



PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON: VOLUNTEERING PROJECT CASE STUDIES 2014-2015

An Arts Council England funded strategic capacity building project on the theme of volunteering with 11 West London Museums



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON: VOLUNTEERING

<i>INTRODUCTION</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>PROJECT OVERVIEW</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>PROJECT PARTNERS</i>	
<i>ORLEANS HOUSE GALLERY</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>FULHAM PALACE TRUST</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>THE HOLLY LODGE CENTRE</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>LONDON TRANSPORT MUSEUM</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>HAM HOUSE AND GARDEN</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>LONDON MUSEUM OF WATER & STEAM</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>GUNNERSBURY PARK & MUSEUM</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>STRAWBERRY HILL TRUST</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>GARRICK'S TEMPLE TO</i>	
<i>SHAKESPEARE TRUST</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>HEADSTONE MANOR & MUSEUM</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>WANDSWORTH MUSEUM</i>	<i>37</i>

PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON: VOLUNTEERING

INTRODUCTION

In 2014-15 Orleans House Gallery led a partnership project with eleven Museums across West London, funded by the Arts Council England. The project entitled *Partnership for Excellence West London: Volunteering* aimed to build organisational capacity and embed good practice by thinking strategically about volunteering.

Volunteers play a vital role in Museums, from engaging local communities with events and activities to enabling smaller Museums to operate with no paid staff. Yet, the capacity to recruit and train volunteers to create an effective, sustainable programme is a challenge for many smaller Museums. This project provided partner Museums with crucial space, time and support to reflect on current volunteering practice and think strategically about how they might work with volunteers in the future.

The project has been successful in developing strong networks across the participating West London Museums. Central to this has been the investment placed in shared training programmes as well as the combining of resources. Through the project, participating Museums explored varied aspects of volunteer capacity building – ranging from the recruitment and diversification of the volunteer workforce to trialling new ways of working with volunteers.

The eleven case studies presented here share the learning from each partner Museum project, reflecting on the successes and the challenges faced. They contain practical advice for other Museums and cultural organisations who are considering developing their volunteering programmes to improve future resilience and sustainability.

Rachel Tranter
Head of Arts
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON: VOLUNTEERING

PROJECT OVERVIEW

*"I HAVE FORMED FANTASTIC RELATIONSHIPS
WITH SOME OF THE PARTNERS RESULTING
IN PLANS TO WORK TOGETHER IN THE
FUTURE"*

Project partner, *Partnership for Excellence West London: Volunteering*

Summary

The *Partnership for Excellence West London: Volunteering* project was funded by the Arts Council England Renaissance Strategic Support Fund and supported Museums in West London to think strategically about their volunteer programmes, enabling them to pilot new schemes or revise practices and work towards embedding best practice in their day to day activities.

Why the project was needed

The project allowed each of the eleven partner organisations the time and space to think strategically about volunteering in their organisation, developing new methods of working and taking risks through their individual projects. The project aimed to establish a strong and productive West London Museum partnership focussing on volunteering and to provide a relevant training and capacity building programme for partner Museum staff.

How the project worked

The project trialled new methods of working in partnership, including joint training and a shared large-scale recruitment drive for volunteers, with adverts in the Metro newspaper and the Guardian website. Orleans House Gallery facilitated the project, sourcing training and supporting project delivery. Regular meetings were held with partners which enabled them to share best practice and resources.

Orleans House Gallery coordinated ten central training opportunities for partner Museum staff and eight training opportunities for volunteers, the themes of which were collaboratively decided at partner meetings. In addition to the centrally coordinated training, project partner staff had the opportunity to take part in a series of Action Learning sets which encouraged reflection on practices and encouraged capacity building through a new approach to problem solving.



"THE PROJECT HAS IMPROVED OUR RESILIENCE IN THAT WE ARE MORE ENGAGED, MORE DEVELOPED VOLUNTEERS AND ARE MORE LIKELY TO RETAIN THEM BECAUSE THEY FEEL WE ARE INVESTING IN THEM"

Project partner, *Partnership for Excellence West London: Volunteering*

Education training session at Orleans House Gallery

Reflections on the project

The successful formation of the partnership has been a major achievement of the project and has been highlighted as an area of strength of the project by the partners. All organisations felt part of a supportive network, formed stronger links with partner Museums and took part in new opportunities. The potential for skills-sharing and future joint strategic working has been recognised, with plans in place to continue working together in the future.

Achievements

All partners considered that the project had been of strategic benefit to them, in particular it helped them to develop a more ambitious vision, develop better systems and structures. Evaluation has shown an overall increase in perceived organisational resilience across the partnership, including a marked increase in strong and effective leadership.

The project achieved significant impact in terms of training. Throughout the project 64 members of the museum workforce participated training opportunities, 40 volunteers participated in the centrally coordinated training and 723 volunteers benefitted from a wider training offer. The engagement and learning opportunities increased within partner Museums over the duration of the project by 22%. During the project four partners increased their percentage of BAME volunteers by 3% or more and three organisations increased their percentage of younger volunteers, one organisation by a very healthy 10%.

Success factors

The training opportunities for staff and volunteers across the partnership were viewed as integral to the success of the project. The range of training opportunities was seen as incredibly successful by the project partners, with something relevant for everyone. Partners were confident that the training would have immediate and long-term impacts for their work.

Lessons learnt

The focus of working on practical projects with a shared overall aim was an important aspect of this project, and ensured that all partners were invested. It is important to recognise that the project required commitment from partners, who have demands on their time, and therefore a flexible attitude within the project structure was essential.

The project enabled the testing of joint approaches to recruitment and training of volunteers. The shared training was particularly successful and can be implemented in the future.

Having a dedicated Project Co-ordinator enabled the smooth running of the project. However, a longer time frame would have been beneficial for partners to further develop their work and deepen the partnership formed.

Next steps

Orleans House Gallery will be building on the success of its partnership work and extending its role as a West London Heritage Hub through the *Transforming Orleans House* project. The Heritage Hub will offer a programme of skills sharing and practical training opportunities and will lead on future joint initiatives with Museums and Heritage organisations, continuing to build capacity and resilience across West London.

