

# Volunteering for Camogie



**THE  
CAMOGIE  
ASSOCIATION**  
An Cumann Camógíochta

## *Volunteering for Camogie*

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## *Glossary*

**VOLUNTEER:** An individual who works on behalf of An Cumann Camógaíochta and does not receive payment for carrying out duties. Volunteers may receive expenses (e.g. travel and lunch expenses).

**RECRUITMENT:** This describes the process in which volunteers could be encouraged to join our Organisational Units, colleges, counties and provinces (hereafter referred to as “Organisational Units”).

**RETENTION:** This is the process of keeping new and established volunteers involved for as long as possible.



(Photo: Sportsfile)

## *Introduction and acknowledgements*

**T**HE primary purpose behind this publication is to try and reawaken the volunteer spirit that once burned brightly in our communities, Organisational Units and counties, provinces and colleges. The Special Olympics in 2003 saw a national surge in volunteerism, with very many of the volunteers getting involved for the first time simply because they had been directly asked.

This publication will define:

- What is a volunteer?
- Recruitment of volunteers
- Retention of volunteers
- Recognition of volunteers

Volunteers are vital to the organisation and management of every Camogie Organisational Unit or County Board. The time, dedication and energy they devote are of the utmost importance in keeping Organisational Units/ organisations running and working well. Without volunteers units would find it difficult to function and may cease to exist. This shows volunteers are extremely valuable and deserve praise, thanks and recognition. Anyone can volunteer, whether they are young, old, male, female, able bodied, disabled, employed, unemployed.

A secondary aim is to inform the members of An Cumann Camógaíochta on how to promote, support and facilitate participation in camogie at all levels. An Cumann Camógaíochta is also an information provider for its Organisational Units, counties, provinces and colleges and acts as a conduit and facilitator of information-sharing and networking between them.

An Cumann Camógaíochta would like to thank the Offaly Local Sports Partnership, all their Partner Agencies, Westmeath Volunteer Centre, Volunteer Centres Ireland and Volunteering Ireland for their generous permission in allowing us to adapt and tailor their publications on Volunteering specifically for Camogie.

## Volunteering in An Cumann Camógaíochta

**V**OLUNTEERING is defined as the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of an organisation or a community. In our case the “Community” refers to An Cumann Camógaíochta. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain.

In our Association volunteers are valued as individuals who bring a unique contribution to the Unit with which they work.

Volunteering covers many varied and different activities. In our Association this may range from coaching, to administration, refereeing, fundraising, or simply offering an expertise to the Association, e.g. PR skills, IT skills or Finance skills etc. Every person who offers support to a Camogie Unit should be valued and availed of; anyone can volunteer. It doesn't matter whether they are young, old, male, female, able bodied, disabled, employed, unemployed; there is something they can do to help with some aspect of your Camogie Organisational Unit.

Some people volunteer a few times a year when they have spare time, others give a regular commitment of several hours per week, and some even volunteer on a full time basis.



(Photo: Martina McGilloway, ilivephotos)

## *The Importance of Volunteers*

Volunteers are vital to the organisation and management of every Organisational Unit, County, Province or College. The time, dedication and energy they devote are of the utmost importance in keeping the Units running and working well. Without volunteers many of these Organisational Units/ organisations would find it difficult to function and may cease to exist. This shows volunteers are extremely valuable and deserve praise, thanks and recognition.

There are many roles a volunteer can fulfil e.g. administrators, coaches, officials, first aiders, drivers etc which are all equally important.

The key to success within Camogie Units is how volunteers are managed and utilised by the people with whom they work.

## *Reasons Why People Volunteer*

There are many reasons why individuals volunteer. Volunteers include members, friends, parents, school students and many more. People also volunteer for a variety of reasons. Some of the reasons include:

- To learn new skills
- To help other individuals
- To be involved with family and friends who are currently members
- To share abilities, knowledge and talent
- To do something other than a day job
- To make new friends
- To become a member of a team
- To give something back to an Organisational Unit
- For the social aspect associated with working in an Organisational Unit
- To have fun!

Recognising what motivates each individual is key in knowing how to maximise their participation within Camogie Units.

## Recruiting Volunteers

### FINDING VOLUNTEERS

The first thing to consider when recruiting a volunteer is to have a clear understanding of how the Volunteer's expectations can be matched with the Organisational Unit's needs. If you are organised and have a clear idea and plan (i.e. when, where and why you want help) and seek it in an organised way, people will be more willing to volunteer.

