Transcripts

See Appendices 1-3 for interview responses.

Results synthesis

PATTERNS

Other than helping a good cause, participants' **main motivations** behind volunteering were:

- Personal development
  - Gain experience
  - Learn new skills
  - Something for CV
  - Personal challenge

- Fun and social
  - Competitive
  - Chance to do something different
  - Chance to meet people

- To feel productive and engaged

- Aligns with hobbies, interests and skills
  - Pursuing interests whilst helping at the same time
  - Offering professional skills so to help in more effective ways

Things that **encouraged** participants to volunteer:

- Good organisation and communication with organisers

- Flexibility

Things that **discouraged** participants from volunteering:

- Lengthy complicated registration process
  - "Feels like a job application"

- Organisations ask a lot of you
  - Lengthy time commitments and a lot of hours
  - Must raise a certain amount of money to take part

- Lack of accessibility to opportunities
  - Don't know where to look
  - Feels like a chore to find the right opportunity
  - Not available in their area
  - Cliquey or selective

SURPRISING RESPONSES/ OUTLIERS

- While two participants were in favour of submitting personal information to make registration easy, one was very against it. I hadn't considered the possibility that some people may not be comfortable with this. I should provide the option for users to choose either an automatic registration process via the app, or manual by getting in contact with the organisers directly.

- The social network aspect was more desirable than I thought it would be.

USEFUL QUOTES

"I think one of the main barriers to volunteering is that it's quite difficult to find something that's local and for the right amount of time"

"Every time I think about trying to get volunteering work, it feels like it's going to be a chore just to get it"

"[websites] are old fashioned and clunky, difficult to use and badly done... not nice to look at"

"I'm not going to give an app all my personal information... You'd have to give me some huge guarantee about where that data's being stored... Need to ensure two-way authentication [for organisers and volunteers]"

"I want to volunteer but I don't want to faff with it. I don't need to jump through hoops to volunteer for you"

FRUSTRATIONS

- Poor usability
  - Current volunteering websites and apps are clunky and difficult to use
  - Poor selection criteria, not personalised enough

- Opportunities are all over the place on different websites, and often out of date

NEEDS AND GOALS

- Clear, informative and interactive opportunity page
  - Time commitment required
  - Location
  - Ability to like/save and share

- Easy, hassle-free registration
  - Profile with information already entered, these details get sent to the organisation
  - Option to link with other social media profiles to extract info e.g. Linkedin
  - Background check accessible by organisations

- Ensure safety and protection of users and organisations
  - Have legitimate volunteer identification process, e.g. passport verification
  - Provide guarantee about where and how the users' data is being stored
  - Provide option to not enter personal details on app and apply manually instead

- Easy and personalised search
  - Location-based, with the ability to view on a map and alter location radius
  - Interests (e.g. outdoor, sociable), Cause, Skills

- Get notified when opportunities you want become available

- Including other ways of helping out
  - Have fundraising events, donation pages

- Increase awareness and discussion through blogs and articles

- The freedom to create own events and fundraising pages
  - "I'll set something up if I see a need"
  - "If someone sends me a sponsor page or fundraising event they're doing, I'll donate to that"

- The ability to interact with the organisation
  - Message organisation
  - View organisation's event history and activity, have an archive of events

- Social aspect – "Community-feel to the app"
  - The ability to interact with other volunteers
  - The ability to upload photos of events to inspire other volunteers
  - Have a section on the opportunity page that says which volunteers are already registered
  - But, ensure user activity doesn't clutter the interface

Appendices

= Key quotes and points

= Overarching themes/patterns

APPENDIX 1

Demographics

Age: 18-29   **Marital status** Single   **Location** Keele, UK   **Level of education** PhD   **Gender** F

Current job title: Researcher

Any interests/hobbies: Journalism, Travel, Reading, Films

Would a volunteering app be useful to you – are you open to the idea of volunteering, have you ever volunteered or considered volunteering before? Yes

When did you last volunteer for something? Events rep for post graduate society, 2018 at Uni; I'm an Editor at a for a Psychology Journal magazine at the moment

What was attractive to you about your previous volunteering roles? Did they align with your desires and needs – why/why not?
(Aligns with likes and interests) Editor role: something different in the sphere of journalism and academia; Events rep: I like events, I like people, like engaging with people, I like helping people especially international students to help them feel less lonely, I worked in a team which was fun and learnt a lot of skills

Inspires me

My current volunteering role helps me feel less bored during COVID-19, nice to talk to someone else who isn't my family, nice to meet people (social aspect)

Nice to learn something new (chance to do something different and learn new things)

How did you acquire your last volunteering opportunity?
Editor: Approached someone I knew/ had already worked with

Events rep: Had to write a spiel about why I wanted to do it, demonstrate commitment etc.