Practical advice

The range of partners involved in the project ranged from completely volunteer run organisations such as Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare Trust to the London Transport Museum; each with different focuses around volunteering. Each partner was therefore encouraged to adapt their individual projects to meet their own varying and unique needs, and it was vital to maintain flexibility with the project structure.

Contact

www.richmond.gov.uk/orleans_house_gallery
artsinfo@richmond.gov.uk



Gunnersbury Park & Museum Costume Conservation Volunteers

PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON: VOLUNTEERING

ORLEANS HOUSE GALLERY

Summary

During 2014-15, Orleans House Gallery was the lead partner of a project involving 10 other organisations with a focus on volunteer development. This project, *Partnership for Excellence West London: Volunteering* was funded by Arts Council England, under the Renaissance Strategic Support fund. In addition, Orleans House Gallery undertook its own project within the programme. The main focus of this project was to enable the different Front of House and Education departments to work more closely together and ensure volunteer recruitment, induction and training is consistent across the Gallery. The project also aimed to develop new long-term volunteer roles within the Education department, as prior to the project Education workshops were supported by short term Voluntary Placements.



Why the project was needed

Orleans House Gallery had 35 active volunteers prior to this project. 22 worked as part of the Front of House team and others specialised in working with Education. The two groups had developed and were managed separately. The project enabled the Gallery Team to work more closely together, creating a clearer focus and a shared framework for volunteering across the organisation. A programme of shared training opportunities was developed for volunteers to develop their skills.

How the project worked

The recruitment process has been steam-lined for all volunteering applications, whether for Front of House or Education roles. A refreshed volunteer handbook has been produced, which has given consistency across the different volunteer roles and joint training for volunteers across Orleans House Gallery has been piloted to great success. A new group of 12 volunteers, both local and from further afield, have been introduced to Orleans House Gallery through the project. Training sessions for volunteers

Volunteer supporting an Education workshop at Orleans House Gallery



have included Dementia Awareness and Tour Guiding. Both these sessions were offered to volunteers across the wider project and were very positively received by the participants. Two further training sessions are planned on Reminiscence and Special Educational Needs (in partnership with the London Museum of Water and Steam).

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROJECT

Achievements

The involvement of new enthusiastic volunteers with Orleans House Gallery has been the main achievement of the project. There is now a new group of people who can regularly support Education workshops. The volunteers have been very positive about the free training offered by the project; 25-30 places were quickly filled and feedback was very good. Following their training in Dementia Awareness, volunteers were able to help on a programme and apply their skills straight away. This will also be possible for volunteers who have completed training in Special Educational Needs.

Success factors

The project funding enabled members of staff to dedicate time to building up relationships with both new and existing volunteers. The enthusiasm and passion for the place that the volunteers brought to the Gallery led to re-invigoration and refreshed the work of the team.

Lessons learnt by the organisation

Proactive recruitment of volunteers through advertising has been effective. By actively promoting specific opportunities for volunteering, Orleans House Gallery has developed a new pool of volunteers. Bringing together the Education and Front of House volunteer teams for shared training, networking and events has improved communication and given them a better perspective on each other's work.

Front of House volunteer at Orleans House Gallery
Training session for volunteers at Orleans House Gallery

Next steps

The work of the project will be embedded into the practice of the Gallery; for example, evaluation meetings with the volunteers will continue and more training will be offered to volunteers. Opportunities for funding additional training will be explored, for example by including it in wider project plans and externally funded programmes where possible. The partnerships built up with the other organisations in the project will also help to maintain a network of colleagues who can continue to share their skills and experience. It will also be possible to continue to extend volunteering opportunities across the partner organisations after the end of the project, as part of the remit of the West London Heritage Hub.

Practical advice

The support of colleagues within the organisation is important for the consistent running of the project from planning through delivery to completion, providing a framework for the responsibilities of the project manager. Working with partner organisations extends the networks for both, bringing new contacts and potential links for future work.

The new regular volunteer roles within the Education department have enabled a step-change in the day-to-day management of volunteers and enabled Orleans House Gallery to expand the Education volunteer profile.

Contact

www.richmond.gov.uk/orleans_house_gallery
artsinfo@richmond.gov.uk

PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON: VOLUNTEERING

FULHAM PALACE TRUST



Summary

The focus of Fulham Palace's project was on communication with and between the volunteers, using digital technologies to empower them to contribute directly, share information, discuss issues and organise their time. A new volunteer role, Volunteer Communication Assistant was developed and four volunteers recruited. Training was made available for the volunteers in courses such as *Writing for the Web*. In addition, four existing volunteers joined two members of staff to create a working group that directed the development of a dedicated web space for Fulham Palace volunteers.

Why the project was needed

As part of the existing volunteer structure, there were already different communication methods in place, such as email, forums, feedback surveys and one-to-one management meetings. However, with over 170 volunteers involved in different areas of work, it was clear that digital communication would allow Fulham Palace to ensure that every volunteer was able to contribute and to enter into dialogue with staff and other volunteers. Rather than the existing volunteer newsletter issued quarterly, for example, a blog updated weekly would keep the whole team better informed.

How the project worked

Four volunteers were recruited to the new role of Volunteer Communication Assistant. The role was advertised through the Fulham Palace website and the *Do It* volunteering website (<https://do-it.org>). The applications were excellent, with advanced skills and knowledge that were directly relevant, such as IT change management. The working group shaped the structure of the website, identifying the key areas and making sure that all the necessary functions were included. The website was built in-house, with professionally supplied software and support from a webhosting company. Project funding was also used for an iPad for the volunteers to use on site and for training.



The working group held monthly meetings as the website was developed and a soft launch allowed a wider, but still limited, number of volunteers to test it. Resources were developed to make sure that all the volunteers were able to use it: a 'how-to' guide was produced (with images) in hard copy and within the site itself, every rota page includes instructions. The Volunteer Communications Assistants led three training sessions (two on site and one in a computer lab) for volunteers and offered one-to-one training in addition. In practice, some volunteers found that they did not need a personalised session once they had used the resources and undertaken training.

