

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	Culture, Leisure and Sport Decision meeting
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	23 March 2012
<b>Subject:</b>	Volunteering in Portsmouth Libraries
<b>Report by:</b>	Head of Cultural Services
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All
<b>Key decision:</b>	No
<b>Full Council decision:</b>	No

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## **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1** To inform the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport of the current volunteering opportunities offered by Portsmouth Libraries, outlining the benefits these activities provide to the service and the volunteers themselves. The report further seeks agreement to extend the current volunteering offer while stipulating that this will be undertaken with the understanding that volunteers will not be used to replace paid staff in the delivery of core services.

## **2. Recommendations**

### **2.1 That the library service extends its range of volunteering offers to:**

- **Return to work and job experience schemes that provide time limited employment offers to volunteers in order to learn transferable skills and obtain workplace experience.**
- **Individuals seeking to support a specific library or area of work on an ongoing basis.**

### **2.2 That the volunteering contributions enhance and support the library offer but do not displace paid staff members in the delivery of core services, or undercut their pay or conditions of service.**

## **3. Background**

- 3.1** Volunteers have supported various aspects of library service delivery for many years. Discussion with volunteers has identified that the motivation for volunteering fits into the following categories:

- To gain skills and work experience to enhance job seeking chances.

- To provide personal enrichment for individuals with time to spare.
- Altruistic giving in order to contribute to a service, community or group.

**3.2** The key areas of the Library Service currently supported by volunteers are:

- The “At Home Library Service”
- BookStart
- Selection and cataloguing of foreign language stock
- Cataloguing of the Arthur Conan Doyle Archive
- Summer Reading Challenge support
- Supporting IT learning sessions.

**3.3** Libraries are increasingly reporting that individuals are seeking to volunteers to support specific libraries or aspects of the service. The range of potential tasks is broad and will include:

- Supplementing or supporting children’s activities including RhymeTime, Storytime and holiday activities.
- Supplementing or supporting adult activities such as reading groups, writing groups, scrabble clubs etc.
- Supplementing or supporting IT needs either for formal learning sessions or ongoing informal assistance.
- Assisting customers using the RFID kiosks.
- Assisting customers to find a book or help with reader development advice.
- Create book displays.
- Shelve books and tidy the shelves.
- Assisting in the delivery of the Macmillan Cancer Support project.

**3.4** The Library Service has also been approached to participate in employment initiatives already in place with Portsmouth City Council to support the unemployed back to work. Potentially all the tasks itemised at 3.3 could be included but the key areas of work would be:

- Issuing and discharging books
- Shelving books and tidying the shelves
- Repairing and tagging items
- Assisting customers using the RFID kiosks
- Undertaking simple enquiries.

**3.5** These tasks represent areas of overlaps with the work of paid library staff. This is inevitable if volunteers are to engage with the service and receive the benefits identified at 3.7 and the Library service is to receive the benefits identified at 3.6. However the delivery of these tasks will not replace paid staff and the Library Service will retain the necessary minimum staffing levels required to deliver core services as stated in the recommendation 2.2. All volunteers will continue to be security checked prior to working with the public and undertake the essential induction and statutory training as appropriate to the tasks they will undertake.

Work profiles will be drawn up to clarify the tasks to be delivered and clarify what is expected of the volunteer in addition to what they should expect from the Library Service. The Library Service accepts and will adhere to the principles laid out in the Charter for Strengthening Relations between Paid Staff and Volunteers as agreed by Volunteering England and the TUC, which is shown in full in appendix 1.

**3.6** The benefits of engaging with volunteers for the Library Service perspective are:

- Increased engagement with the community.
- Opportunity to provide enhanced levels of service.
- Opportunity to increase or alter the current service offer.
- Opportunity to receive ideas inspirations and input from the community with regard to service delivery.
- Opportunity to become aware of the capabilities of individuals who might be candidates for future paid work opportunities.

**3.7** The benefits of volunteering from the volunteer's perspective:

- Learn new transferable skills
- Be able to demonstrate ability to attend work and conform to the needs of the workplace.
- Enrichment in terms of engagement with staff and customers, learning new skills, delivering existing skills in new ways.
- Contributing to the community.

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

**4.1** To enable the Library Service to receive the benefits related to the engagement of volunteers shown at 3.6 and for the volunteers to obtain the benefits detailed at 3.7.

#### **5. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

**5.1** Preliminary EIA has been submitted.

#### **6. Head of Legal, Licensing & Registrars' comments**

**6.1** The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 provides that the local authority has a duty to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. The recommendations set out above would seem to meet these obligations and are further supported by the powers to promote social well being under section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000.

#### **7. Head of Finance's comments**

No additional costs will be incurred by the Library Service as a result of the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.

The costs of volunteer supervision, training and security checks will be contained within the Libraries existing approved budget.

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**Signed by:**  
**Stephen Baily**  
**Head of Cultural Services**

**Appendix A :** Charter for Strengthening Relations between Paid Staff and  
Volunteers: Volunteering England and the TUC

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

<b>Title of document</b>	<b>Location</b>
Nil	

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport on 23 March 2012.

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**Signed by:**  
**Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport**

**Appendix A :**

**A Charter for Strengthening Relations between Paid Staff and Volunteers:  
Volunteering England and the TUC**

<http://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace/tuc-17329-f0.pdf>

**Charter principles**

All volunteering is undertaken by choice, and all individuals should have the right to volunteer, or indeed not to volunteer.

While volunteers should not normally receive or expect financial rewards for their activities, they should receive reasonable out of pocket expenses.

The involvement of volunteers should complement and supplement the work of paid staff, and should not be used to displace paid staff or undercut their pay and conditions of service.

The added value of volunteers should be highlighted as part of commissioning or grant making process but their involvement should not be used to reduce contract costs.

Effective structures should be put in place to support and develop volunteers and the activities they undertake, and these should be fully considered and costed when services are planned and developed.

Volunteers and paid staff should be provided with opportunities to contribute to the development of volunteering policies and procedures.

Volunteers, like paid staff, should be able to carry out their duties in safe, secure and healthy environments that are free from harassment, intimidation, bullying, violence and discrimination.

All paid workers and volunteers should have access to appropriate training and development.

There should be recognised machinery for the resolution of any problems between organisations and volunteers or between paid staff and volunteers.

In the interests of harmonious relations between volunteers and paid staff, volunteers should not be used to undertake the work of paid staff during industrial disputes