The Management of Volunteers in the National Trust

To what extent is the management of volunteers similar or different to the management of paid staff within the National Trust?

A commissioned study by the National Trust 2013-2015

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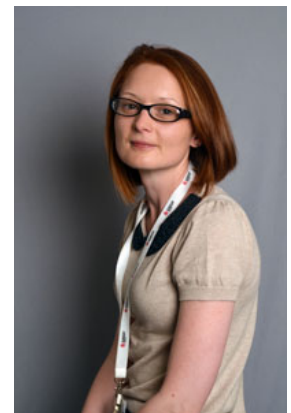Dr Jenna Ward

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Contents

The Research Brief

Prof Anne-Marie Greene and Dr Jenna Ward were commissioned to provide the National Trust with a detailed, evidenced-based understanding of:

(1) what it means to manage a volunteer in the National Trust

(2) the nature of similarities or differences between the management of volunteers and paid staff

(3) the implications of these similarities or differences for policy, resourcing and strategic planning around volunteer management within the National Trust.

This report is based on empirical evidence from in-depth qualitative case studies carried out at two National Trust properties between 2013 and 2015. Both properties were chosen for inclusion in the study by the National Trust. The two research sites were comparable because they shared a number of key features; both were medium-sized stately home locations with similar configurations of House and Garden and involving similar numbers of volunteers (approx. 260).

In order to go beyond the information already gathered as part of the National Trust's Volunteer and Managers Surveys and KPI data this project employed a palette of qualitative methods. Specifically, 15 managers were interviewed, engaged in a task monitoring survey and asked to undertake a participant-produced photography exercise[1]; 10 paid staff and 45 volunteers took part in focus groups which involved the use of participant-produced drawing[2]; and finally, selected managers were observed in their routine work of managing volunteers.

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[1] (Shortt & Warren, 2012)
[2] (Kearney & Hyle, 2004; Munoz et al, 2011; Ward & Shortt, 2013)

Context

Much of the literature on voluntary sector management and the management of volunteers laments either a) the absence of a conventional employment contract, or b) the infiltration or imposition of conventional management techniques on the volunteer context[3]. The volunteer context provides an opportunity to explore the often hidden and unspoken facets of the employment relationship and management practice. This is an important area of enquiry as it offers an opportunity for mainstream management theory and practice in conventional employment settings, to learn from the way that volunteers are managed. In particular, the absence of thee conventional employment relationship provides an insight into how management is experienced beyond the shadow of economic control. This report offers an empirical response to these questions that begins to address a gap in the existing literature by giving a voice to 'the often unspoken, non-official beliefs, values, attitudes and perceptions held by those who interact with volunteers'[4] and the lived experiences of volunteers and volunteer managers.

In the context of the National Trust, some of these issues are also being explored through research projects other than ours. In particular, the recently commissioned Cause and Effect (2015) project by Morris Hargreaves McIntyre explored the relationship National Trust volunteers had with the wider Trust as an organisation. The findings, conclusions and recommendations we make in this report support a number of those made by the Cause and Effect research in that we too found that volunteers have a 'love' for the places at which they volunteer which is much stronger than their feeling towards the Trust more broadly. In this report we conceptualise this 'love' as a form of '**affective commitment**'[5].

What have we found?

In direct response to the research brief, ***we can, with confidence, argue that in practice, the management of volunteers within the National Trust is, and should be, significantly different to the management of paid staff.*** These differences can be classified around five broad, yet interconnected, themes:

1) Performance Management
2) Communication
3) Task Differentiation
4) Trust and Fear V Autonomy and Creativity
5) Emotional Labour

The remainder of this report presents detailed qualitative evidence of the nature of the lived experiences of those who volunteer for the National Trust and those tasked to manage them. All quotes presented are verbatim but the names of the participants have been changed to ensure anonymity. Following the discussion of the 5 key themes a series of recommendations for both the National Trust and property level practice and policy are presented. At the end of this report you will also find a visual representation of the research that has been specifically designed to increase engagement with, and dissemination of, the research findings and recommendations. In addition, a short film that focuses on the theme of emotional labour can be found at www.dmu.ac.uk/crowe

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[3] (Davis-Smith, 1996)
[4] (Murray, 2008: 240)
[5] (Meyer & Allen, 1991)

Future Action

The discussion contained within this document, the film and in the visual representation of the findings (see Appendix 1) is intended for the National Trust. We hope that our analysis, findings, evaluation and recommendations (for both whole Trust and property level policy and practice) are found useful in terms of informing policy, training, recruitment and selection, strategic and human resource management of both volunteers and those paid to manage them. We invite critical engagement with this document from those involved and concerned, as this is an integral part of our sense-making processes as interpretive researchers. Any evidence or testimony of changes to policy and practice that result from these research findings should be made known to Dr Helen Timbrell or Prof Anne-marie Greene.