The main areas of the site are: blog (updated by volunteers); calendar (on which volunteers can sign up for events); volunteer resources (such as handbook, expense report sheet, child protection policy); main volunteering areas (with information such as how-to garden processes); online forum; image gallery; volunteer rotas (with facility to sign up on line for shifts); contacts.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROJECT

Achievements

The website launched on time and the feedback from the volunteers has been extremely positive. Web statistics show that they are using it and the site is already beginning to grow.

Success factors

The project was building on a strong foundation. All the volunteers were made aware of the project from the start. The working group was key to its success, and included a number of volunteers who were already volunteer representatives. The new role of Volunteer Communication Assistant also brought four skilled colleagues to the group.

PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON: VOLUNTEERING



Lessons learnt by the organisation

It is important to have a team of volunteers dedicated to the project, not only for the creation of the website and associated resources, but also for training purposes and ongoing support for both volunteers and staff. A side benefit of the project is that it has given volunteers a better understanding of the different opportunities offered at the Palace and existing volunteers are now getting involved in additional areas as well as benefiting from staff and each other's skills and knowledge as a result.

Next steps

The website is now providing new channels of communication that can be expanded as the volunteers add information and new features. The Volunteer Communication Assistants will maintain and monitor the site. A 'how-to' guide is being developed for managing it, so that knowledge can be transferred to others taking this role in future.

New Fulham Palace volunteers website, created as part of Partnership for Excellence West London: Volunteering

Practical advice

The volunteers need to be involved from the beginning. If there is no-one on the staff who is confident to build a website, consider recruiting a volunteer to this role, if budgets are tight. When choosing software, it is important to consider how much professional support the organisation may need when using it, for example advice on protection and security, a helpline and back-up if something goes wrong. A free option may not be appropriate. Software companies are also likely to give discounts to charities (even though this is not stated on their websites). The website is representing the organisation to its volunteers and staff and its reputation is important.

Contact

<http://www.fulhampalace.org>
mail@fulhampalace.org



THE HOLLY LODGE CENTRE



Volunteer at The Holly Lodge Centre

Summary

The Holly Lodge Centre had two strands to their project. They developed a tool for monitoring and evaluating the quality of the education delivery by their volunteers. This was done through research and with the involvement of volunteer members of the Centre's education committee. They also provided training in Forest School, enabling them to offer new sessions. Both these developments have reached the stage of implementation.

Why the project was needed

The Holly Lodge Centre had recently been awarded the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality badge. One of the quality indicators in the scheme is a commitment to review the experience of learners and act upon feedback. This was the driver for the evaluation tool. The Forest School is a new development, which requires a high ratio of assistants to participate in each session. The project was very timely for both developments.

How the project worked

Research showed that there seemed to be no appropriate evaluation tool available "off the peg." One of the working trustees is a former Ofsted inspector, who was able to suggest the criteria for what would make an outstanding learning session. This was discussed by the volunteers in the context of their work and a new tool was created. The project funding covered the cost of a mini ipad to record images of sessions as part of their evaluation. A full day's training in Forest School was delivered to 16 volunteers by Surrey Wildlife Trust on site. Pilot sessions started in April 2015.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROJECT

Achievements

The Holly Lodge Centre now has a tool for evaluation devised especially for its volunteers, which will provide



evidence-based feedback. It also has a team of volunteers who are now knowledgeable about Forest School: its philosophy, ethos and importantly its safety code. The volunteer teaching assistants know how to use tools safely and can teach others how to use them safely.

Success factors

It was significant for the evaluation tool that there was a high level of skills and experience within the trustees, as it would otherwise have needed to be commissioned from an evaluation consultant. The training was able to generate a real enthusiasm for the Forest School project. The volunteer team are now extremely motivated and keen to assist with the forest school sessions. The volunteers are clear what is involved and are confident to participate.

Lessons learnt

The project as a whole has been most useful, in particular the partnership working with other organisations. Without this, links would not exist. It has been invaluable to share knowledge, information and resources. It is important to value volunteers and providing interesting training with partner organisations, is an excellent way to reward them by adding to their skills.

Next steps

The evaluation tool will be used first with some of the more experienced volunteers and adapted if necessary, before being rolled out. Once all the staff have the appropriate qualifications and the piloting is complete, the Forest School sessions will be offered to schools and community groups.

Practical advice

The impact and importance of training for volunteers should be considered as key to the organisation and the volunteers themselves. Training that does not relate directly to delivery can also prove valuable. For example, volunteers



were able to find out about the use of herbal potions in the Still House at Ham House and in spite of the different time periods, found links with the medicines in the Victorian pharmacy at Holly Lodge.

Contact

www.thehollylodgecentre.org.uk
hlcinfo@thehollylodgecentre.org.uk

The Holly Lodge Centre were able to use the funding for what they needed to do, but in addition, working in a partnership project has been incredibly helpful. It can be difficult in a working day, to lift your head and look around at what others are doing. The project made The Holly Lodge Centre do that.



PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON: VOLUNTEERING

LONDON TRANSPORT MUSEUM



London Transport Museum volunteers

Summary

The focus of the project was to work towards the development of a volunteer strategy for the Museum and to improve the volunteer experience and quality of the product. The funding made it possible for external facilitators to work with a cross-departmental team of staff as a volunteer management team, to improve volunteer practice, develop a strategy and identify key areas for future work. This process has been recognised by Arts Council England as effective and worthy of further investment over the next three years.

Why the project was needed

The number of volunteers and volunteering opportunities has been steadily increasing over the last few years and there has been corresponding growth in the number of members of staff who manage the work of volunteers in the course of their own work. There is a Resource Coordinator, with responsibility for volunteer management, but procedures and processes had evolved over time. There was common ground between staff but some practice had grown up in isolation and there was duplication of effort and resources. It was clear that procedures such as recruitment and induction needed to be centralised.