Was there anything about the process e.g. registration, finding the opportunity, that frustrated you or could have been better?
Websites for volunteering are always really clunky – ==always old fashioned and clunky, difficult to use and badly done==
Uni ones are also pretty clunky, not nice to look at. Tried to use uni mentoring website but it's bad, I don't like it. ==(simple things put off potential volunteers)== ==Usability==

Could do it in person but ==if I'm busy I don't want to go and talk to someone, I just want to do it on a website or preferably on an app==.

==I want to volunteer but I don't want to faff with it==, sometimes you fill out stupid application forms and it's like 'I'm not applying to be a volunteer, ==I don't need to jump through hoops to volunteer for you== that much' ==(Lengthy and complicated registration process)==
You're not paying me so why are you faffing. Looks like a job application. It depends on your skills but when you're very qualified and been volunteering for a while, it's a bit annoying. They can just talk to you, doesn't have to be such a hoo-hah.

If you were considering volunteering now, how would you go about doing so?
Linkedin – there's a hashtag thing, so if you put #whateveryou'reinterestin in the search bar, you can search for volunteering on there and contact the person directly on there, instead of all the faff.

But I have no idea to be honest. Before I always did it through uni. ==(Accessibility - easy way of doing it not available anymore)==. Maybe Bath Alumni website? ==(difficulty of knowing where to look - having to figure out where to look)==

What would drive you to actively seek out a volunteering opportunity?
Want more experience in different things ==(personal benefit)==

Bit of fun   Hanging out

==Boredom==, gets you out of the house

        Wanting to help people, nice to engage with the community

What would encourage you to volunteer for something and keep volunteering? Why?
The chat, nice way to ==get to know people (way to integrate)==

==Something fun and competitive==

==Keeping busy and engaged==

For other people – building confidence, reduce loneliness, getting out of comfort zone

How much of a role would interacting with other potential volunteers play in your enjoyment of volunteering or motivation to volunteer? Why?
It helps, it's fun, a lot of people get a lot from it – good cause and you're ==socialising==

Social aspect of interacting with the people working or running it as well

==People could arrange things on the app== – the forum/chat, like quizzes and raise money that way – in-app events, not just external ==(could integrate a legitimate fundraising platform for users to start their own giving pages/events)==

Has anything ever put you off volunteering? Why?
When it's a bit selective or cliquey, or the people are annoying and intense about it because it's just volunteering – have fun and chill!

When it takes longer to sign up than it does to do a day of volunteering (Lengthy and complicated registration process)

They want a lot out of you – bit of pain – not realistic, should be more flexible (ask a lot of you).

This was fine when I was a student when I had time, but now I have a job and need to make money. Should understand that different people can give different amounts of time, and in different ways

Have you ever used an app for volunteering?
No but everything's on my phone now so it would be easy. As long as it's user friendly.

What features or functions would be most useful to you in a volunteering resource such as an app (e.g. when looking for and selecting a volunteering opportunity, registering for an opportunity)? Why?
If it chatted to me and sent me messages, then I'd just check it like I check my emails.

Easy way to say how many hours I can do and what I'm interested in – when I'm registering and filtering.