Performance Management

This report focuses on a key area of difference involving the way that paid staff and volunteers are performance managed. We establish that paid staff and volunteers are subject to quite different forms of performance management, with the former being more formal and procedural and the latter being informal and adhoc.

To set the context, within the National Trust, there are in existence a number of formal policies around performance management (both appraisal and development review) for various stakeholder groups, volunteers included. For paid staff, this includes conventional PDR processes, common in form and purpose to those we would expect to see for formal employment contracts, which are documented and monitored and linked to pay, training and development. There are also policies setting out capability, disciplinary and grievance procedures. For volunteers, there is a formal policy framework setting out some form of appraisal and development review process under the umbrella of the 'Guidance on Supporting Volunteers to Succeed', linked to both the 'Values and Behaviours' of the National Trust, and to the structure of the 'Volunteering Journey'. This also includes a policy on 'How to manage volunteer performance issues', and 'How to manage an issue raised by a volunteer', both of which have been very recently redeveloped (2016). Our study allows us an insight into the 'lived reality' of that policy framework, i.e. to what extent and how are these policies used and what is the perception of them by the volunteers and people who manage volunteers?

The need for difference

Overall there was consensus amongst most managers, paid staff and volunteers that volunteers could not or should not be performance managed in the same way as paid staff, as the following quotes illustrate:

> I think in my head the difference is when you're paid to accept responsibility it's one thing and when it's just… when you're volunteering is it fair to say to somebody I'm paying you to do it and I'm not paying you to do it, but I expect you to both do it exactly the same, to the same standards, but I can call you to account through all sorts of PDRs and formal line management things.
>
> (Sam, Paid Staff)

> I don't think that would work at all if you tried to implement the same rules for paid staff as volunteers because they are volunteering you know a lot of them could still go out and get a paid job if they wanted that, but you know it's the whole atmosphere and it wouldn't work without volunteers.
>
> (Les, Paid Staff)

> I think it's that recognition that you know… these are intelligent people who are giving up their time and its then about how do we build on the good things that happen and the good things they enjoy; I mean it's a great question to ask isn't it because I think a lot of our volunteers don't like the word managing. (Sarah, Manager)

Part of this also includes the logistical difficulty of having performance management processes for the number of volunteers involved, as one of the managers Hilary commented: "We don't do formal reviews with a hundred and ninety it… it would be quite a task".

Volunteers too generally voiced opposition to being performance managed in any formal way. On finding out there were policies for disciplining volunteers in the National Trust, one volunteer's reaction was first to indicate that she did not know about it, and secondly was adamant opposition: "… the first thing that would happen if somebody tried to discipline me is 'goodbye, I'm off, I'm not working here'" (Ronnie, Volunteer).

Indeed, there were aspects of conventional employment which included performance management processes that were just not deemed to be appropriate for volunteer work, and certainly not part of what volunteers expected from their volunteering experience. As one of the managers Vera commented:

> I don't want it to be that they are daunted by me in any way because I don't think they would come and volunteer so I do try… I have that authority but it is in a very friendly way I think…

> (Vera, Manager)

Volunteer performance review processes in practice

Despite the difficulties and ambiguous views regarding their appropriateness, there were numerous examples of practices that managers engaged with in order to provide some kind of performance management function for volunteers. Indeed, this would be expected of those who manage volunteers, as set out in the available policies. For example, in the following quotes:

> We have started having what we call more one to ones with people, so at least once a year… our… volunteering lead… will sit down with people and talk about their expectations and actually are they happy in their current role, would they like to try something new… it's more for us to say actually tell us what you need, how can we be doing things differently.

> (Olivia, Manager)

> I hadn't seen [a particular volunteer] for a while… so we had a catch up, we did his health and safety, so that was… just one to one with a volunteer for half an hour or an hour.