How the project worked

A series of monthly workshops was devised and run by external facilitators, with 12 staff members participating. Staff came from both sites to make a formal commitment to addressing volunteer management across the Museum. Together they explored their current practice and began making strategic plans. Terms of reference were drawn up for the volunteer management group and an action plan agreed for the year ahead. The core staff group is now ready to begin to involve the volunteers themselves, using a forum. It will also begin to tie into the strategic planning of the museum through the support of senior management and the Board.



London Transport Museum volunteers

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROJECT

Achievements / highlights

The formation and ongoing work of the volunteer management group has been the main achievement of the project. There is now a renewed enthusiasm amongst the staff and a common drive towards change in volunteer management practice. The potential for skills-sharing and co-operation has been recognised and the project has set the Museum on the path to further progress in its work with volunteers.

Success factors

The funding came at a good time for London Transport Museum. Work with volunteers was growing and the project acted as a catalyst for the staff to review and revise their practice and procedures and start working towards a holistic long term strategy. External facilitators added value, enabling all the staff to be equal participants in the process. The Museum was also able to benefit from their professional advice, both formally and in more informal conversation.

Lessons learnt

Members of staff from different departments need to retain their commitment to participating in the regular volunteer management group meetings. There may be competition for their time, such as pressing deadlines in their area of work. In order to keep up the momentum, it may be necessary to be flexible, for example, by shortening the meetings, while continuing to advocate internally for the importance of the work of the group.

Discussions within the staff group highlighted the need to involve the volunteers at a strategic level. Some long-standing volunteers have served at London Transport Museum for as long as current staff and their contribution will be particularly well-informed and welcome.



Next steps

In the next two months, a volunteer forum will be established to enable the volunteers to contribute to the development of the strategy and feed their views into the programme.

Practical advice

The use of funding to employ external facilitators can help to meet the project outcomes. It has value even if the in-house project manager has similar skills, as it allows for the whole team to work together as equals and learn alongside one another.

This work can be the start of a long road. It needs a team effort and shared input to make progress.

Contact

opportunities@ltmuseum.co.uk
www.ltmuseum.co.uk



London Transport Museum Volunteer supporting family workshop.

PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON: VOLUNTEERING

HAM HOUSE AND GARDEN



Families exploring Ham House

Summary

The project used a professional storyteller to develop and run training workshops with volunteers in order to enhance their skills of working with visitors and interpreting the stories of Ham House. The initial training was based on learning the techniques of engaging with different audiences in a more imaginative and creative way. Following these workshops, a set of more in-depth storytelling training workshops are now planned, so that volunteers can learn to craft their own stories about Ham House. New storytelling sessions will be developed and offered to families on weekends and holidays. In addition, volunteers from two different departments were brought together by shared training, which has led to improved working relationships and a new sense of ownership by the volunteers of the responsibilities involved.

Why the project was planned

The project funding allowed Ham House to employ external trainers and pilot new training opportunities for the volunteers. There are over 400 volunteers at Ham House. By working with a group of volunteers, it was possible to evaluate the impact of the training and build on their experience, before offering it more widely.

How the project worked

A storyteller was commissioned to develop a set of two half-day workshops for volunteers and this was run twice, involving 36 volunteers. The workshops aimed to develop storytelling skills and techniques that would help volunteers to engage with a whole range of visitors who have varying motivations and interests. Volunteers were invited to participate in the sessions, according to their training needs and their current roles, for example, tour guides. Their feedback in the evaluation showed that most volunteers thought they had benefited from the training and agreed that it should be rolled out to their peers. Some



Families exploring Ham House
Volunteer at Ham House

also said that they had been taken out of their comfort zone. Although they may not have welcomed the training initially, they had nevertheless been positive about its value to them in the end.

Ham House is using the same storyteller to help to develop new storytelling workshops targeted and marketed more closely at young visitors. Volunteers will spend a day in research and development, followed by a two-day workshop building up stories based on tales, rumours and myths about Ham House and the characters connected to its past. They will learn more about how children learn at different ages and learning styles, so that the stories can be targeted at different audiences. Volunteers with related skills and experience will be able to take a lead on some elements, such as the National Curriculum.

A different training opportunity was offered to volunteers who work in two different teams: the Still House volunteers, who give costumed demonstrations and the Garden volunteers, whose duties include cutting flowers and herbs, including for use in the Still House. An external trainer was commissioned to run a workshop on historic herbal remedies, which served as a link between the two groups. As a result, the Still House volunteers have been taught by the gardeners to cut the herbs they need and the gardeners are also able to replenish the herbs in the Still House. Both sets of volunteers are now able to take ownership of this element of the displays, with less staff time necessary.

REFLECTION ON THE PROJECT

Achievements

It has been possible to observe improvements in guided tours. The volunteers have also shown that they appreciate the development opportunities being offered to them and are enjoying the chance to learn new ways of working.

PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON: VOLUNTEERING

Success factors

Getting the volunteers together from across the different departments (Education, House, Garden, Conservation and Administration) for training has allowed them to share their enthusiasm for Ham House and Garden and to learn more about each other.

Lessons learnt

The project has been a reminder that the volunteers have a great wealth of skills and knowledge to contribute. However, it has also shown that it is worth offering training to volunteers even when they are very busy and/or already have years of experience. There has clearly been a reciprocal benefit for the volunteers and the organisation.

Next steps

The initial story-telling techniques workshops will be rolled out to more volunteers, using in-house trainers, including volunteers at the original workshops.

In the summer holidays, children will be able to come to sessions aimed at their age group (under 5s or 5-11 year olds) and enjoy oral storytelling (rather than listening to books being read). Songs, nursery rhymes and music will make the sessions more interactive. The links with the other partner organisations in the project will be sustained, using the network to inform and support volunteers.

Practical advice

Projects can be difficult at the beginning where there are practical challenges, for example, in terms of lead times and changes of project staff. This may mean that a large-scale project is not feasible, but the outcomes can still be met by using the funding to develop training opportunities that run alongside the yearly strategic objectives and support their delivery.