A good idea when recruiting volunteers is to consider some form of induction in relation to Rules and Regulations of the Association. There is also merit in familiarising them with the supports that are available in relation to Camogie, e.g. Camogie Websites. ([www.camogie.ie](http://www.camogie.ie)). Supporting and mentoring a new Volunteer is a good idea to ensure that their expectation and that of the Organisational Unit's is being met.

### MAXIMISING VOLUNTEER EFFORT

In order to get the best performance, and ensure that each volunteer is enjoying themselves, the Organisational Unit should consider the following:

- Find out where volunteers are needed
- Find out how much time each volunteer can give to the Organisational Unit
- Outline role descriptions
- Include volunteers in Organisational Unit/organisation meetings to ensure they are aware of all activities being carried out
- Support volunteers
- Include all volunteers in relevant training run by Organisational Unit or County Boards
- Help all volunteers stay motivated by giving them the recognition they deserve



## RECRUITMENT STRATEGY

It is advisable that all Camogie Units consider engaging a recruitment strategy on an annual basis.

Some important questions that could inform/ influence how a recruitment strategy is approached include:

- How many volunteers does the Organisational Unit need?
- How long will they be needed?
- When will they be needed?
- What will they be doing?
- What will they be asked to do?
- How much responsibility will they have?
- Will the Organisational Unit nominate a Liaison Person to support volunteers?
- Will the Liaison Person identify the training needs of each volunteer?
- What skills do they need to fill the role?
- Where is the right place to find the volunteers?
- Are there partners within my local Organisational Unit? e.g. GAA that already have volunteers that the Organisational Unit could approach

## ROLE DESCRIPTIONS

There are numerous roles that volunteers can fulfil. Sometimes volunteers are recruited into an area in which they do not have any experience or relevant skill. To avoid this misunderstanding brief role descriptions are required to help avoid confusion about a particular role.

The volunteer role descriptions should include:

- Name of volunteer role
- Brief description of volunteer role (to include activities/tasks)
- Area within the Organisational Unit
- Days and times needed
- Minimum length of volunteer commitment required
- Qualifications /or skills if required, eg physio/first aid.
- Training requirements of the Volunteer, eg Code of Ethics, Coaching etc.

*It is vital that a Volunteer is NEVER forced to take on a role they are not comfortable in.*

## WHERE TO FIND VOLUNTEERS?

There is no set place, volunteers are everywhere. It is useful to target certain groups and areas when looking for volunteers. However it is important that any recruitment efforts should not be limited or restrictive.

Some key issues that would be beneficial whilst recruiting are:

- Raising awareness and the importance of volunteering on your website
- Producing information sheets for volunteers
- Use membership lists. Lists of jobs/skills already recorded will give an indication of who has the necessary skills for a position
- Hold social events, encouraging new members to join.
- Use local press (e.g. newspapers, radio and magazines)
- Organise notices on your website for volunteers
- Produce flyers to be handed out at local events where potential volunteers may be in attendance
- Promotion of your Organisational Unit in local schools and colleges may help involve parents in volunteering
- Ask supporters of teams or Organisational Units to get involved

## THE PROCESS OF RECRUITING

Finding the right volunteer for the Organisational Unit needn't be a formal affair but it is very important in identifying interests and skills of the volunteer. It is important to make the volunteer feel comfortable in the Organisational Unit no matter what their role.

*Remember that the Personal Approach is usually the most effective method of recruitment.*

By taking this approach with the volunteer it allows you to find out more information:

- What experience/skills they have
- What experience they have working in other sports areas
- Why do they want to be involved in your Organisational Unit
- What dates and times they are available to volunteer
- Additional qualifications

It is important to have ascertained that the volunteer will be supportive of the ethos of the Association and is of suitable character to be involved with the Organisational Unit.

*All of the above take time and should be done slowly. The last thing you need to do is to rush the process and scare the person before they get a chance to be involved.*

## Retention of Volunteers in Your Organisational Unit

*These are ten of the main reasons why it is difficult to retain volunteers or why they leave:*

1. Their experience was not what they expected when they became involved with the Organisational Unit
2. Some members treated them as an interruption, not as welcome help
3. Long term volunteering members wouldn't let them into their "insider" group
4. They did not see themselves as having a clear role within the Organisational Unit
5. They did not know how to tell you they wanted to leave
6. They made suggestions that were not acted on, or responded to or even acknowledged
7. The atmosphere was impersonal, tense or cold on or off the pitch
8. The physical supports promised were not forthcoming and did not support their efforts
9. No one smiled at them
10. They were underutilised

### KEEPING YOUR VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED

It can be difficult for some Organisational Units to attract volunteers; however many have success in this area. Irrespective of how successful a Organisational Unit may or may not be it is very important to keep a focus on the volunteers within the Organisational Unit.

