

Inaugural Local Action Group Workshop 2026 Breakout session

Leave No Trace, Aoibhín Ryan

Empowering communities through volunteering & behavioural change in responsible recreation

Community:

1. Can you think of examples of a good volunteering programme you've been a part of, or know of?
 - Irish Wetland Bird Survey- been going for over 20 years
 - Tree nursery
 - Glens Red Squirrel Group- cover a large area
 - Citizen Science programmes such as Explore Your Shore, Spawn Survey, BTO Survey
 - LEADER programmes
 - Check Clean Dry campaign
 - Breeding Waders EIP

2. List tips you have for keeping volunteers & communities engaged?
 - Personalise communication
 - Provide learning opportunities and training
 - Social opportunity – Whatsapp Groups
 - Conflict management
 - Wellbeing considerations
 - Share results and feedback, clear communication
 - Recognition events and reward days
 - Task variation
 - Newsletter

3. If you were designing a community volunteering programme, what would you do to empower people to stay?
 - Appreciation days
 - Visible outcome
 - Group fun activities to break up
 - Treats/lunch
 - Task variation
 - Well organised and providing information
 - Sense of ownership and pride by giving volunteers their own area
 - Hold volunteer week
 - Promotion on social media
 - Knowledge exchange through experts and advisors
 - Generational stories
 - Roles within delivery
 - Ability to adapt delivery – weather
 - Forums to inspire and network
 - Know how their work fits into the bigger picture

Corporates:

1. List current corporate offerings you know of?
 - LEADER Forest Programme
 - Clean Coasts- a lot of funding from corporates
2. Brainstorm some great ideas for innovative volunteering for corporates?
 - Accessible tasks
 - Clear boundaries on commitment and availability
 - German mode; for volunteers- tax free earning
 - Corporate, social responsibility
 - Networking and team building time – work from home culture
 - Official partnerships
 - Green offsetting
 - Allow funding of trials and surveys on their sites