Contact

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ham-house
hamhouse@nationaltrust.org.uk

LONDON MUSEUM OF WATER & STEAM



Volunteer at London Museum of Water & Steam

Summary

The London Museum of Water and Steam worked with two groups of performing arts students on linked projects to interpret the site. The students came from two partner organisations: the University of West London and Richmond upon Thames College. The work was tailored to the needs and interests of the students, who were at different levels and explored the site through different genres.

Why the project was needed

The Museum underwent a major redevelopment during 2013 – 2014, including rebranding to reflect its heritage waterworks theme. As part of this re-invigoration, there was a need to expand and diversify the existing volunteer team and to find more ways for young people to contribute.

How the project worked

The Museum's initial more general aim of recruiting young volunteers was given a new focus on performing arts. There were events planned later in 2015, such as *Museums at Night*, for which there would be a need for costumed interpreters. The performance projects undertaken by the students would act as an introduction for all concerned and begin relationships that could lead to further volunteering.

Some time was spent at the beginning of the project in identifying the organisations to work with. From the six local performing institutions, the University of West London and Richmond upon Thames College were chosen and initial meetings held with staff and students. The University students were able to move relatively quickly and four sessions were held, including one at their Ealing campus. In addition to museum and teaching staff, a freelance movement teacher and a storyteller were employed to develop their performances. Their genre was musical theatre. The students at Richmond upon Thames, a VI form college, were working less independently and their timetable was



more restricted. They worked on a multimedia project and although they visited the site on two occasions, it was more classroom-based.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROJECT

Achievements

These two project strands are still in progress, but the evaluation from the University has been positive. Museum staff members have welcomed the opportunity to engage more closely with local young people and to see the heritage in a new light. They have brought a fresh perspective and new energy to the site. The partnerships with the University and the College are beginning to be established.

Success factors

The partnerships have been developed through the openness of the institutions and the commitment of the teachers, who have recruited and encouraged the engagement of the students. The Museum was careful to remain open to the students' ideas during the creative process and let their imaginations have free rein. The Richmond upon Thames College students took a romantic approach, for example.

The students were being given the opportunity to perform in front of a real audience at the Museum and this made it an authentic process, giving it an added urgency. The project funding covered the cost of employing a professional storyteller to act as a creative catalyst, injecting a spark of inspiration at the start of the project.

Lessons learnt

There were some logistical challenges, for example, a bus strike, which affected an early session. The VI College needed to have four weeks' notice of any trip out, which demanded a flexible approach. However the Museum's



London Museum of Water & Steam
Front of House volunteers at London Museum of Water & Steam

main learning was about how much potential there is in work with young people and it has inspired them to do more. Young people are generally not considered to be "typical museum-goers" and it was exciting to see the Museum inspiring them.

Next steps

There will be two performances and the project work will be evaluated. The London Museum of Water and Steam aims to continue working with the same young people this year. It is discussing future co-operative programmes with the University and College. Although the first projects have been running separately, it may be possible to bring the different groups of young people together in future.

Practical advice

This project had to find new partners to a tight timescale. The personal approach – making telephone calls to the local colleges followed up by an email – seemed to work well. The partnership element of this project has been particularly valuable, offering extra support and training opportunities. Spending time with good practitioners in your area will improve the way you work and help you to develop your role. In general, the advice to another museum considering a similar project would be – Go for it!

Contact

www.waterandsteam.org.uk
museum@waterandsteam.org.uk



PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON: VOLUNTEERING

GUNNERSBURY PARK & MUSEUM



Gunnersbury Park and Museum Costume Conservation Volunteers

Summary

Gunnersbury Park and Museum's project was centred on the development of more specific roles for volunteers and the formalisation of the processes of volunteer management, such as recruitment and induction. A volunteer handbook has now been produced. Volunteers have been recruited and trained to support the delivery of Early Years and Outdoor Learning sessions. New volunteers are still coming forward. The project has been the beginning of a new way of working.

Why the project was needed

Gunnersbury Park Museum is currently closed for refurbishment until 2017. While the capital side of the project progresses, other developments are also planned. In addition to reviewing its offer for Early Years Learning, the Museum is planning to introduce Outdoor Learning opportunities. There was an existing team of volunteers but their work was quite general. There was a need to recruit and train more volunteers to support the devising and delivery of learning sessions. An additional benefit of the project was that it has helped to raise and maintain the Museum's profile within local communities while it is closed for refurbishment. The volunteering project has encouraged more local people to volunteer, enabling them to get involved and effectively become stakeholders in the redevelopment of Gunnersbury Park and Museum and its services at a vital point in its history.

How the project worked

Project funding was used to provide professional trainers to carry out two full days of training and to cover the volunteers' expenses. As part of these training days, ideas for the Early Years and Outdoor Learning workshops were explored and the volunteers were empowered to contribute to the planning. Funding was also used to purchase some of the resources for use in these workshops.



Gunnersbury Park and Museum Outdoor Learning and Gardening Volunteers

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROJECT

Achievements

Gunnersbury Park and Museum has been able to develop a better working relationship with its volunteers through the project. There has been more time to spend with the volunteers and the Museum has been able to benefit from more input from them. Communication has been improved and there is more understanding about the motivations and interests of volunteers. Paid members of staff working alongside volunteers are now more confident about the role of volunteers within the organisation. Being part of a strong network within the partnership project has also helped Gunnersbury Park and Museum, as a relatively small museum, to gain more confidence in its own resilience. The Early Years and Outdoor Learning workshops are currently being trialled with local schools; the development and delivery of these are being supported by volunteers as a result of the training.

Success factors

The partnership enabled each museum to benefit from the training events at other sites, for both volunteers and staff. The individual budgets have been shared so that a great deal more was possible.