Instead of filling out lots of paperwork, just fill it out once and save it somewhere (could have one volunteer form for the app that the organisations have approved) Easy registration

Messages – so you can message the organisers about stuff, anything I need to tell them or that they need to tell me (could allow for bulk messaging to everyone signed up) Communication with organisations

It could point out people who you'd be volunteering with (e.g. have icons of people going 'Sarah, Jane, Max and 20 others are going…') or who are interested in similar things to you in your area – nudge theory - encourages you to do things if you can see a lot of other people doing it 'x amount of people are currently looking at this' might get others excited about it. (social aspect)

Would be comfortable with having background check in the app, DBS added and organisations to check through app

Location feature - nice to know things are happening nearby, helping local charities and businesses, getting to know people in your area, ability to alter the radius of location search

Could have a feature for Jobseekers and job centres: use volunteering to improve job prospects – getting experience, learning skills, keep CV up to date, helping in career change, shadowing employees and volunteers, trying things out to see if they like it

Is there stuff in apps like this that you think are redundant or get in the way? What features would you prefer not to use?
A lot of the information they'd ask for already exists, so if I could just give it my Linkedin Profile instead of having to fill in a CV, that would save a lot of time Option to link existing profiles (e.g. on profile, have option to Upload CV/ Extract education and experience from Linkedin)

Have the app ask me what I'm interested in (include this in the onboarding process) (provide opportunity recommendations)

Notify me when an opportunity in my area and under my interests becomes available

What other ways of encouraging civic engagement that don't require volunteering would be appealing to you?
Blog posts and articles for awareness raising, could get the people who have signed up to volunteer to do it, could write a post about an event

Organisations could sell merch to raise funds

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APPENDIX 2

Demographics

Age: 18-29   **Marital status** Single   **Location** Bedford, UK **Level of education** Bachelor's **Gender** M

Current job title: Starting as a Management Consultant in September

Any interests/hobbies: Learning German, Listening to music, Cooking, Cycling, Football

Would a volunteering app be useful to you – are you open to the idea of volunteering, have you ever volunteered or considered volunteering before? Yes, open to the idea and have volunteered in the past

When did you last volunteer for something?
180 Uni management consulting for charities – finished in May 2019, because I finished Uni.

Roughly how many times have you volunteered in the last year (long-term and one-offs)?
Once (long-term for about 4 months)

What was attractive to you about your previous volunteering roles? Why?
180: Valuable experience for me – to gain skills and experience work I wouldn't have otherwise been able to get at uni -personal skill development – good entry point for industry I wanted to get into

Conservation project for DofE at school that spanned over 5 days: chance to get out and about and meet people – enjoyed the overall experience and social aspect, and the fact it was outdoors

Did they align with your desires and needs – why/why not? Structure and how it was organized?
DofE: During summer holidays so had free time; Well organised, planned well - daily transport and food for the conversation project was organized in advance (which we paid for); Outdoors and sociable

180: specifically organized with uni studies and timetable in mind, fit around nicely with uni life (flexible)

How did you acquire your last volunteering opportunity?
180: Competitive opportunity, like a job application – cover letter and interview
Saw Facebook ad from Uni post and applied from there

Was there anything about the process e.g. registration, finding the opportunity, that frustrated you or could have been better?
Well, the only reason I found out about it was by chance – it was a good opportunity that I felt lucky to stumble across – could have advertised it better, raised better awareness of the role

If you were considering volunteering now, how would you go about doing so?
First place would be to look online, probably try and find a website with loads of opportunities on there, unless I had something particular in mind that I wanted to do. But it would be more likely that I'd be open to quite a lot of different things, I just need a place that offers a lot.

What would drive you to actively seek out a volunteering opportunity?
Either helping a cause I care about or just being open to helping in any way I can.

And doing something different, meeting new people, learning new skills and learning more about a cause, process or people affected by that cause, e.g. helping at a foodbank – better understanding the people who need food banks, better understanding the issues the cause is helping. Gives you perspective.

What would encourage you to volunteer for something and keep volunteering? Why?
Aspect of personal benefit – building skills and for CV: For my previous experiences e.g. 180, these were

mainly about building skills and having something valuable for my CV – this was the main reason I started, and I had no reason to stop – it was only going to provide something useful for my CV if I actually saw it through.

But, say I was struggling with balancing it with uni work, and the CV aspect no longer posed a major motivation, the fact I knew I was helping a charity would have motivated/encouraged me to keep volunteering. Something that would fit in around work, way to give back. Something small and outdoors or project-based like clearing out a riverbed, I'd be more than happy to devote a weekend to that. Likewise, I could do something long-term helping an hour a week, but I'd want this to be job related or academic so I can contribute professional skills to help, more useful way for me to help (Pro-bono work).