It is important also to realize that in order to retain volunteers, they have to feel:

- Needed
- Useful
- Part of the team
- Welcome

Many Organisational Units fail to meet these needs unintentionally. Existing members need to recognise the new volunteer and their needs as well as their own needs.

## MOTIVATION

The Organisational Unit must always keep in mind that volunteering is very different to paid employment and that each volunteer does so in accordance with their own personal commitments. This involvement can vary significantly from person to person. This does not mean that any person is less motivated than the other.

Organisational Units should bear in mind that:

- People volunteer in order to support the Organisational Unit and not for personal gain
- Volunteers do not get paid
- Volunteers do not have a contract
- Volunteers do not depend on the Organisational Unit but the Organisational Unit depends on the volunteer
- Volunteers priorities may not always be in line with the priority of the Organisational Unit

Motivation is pivotal in retaining volunteers in any role. Motivation doesn't just mean urging people on, it also takes into account what is important to that individual and trying to make sure they reach their goals from their involvement. It is important to match the needs of the individual to that of the Organisational Unit.

Motivation is basically giving the necessary support to ensure that people's needs are met and that they are kept interested. Paying attention to the tasks undertaken by your volunteers will be important in motivating them.

## DELEGATING TASKS

Sometimes this can be a challenging process and it needs great consideration. There are many skills associated with it such as being patient, having courage and trust. It is very important when allocating roles/jobs/tasks to volunteers.

For delegation to be successful it is important to match responsibility with authority. For example giving responsibility without authority is not reasonable. Therefore when you delegate it is important to give responsibility with the appropriate authority.

In order to successfully delegate a task you need to:

- Identify the task that needs to be delegated
- Learn the key elements of that task
- Find the volunteer who has the right skills for the task
- Decide upon the appropriate training that is needed by an individual to perform the task
- Include a review of efficiency of roles on an annual basis



(Photo: Caroline Quinn)

## Communication

Communication plays a vital part in ensuring that all volunteers are consulted /informed regarding all aspects of Organisational Unit activities.

It keeps them in the 'loop' with what is happening at the Organisational Unit, especially if they are unable to be involved at committee level.

Communicating with volunteers will also help the volunteer to take greater responsibility in the Organisational Unit. Communication promotes openness in relation to new ideas and where practical, allows responsibility to implement them.

Organisational Units should be aware that there are many different ways of promoting communication. The evolution of technology has made communication with volunteers easier. It is important that these new communication forms should be used in line with the Code of Ethics.



(Photo: Lorraine O'Sullivan, Inpho)

## Promoting Recognition of Volunteers

### JOB SATISFACTION

This is one of the most important aspects in encouraging volunteers to remain at an Organisational Unit.

*In order to promote job satisfaction among volunteers in the Organisational Unit it is necessary to find out:*

- What the volunteer wants
- What will motivate the volunteer
- Make sure that the volunteer understands what they have been asked to do/ role descriptions to help identify the nature of the role to be undertaken
- Offer training to help them in their role if required
- Volunteers should be encouraged to give ideas and implement them
- Provide positive feedback to volunteers

### SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS

Consider ways to support your volunteers by:

- Helping them feel they are making a worthwhile contribution to the objectives of the organisational unit
- Making sure the role strikes a balance between the volunteer's capabilities and the appropriate responsibility of the role they have been given
- Showing adequate recognition and praise for the work of the volunteer
- Supporting the volunteer in developing and improving their skills and abilities

## RECOGNITION

Some ideas that could be useful in acknowledging the work of volunteers are:

1. Create a climate in which volunteers can feel motivated
2. Say thank you often, and mean it
3. Match the volunteer's desires with the organisation's needs
4. Highlight the impact that the volunteer contribution is having on the Organisational Unit
5. Praise volunteers who have done a good job
6. Never waste a volunteers time
7. Give volunteers a real voice within the Organisational Unit by including them in decision-making processes
8. Smile when you see them!
9. Let volunteers put their names to something they have helped to produce or to make happen
10. Remember their names. Seems a bit obvious but forgetting a volunteers name can make them feel very much unappreciated
11. Include volunteers in the annual review of role within the Organisational Unit
12. Actively seek feedback from volunteers especially when they are new to a role.