Lessons learnt

Gunnersbury Park and Museum has found that it is worth making time to put a volunteer strategy in place. Volunteer management is now given more emphasis and volunteers are more valued. There are challenges in working with volunteers, for example, when trying to get them all together, and it has been helpful to be able to share thoughts and issues with partners in the project. It was also important to benefit from a strong lead partner to give direction to the project and provide support and mentoring.

PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON

Next steps

Volunteer recruitment will continue and the Museum will look for new places to recruit. Role descriptions will be kept accurate and up to date. There is already a wide age range within the volunteer team, but there is now an aim to reflect the demographics of the local area better. Gunnersbury Park and Museum plans to maintain the dialogue with the volunteers through evaluation and to increase and improve opportunities for volunteer training and social interaction, such as through group visits to discover the work of volunteers at other heritage sites. The team will be further developed, with more opportunities for training.

Practical advice

Gunnersbury Park and Museum would advise other museums to investigate all the possibilities for recruiting new volunteers, beyond the most obvious places. For example, it might be necessary to work through colleges and secondary schools to find young volunteers, or specific local community groups to meet older people.

It will take time to recruit and the Museum found it helpful to focus on the most local places and then get their publicity out everywhere.

Finally, in the current difficult climate for heritage, it is all the more important to form networks with other museums. It builds new relationships and opens up new possibilities.

Contact

www.hounslow.info/arts-culture/historic-houses-museums/gunnersbury-park-museum
gunnersburylearning@ealing.gov.uk



STRAWBERRY HILL TRUST



Volunteers at Strawberry Hill House

Summary

At Strawberry Hill, the project followed two strands, each offering the opportunity to pilot new ways of working with volunteers. One strand centred on the diversification of the volunteer team, to represent a wider ethnic and age demographic. A new recruitment leaflet was distributed to a set of streets and postcodes where the residents were more representative of the target groups. This targeted marketing approach was seen to have an effect, as there was an immediate uptake in applications from those geographic areas. The second strand involved researching new technologies to improve the existing processes for volunteer rostering. Software was identified and extra hardware (tablets to enable more flexible access by the volunteer team) was purchased.

Why the project was needed

Strawberry Hill was aware that a more diverse volunteer team, in terms of age and ethnicity, would be beneficial for the organisation and its visitors. There was a manual process for organising the volunteers and this was labour intensive for the co-ordinating volunteer (10 volunteers are needed for every day that the house is open). By relieving some of the administrative burden through new software, it would be possible to free up more time for other volunteer management tasks. The costs of production of a high quality leaflet and new hardware, in addition to the staff time to research and pilot these, represented a risk that could also be balanced by the extra funding available and the support and training offered by the partnership.

What the project did

A full colour professionally designed leaflet was produced and a distribution firm was employed to deliver it within a specified set of postcodes within 30 minutes' travel time, extending the reach to a wider and more demographically diverse population. The leaflet introduced Strawberry Hill



and laid out the opportunities available for volunteers. New software was identified that would fit with existing systems and processes at Strawberry Hill. It was also possible to improve the access of volunteers and co-ordinator to the data, such as timetables, by purchasing tablets. This will allow them the flexibility to check their commitments in the break room or input new data during meetings, for example.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROJECT

Achievements

The new recruitment leaflet has had a positive effect in terms of increased numbers of applications for volunteering from new geographic areas. Strawberry Hill Trust increased their percentage of BAME volunteers by 4% and increased families who volunteer together by 3%. The new technology is still in a pilot phase, but the project has moved Strawberry Hill forward in its development of volunteer management systems.

Success factors

The project allowed Strawberry Hill to take an initiative that involved expenditure and risk. Learning from the two strands of the pilot has reduced the risk for future developmental work.

Lessons learnt

The leaflet was successful in terms of numbers, but it did not deliver enough diversity in terms of the applications. The distribution reached more and different people, but the content now needs to be reviewed. Although there are some constants in the text that need to remain (such as information about Strawberry Hill, opportunities available and flexibility), the language and design could be re-considered for more effective marketing to a new demographic.



Volunteer at Strawberry Hill House
Volunteers at Strawberry Hill House

Next steps

Strawberry Hill will continue to stay in contact with the other partner organisations in the project. The project is part of ongoing volunteer development. New technology will be rolled out for the volunteers and management processes improved. The model of widening volunteer recruitment using a high quality targeted leaflet will be maintained, with ongoing evaluation of its effectiveness, with changes to its content.

Practical advice

Project funding can help an organisation to develop and try new ways of working. It was useful to be a part of a partnership in which people were facing similar issues. For example, most of the partners were also using manual systems to roster their volunteers and many of them shared the dissatisfactions with the current processes. They wanted to be able to focus on the volunteers for their different contributions, rather than having to concentrate on filling in spaces with the right numbers of people.

The partnership project also offered training opportunities, in addition to peer support and funding. Although some of this training might not be strictly relevant to the delivery of the project, it gave staff at Strawberry Hill the chance to access training that would not normally be affordable within core budgets. It was also useful to be able to attend training in West London venues rather than travelling further afield.

Contact

www.strawberryhillhouse.org.uk



PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON: VOLUNTEERING

GARRICK'S TEMPLE TO SHAKESPEARE TRUST



Summary

Through the project Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare Trust were able to recruit a new volunteer with specific skills in digital engagement. This led to the production of new digital interpretation in the Temple, for use by visitors, including children. The relationship with the other partner organisations, supported by the project, has provided ongoing benefits. The Trust has been able to learn from different approaches and ways of thinking, putting a new emphasis on volunteer management, including recruitment, training and systems.

