



FUTURE PROOF  
**PARKS**



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## Recruiting young Volunteers

AN INTRODUCTION



## Recruiting Young Volunteers: A How-To Guide



### **About Future Proof Parks**

Future Proof Parks is a programme run in a partnership between **Groundwork, Fields in Trust** and **National Youth Agency**. This National Lottery Heritage Funded programme – part of the £10m 'Kick the Dust' initiative – aims to get more young people interested and involved in preserving their local park and greenspace heritage.

As a result of the programme young people across the UK will learn more about their local historic park heritage and be encouraged to join their local 'friends of' park groups and volunteer to preserve the local spaces that matter to the communities they live in.

The project is also working with 'friends of' park groups to give them the tools, encouragement, and support to get more local young people involved in their work and to see the benefits of cross-generational working.

## Recruiting Young Volunteers: How-To Guide

Working with young people will bring its challenges and rewards for them and you in terms of engaging and retaining volunteers – it will take time, patience and creativity to retain your young members.

Communication is central to recruiting and retaining volunteers and a communications plan tailored to young people and the organisation's work with young volunteers will be key to success.

We know young people see communicating through online networks as important as any offline action they take in their community. By brushing up and combining our social media skills and offline engagement skills, community groups reach more young people directly and through various networks.

This guide provides you with the top tips on communicating with young volunteers; making the most of social media; planning a recruitment cycle; organising some fun offline activities.

Get in touch to share your calendar of events with us: [communities@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:communities@groundwork.org.uk)



## The Basics of Volunteer Recruitment

When recruiting young volunteers, you may find it useful to develop a communications and recruitment plan aimed at this audience, including online and offline activities to promote your organisation (see the template plan in this guide).

When promoting your opportunities for young people, emphasise the benefits of developing social and employability skills, which are so important to young people. You can make the same message appeal to different types of young people, some sounding more casual and fun and others more targeting at personal development and training.

You will need a simple online application form for volunteers (perhaps using Survey Monkey Or Google Forms) and a clear email contact for queries, all on one space for example, a website or Facebook group.

There are also several free platforms that you can advertise your volunteering opportunities on as well as putting up posters in your local shops, job centre, schools and youth centres.

When managing volunteers, the recruitment cycle will help you involve existing volunteers in promoting activities, understand why volunteer tend to leave their roles and when to recruit more.

## The Recruitment Cycle



## Making the Most of Social Media and Apps

Young people love the variety social media can bring to having fun with friends, developing their careers and expanding their social networks. Here are the main social media channels you may consider using and some issues to bear in mind when engaging young people on these channels.

### Facebook

- The most used social network – you can set up a ‘page’ to advertise your organisation and ‘group’ for committee members and volunteers, and the events section is very useful,
- Posts need to be more ‘fun’ and activity-based - pictures and video especially popular.
- It’s more likely you will reach trusted adults and other organisations to share your adverts for young people on Facebook.

### Instagram

- The second most popular channel amongst young people – it allows you to snap, edit, and share photos and short videos, as well as apply filters to your photos, making them look high-quality and artistic.
- Young people may enjoy photography competitions over Instagram as well as much visually interesting content you can provide.

### Twitter

- Young people tend to use this for professional profiles or to look for the latest news and campaigns to follow.
- You can link to partners on Twitter and other relevant organisations, to find interesting content and to have your messages shared by them.
- Great for creating, monitoring and feeding into conversations on relevant topics.

### WhatsApp

- Lets users send text messages, audio messages, videos, and photos to one or many people with no message limits or fees.
- When creating or joining a group it will automatically display your phone number to other people, who can then add you to their phone contacts, so you need permission of everyone in the group to share that data.
- An alternative messaging app is Slack – a more professional, collaborative messaging app. You use emails to set it up, so no phone numbers are visible.



## Snapchat

- The fastest growing messaging app amongst teens and young people that lets users put a time limit on the pictures and videos they send before they disappear (although the data will never truly disappear, and content can be screen grabbed or recorded on new phones).
- There are different ways to add people, and phone numbers are not publicly visible.
- Most teens use the app to share fun, goofy or embarrassing photos – so they may not wish to engage in social action using this app and it could be too informal for what you need.
- There are many opportunities for charities and community groups to use it in various ways – for example having fun with the filters, creating Geofilters around locations or creating a SnapMap to see what activity is going in your area visible to those on SnapChat. Be sure to decide how you will use location settings, i.e., discoverable by people you know on SnapChat (safest option) or publicly (useful for events).

## YouTube

- Great place to post videos (and then embed them in your website) – this is the second most used search engine, as more people look for interactive explanations and project ideas in video form.
- An alternative platform to use would be Vimeo - similar to YouTube but with a slightly different 'atmosphere' and aiming to be more socially conscious of the content it moderates.