## Training

Training is an essential part of any Organisational Unit or organisation. It is also important in the retention of volunteers. There are a variety of training opportunities available within An Cumann Camógaíochta. Organisational Units should contact their county board for details. Training can also be provided through local Sports Partnership Groups and through VEC educational schemes just to mention a few.

Getting involved with other Organisational Units can also be useful in sharing ideas about how to help and recruit volunteers.



## Action Plan for the Recruitment & Retention of Volunteers

Develop an action plan to identify volunteers and motivate them to become active in the Organisational Unit with a view to retaining them on an ongoing basis:

- Decide why the Organisational Unit needs volunteers
- Appoint a Volunteer Liaison Person
- Outline the descriptions for each role that needs to be done by a volunteer
- Decide the skills needed by a volunteer for certain jobs
- Decide how many volunteers you need
- Agree on how the Organisational Unit will approach the recruitment of volunteers
- Approach the individuals with the appropriate skills required
- Support them in their role
- Provide training opportunities
- Highlight the impact the volunteer is having on the Organisational Unit
- Elicit feedback from the volunteer
- Ensure that new volunteers feel part of the Organisational Unit
- Make changes when needed and monitor the process
- Always remember to say thank you for work done

## Rewarding our Volunteers

We have said throughout this policy that it is important to recognise the work of volunteers and to thank them for the role that they play in the Camogie Association. The Camogie Association's National Development Plan – *Our Game Our Passion* – stresses the importance of the recognition of volunteers. The relevant goal in the plan states "Recognise and reward the commitment and expertise of Volunteers." With this in mind the following criteria have been approved by Ardchomhairle for county volunteer awards.

## *Criteria for County Volunteer Award:*

The award should be open to all categories:

- Games Promotion/Development (Coaches, Trainers, Development Officers, Referees etc)
- Administration at Club or County Level
- Facility Maintenance / Development ( Grounds, Clubhouse etc)
- Club/County Support (Gear, Equipment, Transport, First Aid etc)
- Fundraising
- Other

Nominees do not have to be members of the Association.

Clubs would be able to nominate one person for this award.

Award Nomination Form should contain the following information:

- Name of the nominee
- Title of his/her role in the club
- Description of this role e.g. Tasks undertaken; level of commitment; relevant training done
- What impact did this work have on the club?
- Additional information

The impact on the club should have the strongest weighting in deciding the winner of the award.

## *Distinguished Service Award*

This is a national award that recognises the key contributors to the development of the Camogie Association at national level. The length of time the person has served the Association is part of the criteria – a minimum of ten years is required. Nominations for this award are made by County Boards and Provincial Councils.

# Appendix 1

## OVERVIEW OF SOME ORGANISATIONAL UNIT ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES

### 1. Cathaoirleach/Chairperson

#### *General Duties*

The duties of An Cathaoirleach may be summed up as follows:

- To uphold the constitution of the Association. This of course means that he/she must know it thoroughly.
- To act as Cathaoirleach at certain committee and other meetings.
- To strive continuously to improve the Organisational Unit; this involves full co-operation with the other office holders.
- To represent the Organisational Unit at various functions
- To act on behalf of the Organisational Unit in the interval between meetings.
- Prepare or obtain an agenda; certainly she/he should know what will be on the agenda for the meeting (usually this will be drafted with the Organisational Unit Secretary). She/he will decide what the priorities of the meeting are with the intention of getting those matters organised, leaving unimportant matters to be decided at a later date if necessary.

The Cathaoirleach and Secretary should meet before the meeting and go through the agenda. An agenda could be on the following lines:

- Minutes
- Matters Arising
- Correspondence (for letters, etc. not relevant elsewhere on the agenda)
- Report from County Committee or Divisional Committee
- Fixtures and Transport (to decide on ... regarding fixtures, to discuss .... regarding transport)
- Finance
- Fund-Raising
- Other activities
- Other Business (only matters of minor importance to be dealt with here)

It is always helpful to members to give an indication of the exact business to be dealt with under common headings such as Fixtures, Finance and Transport etc. – this way members come to a meeting better prepared to participate.

## 2. An Leas Cathaoirleach/Vice-Chairperson

The Leas Cathaoirleach will be an able deputy for the Cathaoirleach. This post holder should be assigned to chair a high profile/busy subcommittee in order to gain as much experience of Organisational Unit Administration as possible.

