

Development of Corporate Volunteering 2015-16

Background

Until mid-2014 the scope of corporate volunteering for conservation activities within Basingstoke has been limited to 2-3 events organised by the borough's Green Space Ranger and sometimes an events organised with a volunteer group in any one year.

The potential number of corporate volunteering events which could be carried out is, we believe, much greater than this. The limiting factors are:

- number and quality of volunteering opportunities identified and planned
- provision of work party leadership personnel,
- provision of associated corporate delivery package with flexible scope.

This note outlines a proposed way of addressing each of these limitations so that the number of events can be increased and the impact on conservation in the borough can be greatly enhanced.

Number and quality of volunteering opportunities

There are a number of corporate conservation opportunities which have been used over the last 5 years:

Coppicing and woodland working
Pond & stream clearance
New woodland planting & maintenance

These have been held at Oakley Woodlands, Basingstoke Common, Old Down and Chineham Woods among other sites.

We believe it is possible and desirable to work up a list of such opportunities on suitable major sites which can be offered annually for corporate volunteering events.

It is therefore proposed to contact all conservation groups for their suggestions and to work up several of these into standard packages. BDBC staff will do the same exercise for green sites which do not have a conservation group operating on them.

Provision of work party leadership personnel

With corporate work parties of 10 – 30 people it is essential to have an experienced work party leader for every 7-8 volunteers who, in the main, are inexperienced in these activities. This means that a pool of up to 4 technically experienced work party leaders is required who are comfortable working in each main habitat category – woodland working, wet environment working, general site working.

At least one work party leader needs to be very well acquainted with the site on which the event takes place.

BDBC currently has 1 general working work party leader. NB has several but they are not always available and not all qualified for every habitat category.

It is proposed that a list of future NB work party leaders and their skill sets is drawn up.

Provision of associated corporate delivery package with flexible scope.

For a corporate volunteering event to be successful from everyone's point of view - which will encourage repeat events - the associated management of the event needs to be seamless and professional.

A well organised event will include some or all of the following:

- coordinating arrangements before and after the event with the participating organisation and its HR department

- risk assessments for group and site,
- review insurance, CRB, H&S issues with organisation
- tools provision,
- transport to and from site,
- provision of portable toilets on the day,
- additional work party leaders if necessary
- provision of team work wear
- provision of refreshments on site
- support for PR aims of the event
- coordination of post event feedback to the organisation and to site management (BDBC and NB)

While NB work party leaders can do some of these tasks many are outside our experience and capacity.

However, there is an organisation which can and does provide these services - **Employee Volunteering, Odiham** : <http://www.employeevolunteering.co.uk/>

This is a CIC (a Community Interest Company) who charge the corporate entity for their services. They were involved in the recent very successful Lilley Work Day at Chineham Woods.

The proposal is that we talk with this organization about joint working and developing a series of flexible packages for Basingstoke sites.

Next Steps

- 1. Work with member groups to identify sites and activities for the future corporate volunteering list**
- 2. Contact Corporate Volunteering with proposals**
- 3. Work with NB volunteer work party leaders to ensure complete understanding of event organizing and high standards of execution**
- 4. Prepare our own documentation for corporate events on our sites (BDBC will do same for non-volunteer supported sites).**

MRW

26.10.2014