



Tips for Hosting an Event: In person

What are you aiming to achieve with your event?

Do you want to say thank you / celebrate your volunteers? Are you hoping to recruit new volunteers? Make it relevant to your aims and keep it in mind throughout the whole planning process.

Pick a date:

Set a date and time for the event that allows volunteers, staff and stakeholders to be involved. Would a morning breakfast session be suitable or a celebration in the evening after work? Give as much notice as possible of the date to ensure your guests can make it. Remember, the Thursday and Friday (2nd and 3rd June) of Volunteers' Week is a UK wide Bank Holiday to recognise the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Establish your budget:

An event doesn't need to cost a lot to be effective, but make sure you put together a budget so that you can prioritise your spending. Think about sponsorship, will a local business give your organisation money, catering or a venue as part of a sponsorship agreement? Will organisations, local partners offer in-kind support? Contact potential supporters as early as you can so that you aren't disappointed, or your event can't go ahead.

Pick and book a venue:

Whether you are booking an external venue or using your own, ensure it's booked in advance.

Arrange a speaker/entertainment:

You may wish to provide entertainment or book someone to speak at your event. This could be someone from your organisation/charity, a trustee or a stakeholder/partner or even some of your volunteers. You could even contact a local voluntary art groups to come along to join in and provide entertainment. If you are hosting a Thank You or Recognition style event, it might be nice for your volunteers to hear from some of the people they have helped and supported.





Develop a risk plan:

Think about things that may happen before or on the day that could impact on the event and how you would manage these. Example, do you need event insurance?

Invitations:

Consider how many people the venue can hold. Do you want your event to be an open event or by invitation only and will you need RSVPs, or can people just turn up? Make sure you include the date, time and contact details in the invite. Perhaps invite the local paper to get some additional promotion of the event.

Promotion:

Liaise with local radio, schools, colleges, libraries, shops and local council to help promote your event. Ask your contacts to spread the word and invite/tell their friends. Use social media to talk about the event, tag the Volunteers' Week Scot Social accounts ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)) and use the [#VolunteersWeekScot](#) hashtag.

Reminders:

Keep talking about the event via social media and emails. Send reminder information to those you have invited to attend a few days before the event.

On the day:

Develop a rota/task list for the day and make sure all staff helping at the event know their roles.

Additional note:

When planning your event, it is important that you keep up to date on Scottish Government COVID-19 advice and guidance in relation to events and gatherings. You may also want to check with invited attendees, staff, volunteers and speakers that they are comfortable attending before committing to final plans.





Tips for Hosting an Event: Online

Choose the video platform to host your event:

Use a platform you and your co-hosts are comfortable with. If you haven't used any online video platforms before we suggest you do a little research into options and take the time to read/watch the user guides to familiarise yourself before hosting your online event. The platform we'd suggest is Zoom. There is a cost for your account if your session runs longer than 40mins. You can read more about using zoom here: explore.zoom.us/resources. Additional platforms include:

- Skype: www.skype.com
- Google Hangouts: hangouts.google.com
- Microsoft Teams: www.microsoft.com

Pick a date and get your invites out early:

Try select a date and time that works best for you and your attendees. Remember, you will not be able to suit everyone so go with the majority. We suggest you send your invites to your online event at least 2 weeks before the scheduled date. You could send out an email invite or set up a Facebook event (public or private) with the invitation and event details. Then follow up with the access link around 24 hours before the event is due to start.

How to keep things running smoothly:

Make sure you do some general housekeeping at the start of your online event. Things like:

- An Event Overview: Give your participants rundown of what's to come. Let them know who the hosts are, what the proposed timings are for the session etc. Basically, your event schedule.
- Planned Breaks: Inform participants if/when there will be a break period during the event. We'd suggest a 5-10 min pause during an event that is more than an hour for people to take a quick comfort break and have a quick chat and catch up with other attendees.





Online event good practice:

- **Muting:** Reminding your participants to go on mute when the hosts are presenting (only to unmute when they are asked to). This will remove any unnecessary background noises, chatter etc.
- **Cameras:** If possible, encourage participants to have their cameras on! It's not fun to look at an avatar/not see who is talking. It's also important to note that with their camera on they might want to think about their surroundings and lighting. Most online platforms offer background options if they'd rather not show their surroundings. We have Volunteers' Week branded virtual backgrounds available in the resource section.

Additional things to remember:

- **Prepare for tech troubles:** If physical events have hitches, virtual events have glitches. Before kicking things off, test your Internet connection and have your co-hosts do the same. Remember, not all your guests will be tech savvy so anticipate the troubles your attendees might have. If possible, share with them a user guide for the platform you're using beforehand.
- **Share contact info:** Some attendees might have issues before even joining so make sure you share a phone number or email address for attendees to contact if they need a little more help and guidance.
- **Do a quick run through:** Take the time a few days before to fully run through your event plan and schedule with a few colleagues and/or co-hosts. This will give you the opportunity to familiarise yourself with the structure, timings, glitches etc and fix anything that isn't quite working.
- **Plan for chatting:** Anticipate that there might be some catching up happening before, during and after your event. Allow your volunteers and attendees the time to catch up and chat away but try keep it all within your time limits if you can.
- **Remember to have fun!** Volunteers' Week is all about having fun, thanking and celebrating volunteers. If things don't go quite to plan, don't worry about it!