## 3. An Rúnaí/The Secretary

The post of Secretary is one of the vital links in any organisation. His/her duties are many and varied and call for a high degree of dedication. These duties dovetail with those of the Cathaoirleach and it is essential that they work as a team of which the Secretary will very often be the more active one.

The secretary should be a good organiser, tidy and methodical, tactful and friendly and above all reliable.

*The Secretary must:*

- Keep records of matches, venues, dates and winners. Simple files about various activities should be kept as all such items will be sought for the compilation of a History or a Centenary Year Book etc. A petty cash book is also necessary for recording payments of small cash amounts, i.e. postage, telephone calls, etc.
- Be the main link with the higher unit. She/he should deal expeditiously with all correspondence, if necessary after consulting with the Cathaoirleach. She/he should use letter heading and keep copies of all important letters.
- Prepare the business for all meetings, i.e. get together any information that may be needed.
- Make all the physical arrangements for meetings
- Check back on the minutes of the last meeting to see that action has been taken as required.
- Record the attendance of each member and apologies for absence.
- Take a note of decisions reached. She/he should not try to write everything down, but should follow the sense of the discussion, listening for key points. If in doubt about decisions, the Secretary should ask for clarification.
- After the meeting, the Secretary must write the minutes. This should be done as soon as possible. Usually minutes should only record what was dealt with and what decisions were taken. But sometimes the main points raised in a discussion may need to be recorded. Do not give a verbatim account. Minutes should be written in a proper Minute book.

The Secretary may have to assist the Cathaoirleach in the conduct of the meeting and ideally both officers should work together to get the meeting over quickly.

#### 4. The Treasurer

An Cisteoir has responsibility for the safe-keeping of the funds of the Organisational Unit. He/she is in a position to seek and to give advice on the best management of funds. Through his/her dealings with financial and other institutions on behalf of the Organisational Unit, he/she has the opportunity to portray a good image of The Camogie Association.

Detailed duties are outlined in the Official Guide of An Cumann Camógaíochta.

#### 5. Children's Officer

The role of the children's officer is dealt with specifically under Child Protection in the Official Guide of An Cumann Camógaíochta.



(Photo: Caroline Quinn)

## 6. PRO

The PRO communicates with the general public on behalf of the Organisational Unit. He/she is in a position to present, in an attractive manner, a good image of the Organisational Unit and the Camogie Association. The level and quality of publicity given to the Organisational Unit and The Camogie Association depends to a great extent on the Organisational Unit PRO.

*Duties of the PRO:*

- Supply the PRO at the next level (county/provincial/national as appropriate) with information on a regular basis/as required
- Provide the Director of Communications & Marketing with information as required
- Work as a member of a team with the other Organisational Unit Officers
- All information for publication should come through the PRO
- Act as direct contact point for all media- print, broadcast and online
- Act as official spokesperson for unit, in consultation, with other officers

## 7. Registrar

As of March 6th 2014, all Camogie Clubs are required to use the new Electronic Camogie Registration System to register members/clubs of the Association. The new system was created by Servasport. The Camogie Registration System is a standalone system hosted within the GAA Management application. Some Camogie clubs may already use the GAA/Servasport registration system. These will now be required to register Camogie members on the Camogie Association/Servasport system using the assigned Unique ID and password provided by the Camogie Association. The Secretary of each Club unit must contact their relevant County Secretary to avail of registration details pertaining to the new electronic registration system.

