West Lothian Volunteer Network

Tuesday 2pm March 25th

Chair: Linden Raeburn (West Lothian Council) Linden.Raeburn@westlothian.gov.uk

Note Taker: Victoria Isbister (VSGWL) Victoria.Isbister@VSGWL.org

Present: Ray Fallan (VSGWL), Sandra Stark & Sharon Rae (Cyrenians), Leighann Bishop (Xcite), Jennifer Harley (Team Jak), Claire Garton (NHS), Lee Dolby (Linlithgow CDT), Elizabeth Campbell (HCL), Lisa Callaghan (Home Start), Glenn Marsters (Active Schools), Joe Langtree (Room to Reward), Susan Proudfoot (CAB), Jocelyn Lockhart (WLCAN), Aynsley Douglas (WLC), Roz (School Bank)

Apologies: Gillian Dunnigan (Social Security Scotland)

1. **Welcome and Apologies** – Linden opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming.
2. **Last minutes and previous actions** – nothing raised.
3. Victoria to email Lee regarding Linlithgow opportunities - completed
4. Linden will get availability from Mercure for June event - completed
5. Volunteer Fayre locations – open to suggestions from all: see agenda item
6. Partner newsletter Anti-poverty service - aynsley.douglas@westlothian.gov.uk – happy to promote events
7. Share PVG slides – Ray – see action point about running workshop
8. Linden to email Sylvia about having Volunteer Fayre at Cyrenians community hub - outstanding
9. **Guest Speaker: Room to Reward (Joe)**

[**Unsold Hotel Rooms for Volunteer Recognition-Room to Reward**](https://www.roomtoreward.org/)

Unique volunteer charity. Partnered across UK with 950 hotels (120 across Scotland) who donate short breaks during times of low occupancy so volunteers can take time back for themselves in recognition of the time they give. Tangible thank you to those who deserve it, celebrating the work of volunteers. No cost to orgs or volunteers. No admin fees. 1100 partners, big national charities right down to small but vital community groups. Number of nominations per year varies – 2 for small groups, 12 for bigger orgs, proportional.

When you register as charity partner you are given login details, supply volunteer name and nomination statement (250 words). Criteria - minimum 1 year volunteering and not as part of a placement. It is a thank you, not a prize. Every nomination will be approved if meet criteria. Nearly 3000 breaks have been completed, showcasing incredible range of things that people do. You are then emailed a certificate which has a booking link to present to your volunteer whenever you like. Volunteer can then access what is available and filter by region. Support available by team if needed. Hotels will block out their busy periods. 2 people, 2-night, bed and breakfast. Any voluntary charity welcome to join. Up you who you nominate. Wonderful support from hotels. WLC is eligible however group is politically neutral so encouraged showing the wider community impact of any volunteering nomination.

1. **Themed discussion: PVG**

Rules change April 1st. Linden and Aynsley attended training course with Volunteer Scotland – left with lots of questions. Ray spoke about recent meetings she has attended and is working on slides and plans to organise an event at the Gateway however it’s a fluid situation as advice is changing. Various scenarios discussed and those present thought about their own situations. Many members have volunteers who are currently do not have PVGs. [Home - Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian](https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/)

Regular / Incidental contact. Example – kids on a bus going swimming, 2 parents take turnabout week in – do all these parents need PVG? Original advice, yes. Advice now, if it is not regular (you decide definition), they do not need PVG. Concern if Orgs inadvertently commit an offence. Recommend orgs to contact [Home - Volunteer Scotland](https://www.volunteerscotland.net/) directly. Local council and NHS – no waivers, need to pay for all applications. This could influence decisions in some orgs. Ambiguity – a member referenced another meeting she attended where there was differing opinions and thoughts surrounding whether or not PVG was needed by certain staff.