How much of a role would interacting with other potential volunteers play in your enjoyment of volunteering or motivation to volunteer? Why?
Depends on what type of work it is – it wouldn't motivate me any more or less if it was a short time commitment. One-off events like weekend conservation projects would be more fun with people – you would probably enjoy it more.

Has anything ever put you off volunteering? Why?
Effort to get a role – during searching for a role and needing to fulfil lots of requirements. They ask a lot of you such as committing loads of time, and seem too selective over who volunteers, so I can't be bothered to apply as it might be a waste of time if I don't get it. (Ask a lot of you)

Have you ever used an app for volunteering?
Don't think so – but I've considered it. I tend to just look at websites more, but if there was a big name app out there that everyone knew was good for finding volunteering opportunities then I'd probably look at that first.

How do you think an app would help or encourage you to volunteer?
I suppose at the moment, every time I think about trying to get volunteering work, it feels like it's going to be a chore just to get it – like, going to spend hours researching and not finding anything, or I find something that involves a big effort to get onto. I might find something I like but, after reading more into it, I find that they've filled or their places or whatever, because it's just not clearly labelled, or they don't offer it in your area. So having a database that says 'this is still available' or 'this is available in your area', then you could filter for those options a lot easier. In reality, you find everything's scattered and every website's different, and it becomes hard to find the bits of information you want – especially as the chances are you have to look through numerous organisations before you find an opportunity that's suited to you.
(Having an app with everything in one place would make this easier)

I think one of the main barriers to volunteering is that it's quite difficult to find something that's local, for the right amount of time, so if you were able to have a database of all the possible volunteering opportunities and then filter by the things you're able to do, your location etc., it would be much easier to find things, and then also much easier to go on and apply or get in touch with them to volunteer.

What features or functions would be most useful to you in a volunteering resource such as an app (e.g. when looking for and selecting a volunteering opportunity, registering for an opportunity)? Why?
Putting all your details on a profile such as background check, so any organisation can check it, rather than going through the same annoying process of having to separately apply and re-enter the same details each time – makes it feel like you're applying to jobs, when you're not even getting paid!

Have a map that visibly points out all the opportunities local to you, location-based

Community-feel to the app, messaging and sharing stories etc with other people, uploading photos of events to inspire other volunteers (photos on their profile and on archived events) (social aspect - interacting with other users) (psychology side – modelling and copying others; social status - posting photos doing good deeds makes you feel good)

Feeling more connected to organisations you're helping – they have their own pages (verified), and you have the ability to interact with them

Is there stuff in apps like this that you think are redundant or get in the way? What features would you prefer not to use?

Automatically remove the opportunities that are closed or expired, or have them in an archive – show the organisations volunteer activity/ opportunity advertising history

Don't overdo the social media aspect – have the opportunity to get in contact with users, ensure its more centred around the organisations rather than the volunteers. Don't want to clutter the interface with user activity that will distract from the organisations' messages

What other ways of encouraging civic engagement that don't require volunteering would be appealing to you?
Social media aspect would be good, because they can share stories from other places.
(Getting involved by learning about issues and encouraging discussion)

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APPENDIX 3

Demographics

Age: 50+   **Marital status** Married   **Location** Surrey, UK   **Level of education** doing PhD **Gender** F

Current job title: PhD candidate

Any interests/hobbies: Learning Italian, Cycling, Information Security, Nature and walks

Would a volunteering app be useful to you – are you open to the idea of volunteering, have you ever volunteered or considered volunteering before? Yes

When did you last volunteer for something?
I've just volunteered to help someone with their in vivo coding. I volunteered to run catch-up sessions with our cohort which I set up and run every two weeks to help with the university's research. Before that, I signed up to Royal Holloway's 'Adopt a Painting' in their picture gallery, to help people with accessibility issues.