Why the project was needed

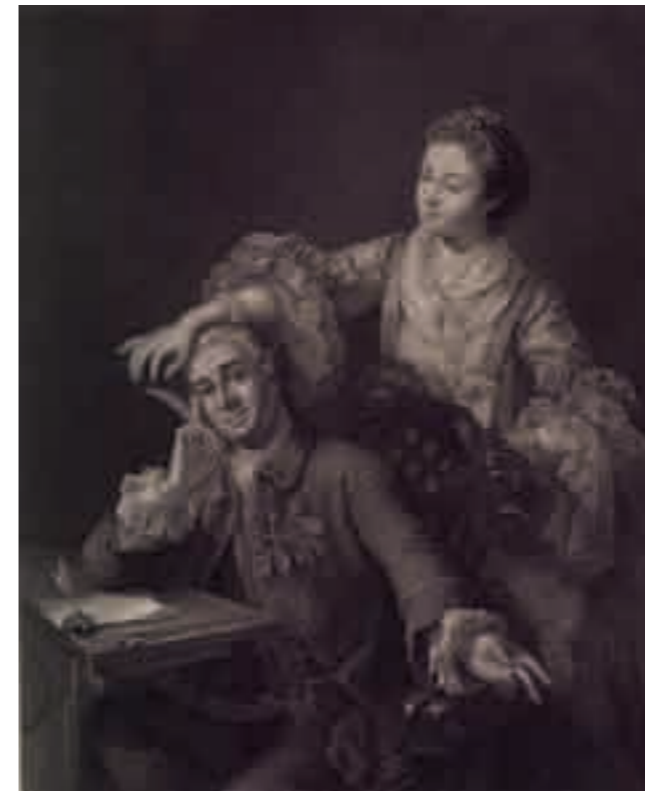
At the start of the project, Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare Trust was aware that as a volunteer-run organisation, they might have a different perspective from other partners. The Trust had initial reservations about the time and commitment the project required from the trustees. However, any initial doubts about the relevance of the project was overcome by the wish to continue to support and co-operate with Orleans House Gallery, with whom the Trust already had a close working relationship.

Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare Trust also wanted to diversify their volunteer team, in particular to attract volunteers with particular useful skills, such as digital programming and website design. This was important for promotion and interpretation of the building and its stories

What the project did

Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare Trust was assisted by Orleans House Gallery to recruit a volunteer with the right skills to help with digital projects. In addition to her involvement with the Trust on a voluntary basis, she was commissioned to work on content supplied by the volunteers to produce digital displays in the Temple. Two ipads and stands were purchased with funding from the

Volunteer run activity at Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare



Bourne after Hogarth
Mr and Mrs Garrick, undated
Engraving
Richmond Borough Art Collection

project and two displays have been produced, one aimed at general visitors and one at children and young people. It has also been possible to purchase new badges for volunteers and a professionally-made theatrical costume for interpreters acting as David Garrick.

In addition to the material benefits of the project, the Trust has been able to take part in monthly Action Learning sets, giving them the opportunity to discuss shared issues and deepen knowledge by finding out more in-depth about the different ways heritage organisations manage and work with volunteers to make the most of the visitor experience.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROJECT

Achievements

Through this project, the Trust was able to find the volunteer they needed to move them forward in their approach to technology. This has led to tangible improvements to the way visitors can learn about Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare.

Success factors

Once the volunteers were more aware of the processes as well as the potential of digital communication, they were able to recognise how best the funding available might be used. The support of the other partner organisations has been important in raising awareness of different working practice and putting a professional focus on volunteering, using strategic planning and ongoing volunteer training, for example.

Lessons learnt

Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare Trust has been able to pass on their learning within the volunteer team. There was a renewed emphasis on the skills needed by the volunteers, such as the ways to approach visitors. They have seen an example of successful volunteer recruitment lead directly to benefits for visitors.

PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON: VOLUNTEERING



Next steps

Garrick's Temple to Shakespeare Trust has strengthened their relationship with Orleans House Gallery and will continue to work with them as part of a Heritage Hub network. The partnership with the other Museums involved will be sustained and extended, as at least eight of the partner organisations plan to continue meeting, working together and supporting each other's work.

Practical advice

It is understandable for members of a small volunteer-run and well-established organisation to have reservations when invited to take part in a partnership project with a focus on volunteer development. Volunteers may feel that they do not need training or that they are doing fine as they are. They may not immediately see the benefit of working with paid staff from different kinds of organisation, both local and further afield. This project should encourage other volunteer organisations to "give it a go". There will be shared issues to discuss and the chance of learning something new. By taking the opportunity to reflect on how you do your job and learn from others, you are working to improve your own practice. It may be a cliché, but it is still true: it is never too late to learn.

Contact

www.garrickstemple.org.uk



Stadler after Farington
Garrick's Temple, Hampton, 1793
Coloured print
Richmond Borough Art Collection.

HEADSTONE MANOR & MUSEUM



Family enjoying volunteer run Halloween event at Headstone Manor & Museum

Summary

Headstone Manor and Museum recruited five volunteers, including four young people, for a new role: to act as costumed characters from the history of the site, and to contribute to public tours. A series of three workshops was held, employing a freelance facilitator to work with different local groups, including two drama clubs. There was a focus on the ghostly myths surrounding Headstone Manor, in order to develop scripts. From these workshops, volunteers were recruited for the character roles. A wider Halloween event was planned around the tours to bring in a new audience. Eight new events volunteers were recruited to help with this (including five young people).

Why the project was needed

Headstone Manor and Museum aimed to extend the volunteering opportunities it offers, particularly to young people and as a strategy for resilience. It used the funding to resource a pilot project that could be sustainable once the set-up costs were covered. It was a chance to try a new approach, based on work at larger organisations such as National Trust properties. The Museum also saw it as an opportunity to establish and strengthen links and contacts within the local area, which can be used to recruit volunteers.

How the project worked

Three workshops were delivered with 33 participants. Two local drama clubs participated and open auditions were held at Harrow Arts Centre. The content of the workshops covered "scary acting techniques" as well as creating character profiles and scripts connected to the myths / history of the site: Saxon soldier; Tudor nursemaid; Civil War Battered boy; Victorian cook; Farm worker. A dress rehearsal was held on site the afternoon before the Halloween event. Six tours of the house were run as part of this event. The visitors were met by a tour guide at the start of the tour and given some general information about the house before



they went in. The tours went in a certain direction round the house so the stories flowed. There were five different characters all playing different ghosts from the past. They were each in a different room and their monologue related to that room, so that the actors could engage the audience with ease. The visitors were led round the house by the tour guide and were accompanied at all times. At the end of the tour, the guide led them back to the exit while giving them historical information about the house.

