill/Emergency Procedures (Compulsory) (IH)
- Health & Safety/Risk Assessment (ET)*
- Child Protection (Where appropriate) (IH)
- Duty Management/Security (IH)
- Computer Skills (Where appropriate) (ET)
- Tour Guides (Cathedral & Tower) (IH)

*These courses may be delivered 'in house' by suitably qualified members of the community.

A 'Skills and Training Assessment' evaluation in relation to full time staff and volunteers is as follows: -

Skills and Training Assessment for Staff and Volunteers

Skills and Training Assessment for Staff and Volunteers		Staff to be trained	Cathedral Clergy	Narthex Manager	Catering Manager	Learning Officer	Estate Manager	Caretakers	Shop Staff	Bar Staff	Cathedral Guides	Tower Tour Guides	Catering Staff	Flower Arrangers	Readers	Catechists	Other Volunteers
			number	3	1	1	1	1	2	3	3	20	15	6	14	24	8
1	Food hygiene									●			●				●
2	First aid training			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●				●
3	Health and safety awareness (including manual handling lifting techniques)			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●
4	Disability awareness		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
5	Cultural and Diversity Awareness		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
6	Deaf awareness and signing		●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●
7	Customer care and customer service management			●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●				●
8	Environmental and duty of care awareness and managing according to standards and procedures		●	●			●										
9	Communication skills (including listening skills and handling difficult situations)		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	●
10	Presentation skills - public speaking		●	●	●	●	●				●	●	●		●		●
11	ICT for facility management, room booking and invoicing			●	●				●	●			●				

Where the training is identified as requiring input from outside agencies we approach Voluntary Norfolk (a learning skills service for voluntary organisations in Norfolk), which offers local volunteer and community groups details of local training providers and links to local and national training courses. Some potential providers are: -

People Plus, Norwich (Food and Hygiene, Health & Safety)

St John's Ambulance or Norvic Training Associates (First Aid)

'Welcome All', provided by Welcome to Excellence as an 'in-house' training module (Disability Awareness).

Royal National Institute for the Deaf or Norfolk Deaf Association (Deaf Awareness)

'Welcome Host', provided by Welcome to Excellence as an 'in-house' training module (Customer Care).

IT Key Skills, provided as part of the Voluntary sector Initiative for Professional Development (VSIPD) (ICT)

Norfolk County Council

Norwich City Council

City College, Norwich

6. Security of the public

All staff and volunteers whose role brings them into contact with young persons and vulnerable adults are the subject of an 'Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau' checks and any future further scrutiny which may be prescribed by the appropriate regulatory bodies. The Diocese of East Anglia maintains a vigorous records system of all diocesan volunteers.

Where the training of staff and volunteers requires that qualifications need to be obtained, certificates (where appropriate) are displayed prominently for the public to see as reassurance that their welfare is of primary concern.

7. Our Voluntary Groups

As mentioned on page 6, there are many and varied groups for volunteers to join; indeed we hope that some will join more than one group! There are 'Parish' based groups, Diocesan Groups and 'National' groups. Information about all of these can be found on the Cathedral website (www.sjbcathedral.org.uk)

8. Evaluation

Our Volunteer Action Plan is reviewed annually by the Cathedral Dean, the Narthex Development Manager and the Volunteer Coordinator.

Volunteers, staff and the general public have regular opportunities to contribute to this review process. Their input will be invited by informal interview and written evaluation.

An annual gathering of all volunteers is held to thank them and show appreciation for their efforts during the past year and to discuss matters of mutual interest.