If a long time ago/ can't remember – **why do you think this is, what made you stop?**
Meals on Wheels years ago – stopped because we moved house (location)

Roughly how many times have you volunteered in the last year (long-term and one-offs)?
About 6 times, including fundraising events

What was attractive to you about your previous volunteering roles? Why?
Something that seemed fun and different

Fundraising events – fun, outdoors – I like being outdoors, wanted to be a part of a big event because this shows how widespread Alzheimer's is and a big event is really good for their publicity and awareness

Did they align with your desires and needs – why/why not? Structure and how it was organized?
Needs – not really, had to reschedule my time and move stuff around to fit it in

Fundraising events for cause I have a personal connection to

Desires - Alzheimer's cycling challenge was a personal challenge and I did that because cycling is a personal hobby
(Tying in skills and hobbies)

How did you acquire your last volunteering opportunity?
Someone asked me, got approached to do it

Was there anything about the process e.g. registration, finding the opportunity, that frustrated you or could have been better?

No

If you were considering volunteering now, how would you go about doing so?
I'd set something up if I see a need or if someone asks me, I wouldn't set out to apply to something because I don't have the time

What would drive you to actively seek out a volunteering opportunity?
Needs not being met - I've organised things or set things up because I believe there are needs not being met

Helping out a cause that I have a personal connection to - Alzheimer's walk and cycling challenge, my dad has Alzheimer's , wanted to be part of the major publicity campaign

Alzheimer's cycling challenge – personal challenge

What would encourage you to volunteer for something and keep volunteering? Why?
Worthwhile cause

Something that interest me, the job or role would have to fit in with interests – I wouldn't do something even if it was worthwhile if it didn't interest me

Good communication with organization

Being asked to/ approached

How much of a role would interacting with other potential volunteers play in your enjoyment of volunteering or motivation to volunteer? Why?
Volunteering with people wouldn't really motivate me anymore to volunteer, but I'd get people to join me because I think it would be fun

People sharing personal stories of helping causes or things I'm interested in, I find appealing – these would inspire and motivate me to help too (social aspect)

Individual giving appeals from people I know – Personable, more appealing than mass emailing or national or celebrity appeal

Has anything ever put you off volunteering? Why?
The organisers - The second time I was approached to contribute to something I'd previously contributed to, I said no because the organisation never bothered to reply to an email I sent them. Unhelpful or if I don't like their attitude, lack of communication/ interaction with the organisation.

One of the cycling challenges forced you to raise a minimum amount of money, so I picked another cycling challenge that only required you to raise as much as you wanted/were able to raise (ask a lot of you/requirements)

Lack of time to volunteer

Women-only events, events that aren't inclusive

Have you ever used an app for volunteering?
Yes – University volunteering app: really clunky, lots of unnecessary scrolling; selection criteria was rubbish; no relevant opportunities, not many opportunities showing

Someone would have to publicise it because I don't know any [national apps] that exist

What features or functions would be most useful to you in a volunteering resource such as an app (e.g. when looking for and selecting a volunteering opportunity, registering for an opportunity)? Why?
Location of volunteering; a decent description of what the volunteering is; a time commitment; frequency of commitment; a decent search that you can filter properly on your interests

Concerns around data storage and usage/ ==Safety around data protection and identification:==
==Two-way authentication:==
1. Authentication of app and organisers – GDPR data protection of user's data:
    I don't like giving out personal information, so as little personal information as possible, because I don't know where it's going. Basic info like name, location and email address is fine. Once I've committed to an opportunity, then I'll give the specific organisation my details, but I'm not going to give an app all my personal information. Would still be a useful to me if ==I can use it as a decent search engine==.

    Would rather do it manually ==(have option to apply via the organisation or directly through the app== - provide info   separately and do it manually, and option to provide all info for organisations to access and apply automatically).

    I want to know where my data's going. The app can say what it likes [about data protection], but you've got no idea   that it will or not. ==You'd have to give me some huge guarantee about where that== ==data's being stored.==

2. Authentication of volunteer – valid volunteer identification for app and organisers:
    How do you know the person applying is giving you the correct information?
    Passport identification like with Monzo and Airbnb (that the app need to store safely), ==Link to other== ==social media==   ==profiles== for legitimacy - like Linkedin

Is there stuff in apps like this that you think are redundant or get in the way? What features would you prefer not to use?
==Being forced to give away sensitive information==

What other ways of encouraging civic engagement that don't require volunteering would be appealing to you?
==Donating== – fundraising page, sponsored event pages, individual giving
If someone sends me a sponsor page or fundraising event they're doing, I'll donate to that