REFLECTION ON THE PROJECT

Achievements

The Halloween event was very successful, with over 600 visitors on site in one afternoon. It was widely and warmly welcomed by the local community and family visitors reflected the diversity of the local area. The open event allowed Headstone Manor and Museum to trial the new tours with a larger number of visitors.

A new volunteer role has been developed and new volunteers recruited, including five actors. Connections have been established with new groups, such as Harrow Arts Centre's young actors.

Success factors

Using a Theatre in Education freelancer enabled the Museum to take the opportunity to train staff, so that they will be able to run a similar event in-house in future. It was also possible to use her professional skills more widely than running workshops, to produce a 'how-to' guide, to resource costume and props and to share contacts.

Lessons learnt

The Halloween tours were not suitable for some of the smaller children and it could be difficult to re-direct families away from them. In future, the "spooky tours" will happen later in the evening, following on from the afternoon family event, in order to separate the different audiences.

Costumed volunteer running tour at Halloween event at Headstone Manor & Museum



It is possible to achieve successful outcomes to a tight timescale, but some elements are likely to be affected, for example, schools cannot be involved at short notice, however positive they are about the Museum and the project. Evaluation is more effective and data is easier to collect when it starts early in the project.

Next steps

Costumes have been purchased, props sourced and together with the scripts, these resources are now available for future use. The Halloween event and "spooky tours" will run again next year. Workshops and auditions will be programmed to take place well in advance, so that recruitment will be easier. Headstone Manor and Museum will be able to repeat the event to continue attracting local families while buildings are inaccessible during the HLF-funded project to transform the site and build a new museum.

Practical Advice

Local drama groups and amateur dramatics societies are useful partners for heritage organisations. They may be looking for new venues for their set pieces. They may organise the administration for shared events e.g. ticketing. When working in partnership, both organisations are likely to need to generate income, so this needs to be balanced at the start.

Other partners to approach when planning a new project are organisations that are already doing similar work with similar audiences. This will be the easiest option.

Some of the activities were inspired by visits to other museums. Running different events and trying activities piloted by others allows a museum to build on their good practice and learn new ways of engaging with the local community.

Contact

harrow.museum@harrow.gov.uk
harrowmuseum.org.uk

PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE WEST LONDON: VOLUNTEERING

WANDSWORTH MUSEUM



Courtesy of Wandsworth Museum

Summary

The focus of Wandsworth Museum's project was the skills development of the existing volunteer team and the recruitment of two new volunteers to specific roles within the learning department. Both these elements were successful and the Museum has been able to use the learning from the project to inform its strategy and formalise its procedures at a time of organisational change.

Why the project was needed

Wandsworth Museum is developing a partnership with Battersea Arts Centre, to be implemented in 2016. The need to combine strategies and policies between the two organisations meant that the timing of the project was right. A renewed focus on the development of the 20 existing volunteers, the recruitment of volunteers with different skills and the opportunity for staff and volunteers to receive training has enabled the Museum to gather new ideas to carry forward.

How the project worked

The joint recruitment drive carried out as part of the wider project raised awareness and Wandsworth Museum received more enquiries about volunteering, but it was through existing local networks and contacts that the two new volunteers were recruited. Each of them came with strong existing skills and experience for their work: one specialising in Early Years and Children with Special Educational Needs and the other in Formal Learning. These new volunteers were offered training opportunities funded by the project, such as Babies in Museums workshop, run by Kids in Museums. They were also able to attend the training day on Early Years and Schools organised by Wandsworth Museum and open to other partner museums. The funding covered high quality training. This training was particularly useful for existing volunteers whose previous experience had mainly been of working in the front of house, as they

Training session for Wandsworth Museum volunteers



Early Years workshop at Wandsworth Museum
Work created at Early Years workshop at Wandsworth Museum

were able to find out more about learning in Museums. The project-wide training offered by Orleans House Gallery and other partners provided additional useful and relevant opportunities for the Wandsworth volunteers, such as Mental Health Awareness, Storytelling and Running Tours.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROJECT

Achievements

Feedback from the volunteers about their training was mostly very positive. Meeting other volunteers, both from Wandsworth Museum and from elsewhere, was particularly mentioned as a benefit. Their own thinking about their volunteering was expanded as they were able to share ideas and build up new contacts.

Success factors

At the beginning of the project a volunteer meeting was held, which informed the volunteers about the project and funding, the planned outcomes for them and the opportunities for training that would be available. The volunteers were at the heart of the project and the Museum wanted to involve them from the start. This meant that everyone was clear about what was about to happen and why and potential problems later in the project were minimised.

Lessons learnt by the organisation

Wandsworth Museum became more aware of the benefit of receiving formal training for staff on volunteer management and creating an overarching strategy for using volunteers. Previously staff had taken on the management of volunteers as a part of their job without formal training. The project enabled them to build on their experience and develop their own learning. The training was relevant and could be directly applied to improve practice. It will also help the Museum to move towards more standardised procedures.

Next steps

The new partnership between Wandsworth Museum and Battersea Arts Centre will require both organisations to take a combined strategic approach, with shared policies and practices. Procedures for recruitment and induction, for example, will follow an agreed format. The project has been timely and has enabled the Museum to use professional training, advice and support as a basis for the next stage of the shared development.

Practical advice

Partnership projects offer a valuable resource in terms of learning from the practice, ideas and experience of colleagues at other heritage organisations carrying out similar work. Although project timetables may make this difficult, partners need to communicate as much as possible to make the most of this opportunity.

Recruitment of volunteers through existing local networks, such as colleagues in children's centres, schools and local authority departments, was more effective than paid advertising in newspapers.

One of the barriers to participation in training for volunteers may be transport costs. When they are offered re-imbursment of this cost, some will prefer not to take it. A small addition to the budget allocated for volunteer training can have a positive effect.

Contact

www.wandsworthmuseum.co.uk



