

BACKGROUND

The Volunteer Swale Awards were launched in 2014, as a way of recognising and celebrating local volunteering champions, alongside the opportunity to raise awareness of volunteering and the benefits of 'getting involved'. The last 18 months has had many challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, however the show of solidarity exhibited through volunteering has not only been heart-warming, but crucial to ensuring that the most vulnerable within our communities felt supported. It is therefore more important than ever, that we demonstrate our gratitude to those who give their time to help others, campaign for the causes that matter and provide opportunities that otherwise would not have been available. However, recent discussions between Members have led to the idea of moving away from the celebration dinner and awards presentation delivered in previous years and towards something that encompasses not only the celebratory and recognition aspect, but also an opportunity for volunteer recruitment and for would be volunteers to find out about the opportunities available to them.

PROPOSAL

The proposal is to run a daytime networking and awards event. The event will be open to the public and will provide a networking and exhibition opportunity, smaller topic specific hosted breakout sessions plus an award ceremony. The first part of the day gives local voluntary and community sector organisations an opportunity to showcase their work and recruit volunteers to help them deliver their projects and aspirations moving forward. This also provides an opportunity for residents to find out about what volunteering options are available to them whether they're a seasoned volunteer looking for their next project, or someone brand new to wanting to volunteer looking for their first experience. The hosted breakout sessions will cover topics including 'How to become a volunteer' and 'How to apply for funding'.

The awards part of the day will be opened by Mr Paul Auston, Link Deputy Lieutenant for Swale and will recognise the contributions and efforts of local organisations and individuals contributing to volunteering in Swale across a range of categories. Nominations for the awards will be open to all between October and December with the judging panel reviewing all submissions in January 2022. It is proposed that there will be one **Community Inspiration Award** that will be chosen from all the nominations made.

It is proposed for the event to run from 12:00 to 16:30 on the 26 March 2022 at The Millennium Hall, Fulston Manor. The networking and exhibition part will run for the first 2.5 hours and the awards ceremony will start at 14:30.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

As well as general feedback on the proposal for the day and if there are any areas we haven't covered or should have included, specific feedback is requested on the following areas:

1. What do you think the event should be called? Some suggestions are detailed below:
 - Swale Volunteer Networking and Awards
 - Volunteer Swale Conference and Awards
 - Volunteer Swale Awards Conference
 - Volunteer Swale Exhibition and Awards
 - Volunteer Swale Awards Exhibition
 - Volunteer Swale Awards Show
 - Volunteer Swale Summit and Awards
2. What breakout session topics do you feel would best benefit the VCS Sector and those interested in volunteering?
3. Below are the current proposed award categories. Do you feel these are appropriate and sufficient? that have been discussed, please can you advise if you feel these are suitable:

Swale Volunteer Awards
Cabinet Advisory Committee
September 2021



- Volunteering contribution to supporting Older People (55+)
- Volunteering contribution to supporting Young People (18 and under)
- Volunteering contribution to Sport
- Volunteering contribution to Community Safety
- Volunteering contribution to the Environment
- Volunteering contribution to Heritage and Culture
- Volunteering contribution to Wellbeing
- Young Volunteer Award (18 and under)
- Fundraising Award (focusing on the method used rather than the amount raised)
- Covid-19 Volunteering Award (focusing on support to Swale communities)