

**Classification:** Public

**Key Decision:** No

## **Gravesham Borough Council**

**Report to:** Community and Leisure Cabinet Committee

**Date:** 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024

**Reporting officer:** Community Involvement Officer

**Subject:** 2024 Year of the Volunteer

### **Purpose and summary of report:**

To provide an update on council plans to develop staff volunteering and wider plans to celebrate and promote The Year of the Volunteer

### **Recommendations:**

1. To update the Community and Leisure Committee on plans and progress to encourage and support staff volunteering throughout the year.

<b>Key Implications:</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Implications</b>
<b>Legal</b>	None
<b>Finance and Value for Money</b>	Delivered through existing budgets
<b>Corporate Plan</b>	# One Community – Strong Community
<b>Climate Change</b>	Volunteering opportunities positively support the environment and climate change programmes

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 2024 marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of Gravesham Borough Council. It also is a significant anniversary year for several local charities including Pinnock's Charities, Gravesend RNLi, Elizabeth Huggins Cottages Charity, Gravesend Historical Society and Gads Hill School.
- 1.2 To celebrate all of these momentous dates and the spirit and impact of local charities on our communities, the Council is marking 2024 as the Year of the Volunteer.

## **2. Volunteering**

- 2.1 Volunteering rates have been steadily declining over the past 10 years despite a slight increase during the Covid pandemic. This is supported by national surveys and speaking with local community groups and charities all are facing significant difficulties in recruiting volunteers and for many this is impacting their ability to deliver services.
- 2.2 By marking 2024 as The Year of the Volunteer, Gravesham Borough Council has updated its Staff Volunteering Policy which supports all staff to volunteer for up to one day per year as part of their working hours.
- 2.3 Volunteering brings huge benefits to the community and worthwhile causes but even more so to the volunteer. As part of our support and encouragement we will be promoting the benefits of volunteering on wellbeing, having fun and connecting with others.
- 2.4 Working with local community groups, charities, churches, parish councils and schools a growing programme of volunteering opportunities has been developed suitable for staff to complete in one day. This information is updated and shared regularly with staff on-line. The details are also posted on each floor of the Civic Centre.
- 2.5 Staff are encouraged to discuss what type of volunteering activity would interest them so that the Community Involvement team can focus their efforts to find suitable opportunities or manage expectations. The team are also working across council departments and teams to support and fill group activities where opportunities have been identified.
- 2.6 Details of completed volunteering activities are being shared and promoted to encourage further uptake. Examples of volunteering opportunities on offer include
  - Helping out at Hive Hope Foodbank
  - Clearing up outside space at Istead Rise Scout Hut, KASBAH centre in The Hive and Coldharbour Library reading garden.
  - Marshalling for community fundraising events including Cyclopark, Ellenor Hospice Walkathon and Twilight Walk,
- 2.7 The year is also being used to encourage staff to consider regular volunteering and promoting local opportunities including the Kent Volunteers website and brokerage service.

## **3. Local community activity to promote volunteering**

- 3.1 A Thank You and Celebration event is planned for up to 200 community volunteers with afternoon tea and entertainment.
- 3.2 The communications team are in the process of completing a film around volunteering in the borough and are meeting with individuals and groups. So far they have met with Hive Hope Foodbank and community award winner Sheila Gibson who litter picks in Istead Rise and has reunited local residents with lost and found items. This film will be used throughout the year to promote volunteering, to celebrate our communities and demonstrate the impact that volunteering has.

3.3 The council supports the Gravesham voluntary and community sector network and over the next 12 months we will be proactively supporting their volunteer recruitment through staff volunteering and professional support, promotional opportunities, and facilitating volunteer recruitment activity.

#### **4. Appendices**

4.1 Appendix I - Staff volunteering opportunities in the Gravesham area.

#### **5. Background Documents**

5.1 There are no background documents.

**Lead Officer:** Kirsty Gaunt – Community Involvement Officer

**Email:** [kirsty.gaunt@gravesham.gov.uk](mailto:kirsty.gaunt@gravesham.gov.uk)

<b>Secondary Implications</b>	
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Will be completed where required if not covered by the hosts own risk assessments.
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	<p><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of <a href="#">personal data</a> or <a href="#">special category data</a> or <a href="#">criminal offence data</a>? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links. No</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? n/a</p> <p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at <a href="mailto:gdpr@medway.gov.uk">gdpr@medway.gov.uk</a>. Click here to start typing</p>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No</p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. Click here to start typing</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	There are no implications but the volunteering activity will hopefully build community spirit and help make some community spaces feel more safe
<b>Digital and website implications</b>	We are developing positive stories to share through our digital platforms. Internal forms for volunteers have been uploaded to the intranet
<b>Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults</b>	Volunteering opportunities will comply with the host organisation/ group's safeguarding policies and practices.