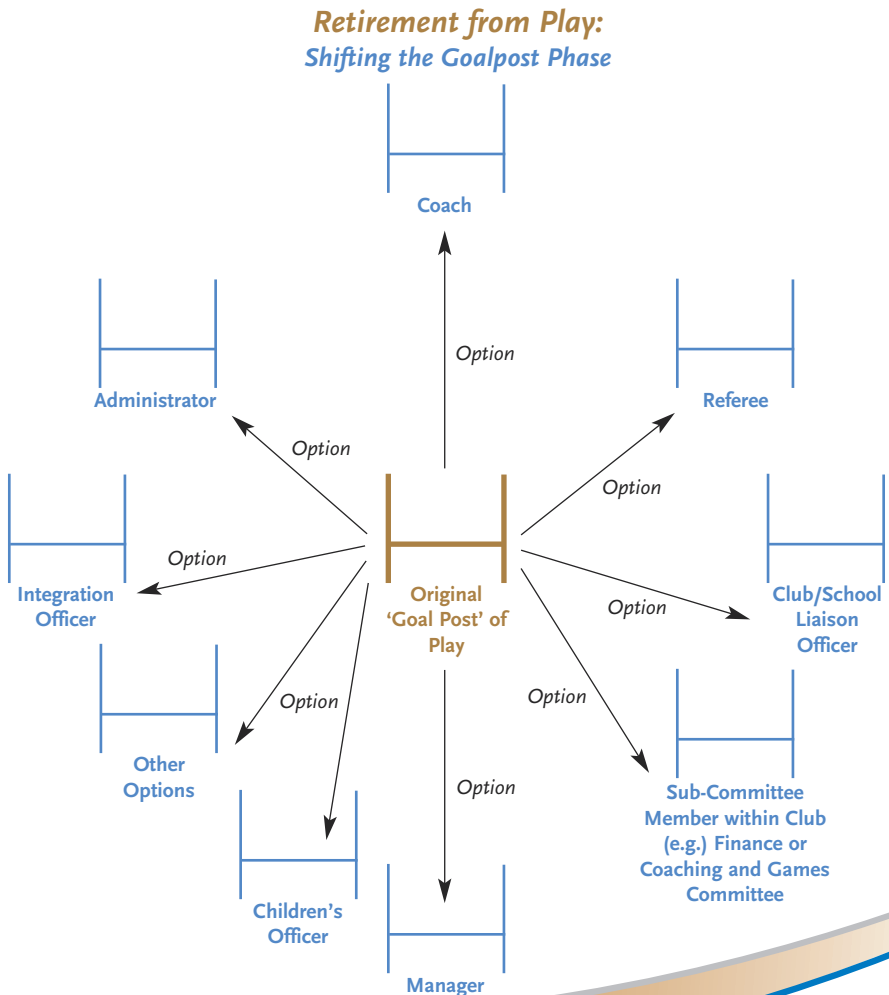
## 8. Code of Conduct for Officials/Officers

All Officials and officers must abide by the Code of Conduct for All Officers which forms part of An Treoraí Oifigiúil.

## Appendix 2

### FURTHER INFORMATION

An Cumann Camógaíochta has a player pathway booklet that is available to Volunteers. Below is the “*Shifting the Goalpost*” section of this document which has proved to be an extremely valuable source of information. To obtain a copy of this document please see [www.camogie.ie](http://www.camogie.ie) or contact your local Regional Development Coordinator (RDC).



For more information about volunteering, organise a seminar for volunteers, coaches, leaders, teachers and anyone else who is interested in volunteering for Organisational Units. This could be done at County Level and supported by Organisational Units.

## Websites

General information about volunteering and some useful tips and guides for volunteering visit any of the websites detailed below.

Irish Sports Council	<a href="http://www.irishsportsCouncil.ie">www.irishsportsCouncil.ie</a>
Laois Sports Partnership	<a href="http://www.laoissports.ie">www.laoissports.ie</a> E: <a href="mailto:info@laoissports.ie">info@laoissports.ie</a>
Longford Sports Partnership	<a href="http://www.longford.ie">www.longford.ie</a> E: <a href="mailto:smcguinness@longfordcoco.ie">smcguinness@longfordcoco.ie</a>
Offaly Sports Partnership	<a href="http://www.offalysports.ie">www.offalysports.ie</a> E: <a href="mailto:sports@offalycoco.ie">sports@offalycoco.ie</a>
Westmeath Sports Partnership	<a href="http://www.westmeathsports.ie">www.westmeathsports.ie</a> E: <a href="mailto:info@westmeathsports.ie">info@westmeathsports.ie</a>
Volunteer Centers Ireland	<a href="http://www.volunteer.ie">www.volunteer.ie</a>
Volunteering Ireland	<a href="http://www.volunteeringireland.com">www.volunteeringireland.com</a>
Sport Northern Ireland	<a href="http://www.sportni.net/">www.sportni.net/</a>
Volunteering-NI	<a href="http://www.volunteering-ni.org/">www.volunteering-ni.org/</a>
Longford Volunteer Centre	<a href="http://www.volunteerlongford.ie/">www.volunteerlongford.ie/</a>
Westmeath Volunteer Centre	<a href="http://www.volunteerwestmeath.ie">www.volunteerwestmeath.ie</a>



## Useful Contact Details

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