## Top tips for getting started with social media:

- Pick a couple of channels to work – once you get the hang of each channel you can use free scheduling tools such as Hootsuite, to posts from all your channels according to your content plan.
- You should post at least once day on social media (or few times a week minimum) – 80% of posts should contain content of interest to your audience (surprising, fun, emotional but not controversial) and 20% with content about the impact your organisation is making.
- All posts about your organisation should contain a link to your website or a 'call to action' for people to get involved – think about showing images of volunteers from diverse backgrounds or an image of what the activity will look like.
- Make the most of popular events, from Halloween to Pancake Day and hashtags such as #MondayMotivation and #GivingTuesday to share content.
- Link your content to major campaigns and awareness days from Black History Month to International Women's Day, World Mental Health Day or National Parks Week.

### Tips for Offline Recruitment:

Not all people have the same access to a smart phone or the internet, so it is also important to use offline recruitment methods to reach a variety of young people.

You can work with other youth-facing organisations to run recruitment events and gain referrals. Always have information on how to contact you at any event you run – prompting people to take a small step towards joining your organisation!

Offline recruitment could include:

- Stalls at community markets or events – you can do some fundraising as well as recruitment, with cake sales or games, and creative activities for people to try.
- Creating posters about your volunteering opportunities and events and display them in various community spaces, such as schools, shops, place of worship, sports facilities, and job centres.
- Writing to the local media who may run a community magazine or website, asking for their help in creating a news story around volunteering.
- Open meetings – hold a meeting on a particular topic, as this breaks down the perception some might have that the group is members-only.

Use the Communications & Recruitment Plan to shape messages for different audiences and plan your content around online and offline activity, showcasing your practical activities with volunteers too.

Communications & Recruitment Plan		
Audience	Key Messages	Communications Channel
<b>16-24 year olds</b>	Example 1: Join our drop-in volunteering sessions, meet new people and get fit in our outdoor gym.  Example 2: We are looking for volunteers with just a few spare hours to run our social media and events calendar, helping us to shout about 'what we do' in the community.	Instagram Facebook page
<b>Partner organisations with access to young people</b>	Example 1: We are offering drop-in volunteering sessions and longer-term volunteer placements, to share skills with young people and make our community a better place.	Facebook page Twitter
<b>Families (who might reach 16-24 year olds)</b>		Facebook page Instagram
<b>General public</b>		Facebook page Twitter Instagram



**Communications Calander:** Planning your communications can help your messages stay fresh, relevant and timely.

<b>Communications Calander</b>		
<p><b>Key events and recruitment times</b> – list your own events and partners events that you know are coming up and slot in recruitment of volunteers, if applicable. Add in major online campaigns and awareness day that link to your content e.g., World Environment Day or Volunteers Week. Our suggestions are tailored to young people’s timetables.</p>		
<p><b>Sep</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Workshops in schools</li> <li>▶ Online recruitment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Oct</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ October half-term outreach and recruitment</li> <li>▶ Halloween in the Park</li> </ul>	<p><b>Nov</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Stall at Fireworks Display</li> <li>▶ Volunteer training</li> <li>▶ Skill sharing activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Dec</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Stall at Christmas lights switch on</li> <li>▶ Volunteers ‘thank you’ and awards event</li> </ul>	<p><b>Jan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Online recruitment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Feb</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Half term outreach activities (offline recruitment)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mar</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Weekly drop-in volunteer activity</li> <li>▶ Easter Holidays</li> <li>▶ Youth Social Action Projects (led by young volunteers)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Apr</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Weekly drop-in volunteer activity</li> <li>▶ Easter Holidays</li> <li>▶ Youth Social Action Project (led by/for young volunteers)</li> </ul>	<p><b>May</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Exam season</li> <li>▶ Relaxation/de-stress activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Jun</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Exam season</li> <li>▶ Relaxation/de-stress activities</li> <li>▶ Online recruitment</li> </ul>	<p><b>Jul</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Youth Social Action Project (led by/for young volunteers)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Aug</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Weekly volunteer activity (one-off, flexible)</li> </ul>

### Useful Links

Advertising volunteer roles for free here:

- ▶ Charityjob - [www.charityjob.co.uk/recruiters](http://www.charityjob.co.uk/recruiters)
- ▶ Countryside Jobs Service - [www.countryside-jobs.com/jobs/advertise/volunteers](http://www.countryside-jobs.com/jobs/advertise/volunteers)
- ▶ Do-it – [www.do-it.org/](http://www.do-it.org/)
- ▶ Environment job - [www.environmentjob.co.uk/volunteering](http://www.environmentjob.co.uk/volunteering)
- ▶ JobAid through Jobsite - [www.jobsite.co.uk/jobaid/about.html](http://www.jobsite.co.uk/jobaid/about.html)
- ▶ Volunteer Centres - [www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/find-a-volunteer-centre](http://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/find-a-volunteer-centre)

# FUTURE PROOF PARKS



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Engaging young people through  
volunteering to preserve and celebrate  
their local heritage parks and green spaces

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## OTHER RESOURCES IN THIS SERIES

[Working with young people](#)

[Including young people in your organisation](#)

[Working with other youth organisations](#)

[Empowering young volunteers](#)

[Safeguarding young people](#)

[Crowdfunding Toolkit](#)

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Find out more at [www.fieldsintrust.org/future-proof-parks](http://www.fieldsintrust.org/future-proof-parks)