



Module Three: Promoting and Supporting Volunteers

2023

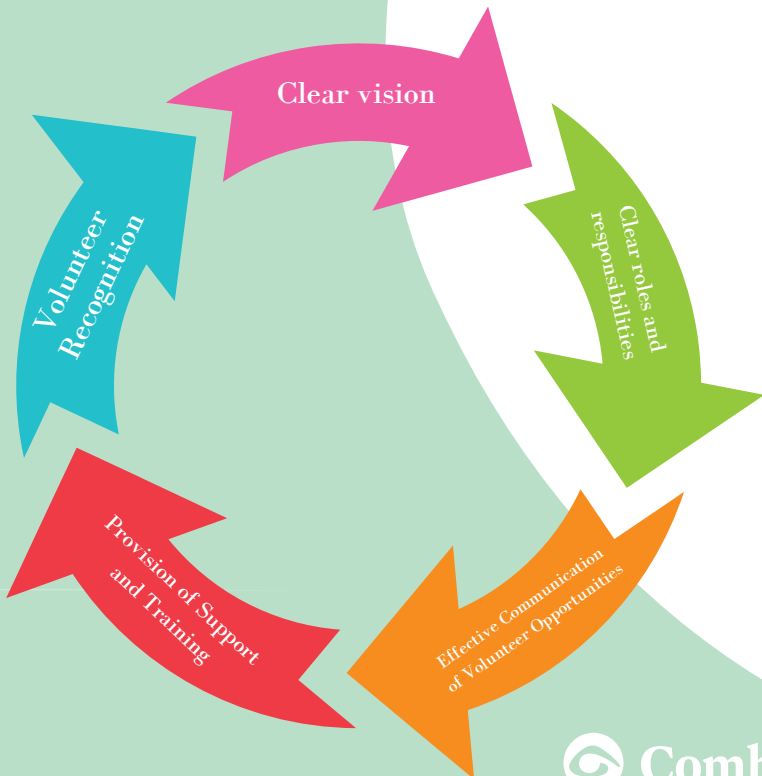
**Training
resources**

Understanding How to Get the Best out of Volunteers

Attracting and supporting volunteers:

Volunteers are central to the success of Comhaltas and its local branches. If Comhaltas and its volunteers is to develop the organisation, ensure the sustainability of branches and develop branches, it must continue to attract, support and develop volunteers.

Branches which are effective at attracting, retaining and developing volunteers follow the cycle below:



How to attract volunteers?

Many voluntary organisations, including Comhaltas Branches, rely on AGMs as a means of attracting new Committee members and volunteers. The number of volunteers and the range of skills required should line up with the Branch Development Plan. (Module Two). It sets out the direction the branch wants to take over the next one, two or three years and the targets it hopes to achieve. As part of the branch planning process, the Committee should examine the range of skills it already has access to and identify where there are gaps ... these are new volunteering opportunities within the branch.

There are a number of effective approaches to attracting new volunteers. Whilst many branches rely on people to volunteer there is clear evidence that people volunteer when they are asked and when there is clarity about the role they are being asked to fill.

Key approaches include:

- Briefing existing Committee members on the numbers of volunteers and roles/skills required
- Having clarity about the time commitment (or days/evenings of the week) ... and being honest about this to manage the expectation and reality for perspective volunteers
- Asking existing volunteers to directly approach people they know within and outside the local branch for the strengths they will bring to a role and who may not necessarily sit on all committees
- Ensure the branch is present at community gatherings and events to promote the branch and attract for new members.
- Using the branch's social media channels to promote the opportunity

Many of us have heard the following comments:

- ,You could get nobody to do anything around here.
- ,Only for 2 or 3 of us the branch would fall apart.

Whilst we can appreciate these frustrations there are many examples of branches where volunteer numbers have increased significantly over the last 10 years and as a result the branch is more sustainable, has more people engaged in our culture, works from better facilities and financially is on a more sound footing. Typically, Craobh Maith standard branches understand the following about volunteering:

Factors

Helps to Attract
Volunteers by....

Applying good management to your Comhaltas branch

A well managed local Comhaltas branch will take actions to ensure that each of the six elements of good management are embedded within how the branch is managed. Below are the key activities associated with each of the six elements of good management:



Strong leadership—the right people in the right places

1

Clarity in relation to roles and responsibilities

2

Role specific training provided

3

Shadowing and mentoring of new volunteers provided from more experienced volunteers

Strong values and integrity

1

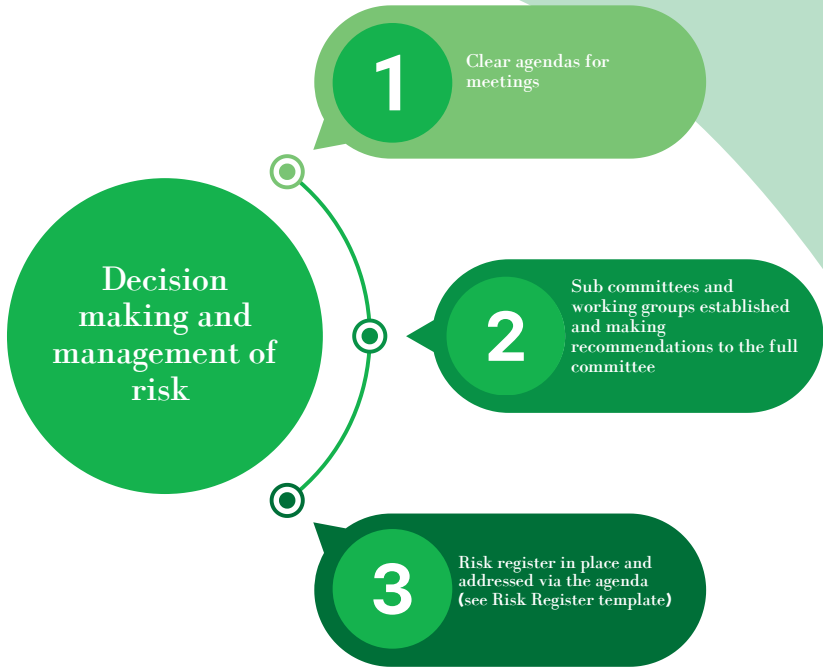
Values agreed and adopted in the Branch Development Plan

2

Actions taken which directly contribute to values

3

If clear breaches of values and policies are identified appropriate remedial actions are taken



Openness and accountability

1

Publicly promoted AGM

2

Transparent accounts presented at the AGM

Compliance

1

Aware of rules and regulations which the branch is subject to

2

Processes in place and responsibility allocated

3

Training and support/advice available to volunteers where required