1. **Volunteer event: June 2025: Mercure Hotel: Friday June 6th**

WLC have agreed to pay buffet. Volunteers would need to buy their own drinks from bar. Linden queried drinks options with hotel (can we just pay for juice) however it’s part of booking agreement. Council cannot provide drinks vouchers. Could it be afternoon, tea / coffee – no. Friday night, red carpet. Jennifer, as a volunteer, said she would appreciate the meal and be prepared to buy her own drink. Would need to be clear in invite that volunteers responsible for any bar costs. 100 places divided by organisations interested. Some orgs might be able to contribute to volunteer costs (non-alcoholic). All agreed it would be a nice venue allowing for networking. Comparable to costs of holding event yourself. Invite speakers. Subgroup to be set up from next meeting to discuss invitations, speakers, details.

1. **Volunteer Fayre/s: June**

Victoria wondered about locations other than Bathgate. Suggestions: Galadays, Train stations, Howden Park Centre (prohibitive cost), Hospital, Livi Centre, Morrisons at Deans or Morrisons at the centre, Asda at the centre (needs booked well in advance), Xcite (cost).

Lee asked, where’s the need? What areas have opportunity for volunteering? This shows potential demographic to target. Whatever location you pick will disadvantage others. Why aren’t people engaging? 2024 multiple fairs and locations. Linked marketing across WLVN – did this work well? WLC followed up with information day, hadn’t felt that it was well attended, however 18 people came. Outdoors? Think about tying in with other events. Where is there good footfall? General agreement wherever it’s held, that’s where people will

Should we try a different way? Why try something different. Linden concerned as there is no budget. Lee spoke about an event he was involved in, if members can pull resources and partner externally, perhaps there can be a budget to hire someone who could help us make an impact. Marketing: could work with students or ask marketing companies if they would do something pro bono.

1. **Service Updates inc Volunteer celebrations: awards, successes**
* Team Jak: Raised £33,555.57 at the 10th Anniversary Ball. Volunteers - New Recruit/Refresher Training event held in the Den - good for all volunteers to meet and learn together. Easter Fun lunches planned during Easter holidays for families and an Easter Eggstravaganza on Sunday 13 April.
1. VSGWL: [Homepage - VSGWL Locator](https://westlothianlocator.org/) Official launch April 1st however is now live – check it out! Tracy shared her screen and explained how it works. Will be emailing members soon asking orgs to check their details – as many updates have been completed using Gateway external resource. Orgs can have as much or as little information as they want. You can search by location or category. Add / edit function or email Gateway – there will be a human check of submitted information to ensure appropriate. [Membership - Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian](https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/organisation-support/our-members/) If your not a member, free to join, get in touch. Tracy.kerr@vsgwl.org.
2. **Any other business** None
3. **Next meeting**

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|  | **Guest Speaker** | **Themed discussion** |
| **January 28th** | Dogs trust |  |
| **February 25th** | Voiceability |  |
| **March 25th** | Room to reward (Joe) | PVG (Ray) |
| April 29th | VSGWL Service Locator (Tracy) | Volunteer Expenses (Linden) |
| May 27th | Jocelyn Lockhart (WLCAN) | Training |
| June 24th | WLC Volunteering (Linden) |  |
| August 26th |  | Volunteer Fayre |
| September 30th | Community Benefits Gateway (VSGWL) | PVG (Ray) |
| October 28th |  | Volunteer retainment |
| November 25th |  | Volunteer Scotland? |

**Actions**

1. PVG workshop at Gateway - Ray
2. See if Mercure would provide water on tables – Linden
3. Volunteer Event subgroup – Online 3pm after meeting 29.04: Discuss invites, speakers
4. 2025 Volunteers week – subgroup – Online 1.30pm before meeting 29.04: (What has been before, what worked, what didn’t. Where is need, where is opportunities, Cyrenians community hub?)
5. 2026 Volunteers week – do we book Asda in advance (Champion contact) – All members
6. Explore marketing contacts at WLC – Linden / all members
7. <https://salesforce.123formbuilder.com/form-6733157/volunteer-opportunity-form-new> VSGWL opportunities