> (Alison, Manager)

> We'll deal with you know issues that come up as and when they come up. With new volunteers that have been recruited and inducted we'll have a follow up with them however many months down the line, we'll occasionally have focus groups which is almost a review and we'll ask them their opinions on things or generally how things are going, we've done things like suggestion boxes in the volunteer tearoom.

> (Louise, Manager)

The thing that I have started to do is we do have folders for each of the volunteers… we do keep a record of all of the registration forms and expenses and that kind of thing so if somebody comes in we've got them, but when we have had to talk to people and something's happened I've just slotted a note in because then if you've got five or six times that somebody's actually shouted at you or… you can say… you know that this isn't just a one-time thing, this has actually happened quite a lot just as you do with staff.

(Joan, Manager)

What is interesting to note is that none of the managers specifically referred to particular National Trust policy documents in informing their selection and use of mechanisms, and all of them tended to use quite different individual methods. Overall the nature of any review processes was more informal, conversational and ad hoc for volunteers in contrast to the more formal PDR processes used for paid staff. The quotes on this subject are littered with phrases like 'having a chat', 'catching up', 'dealing with issues as they come up'. One of the managers Kara and a volunteer offered illustrations of the key difference between performance management for a paid staff member and that of a volunteer which could be summed up as the difference between 'asking' and 'telling':

When you have contracts… and you have an element of, your contract is to do x, y and z, you know the reason we do things is x, y and z. A volunteer, you don't necessarily have that contractual agreement to fall back on to say actually 'your behaviour x, y and z isn't the same as what I'd expect from a staff member', it's more about kind of gently kind of explaining the reason… it's more like 'right this is… what we're trying to achieve, I respect your opinions, really helpful, great that you're trying to help the shop, however, you know the reason why we're doing things is this'.

(Kara, Manager)

'In extremeness if it was a gross misconduct you'd be asked to leave, but the reality is no… I mean it's not the same and volunteers are… I come back to this point about being 'asked' and 'told' you know… if the volunteer's doing something that the house doesn't approve of [then] they will ask the volunteer whether they will be prepared to consider doing it this way rather than that way.'

(Amy, Volunteer)

Any issues that arose would tend to be dealt with in a friendly and light touch manner, for example:

You just have to chat, it's working through it in a way to find out what they expected out of the role they were doing, what I expect out of them and come to some sort of mutual agreement.

(Stewart, Manager)

'we'd chat to that volunteer… take them away to a quiet area and just have a chat about it you know, we've had this comment… what was the issue from your point of view, what happened and chat through it… I try if I hear something that was really good I'll comment to them, so it's sort of an ongoing thing I suppose, but very informal'.

Where the situation changed somewhat would be when a volunteer's behaviour was deemed to be misconduct. In these cases, there was care taken to invoke a more formal process, as one of the managers Olivia explained:

> There is a very, very clear process for that and it is very, it's formal not in a sort of overbearing sense but it does protect all parties… it starts with the informal conversation but then you document it and it might start with something else and it might start with an actual meeting that you invite somebody to… there is a timeline and a process.
>
> (Olivia, Manager)

Indeed, while all managers indicated that the removal of a volunteer from post was very rare, this had actually occurred very recently at one of the properties after being found to have publically brought the property into public disrepute. In these circumstances, managers and paid staff referred in general to 'formal processes' but again not to specific policy documents.

The difficulty of enforcement

In terms of the outcome of performance management processes for volunteers, overall there was a general view that there was a greater degree of tolerance to poor performance from volunteers than paid staff and sometimes managers did feel that they were unable to deal effectively with poor performance or 'bad' behaviour. For example, Simon, one of the managers felt that "If I bit the bullet more and made a fuss I might have some performance issues but I tend to be fairly laid back", and instead he tends to work out whether a volunteer will take the instruction and change their behaviour, and if not he has to live with it. Similarly:

> 'You cannot depend on volunteers because they might turn up today or they're gone tomorrow and that's their obligation… you know they're doing it voluntarily… if we didn't turn up to work we'd have a telling off about it, but if they don't you can't… you know you have to accept that'.
>
> (Greg, Manager).

The observation exercise of one of the managers provided an indicative illustration of this. Having shown the volunteer how to complete a particular task in the garden, the manager left the volunteer to get on with the job. However, later observing that the task had not been completed correctly, instead of telling the volunteer, this manager simply quietly went about after the volunteer correcting the work, effectively repeating the task all over again and clearly adding to their own workload.

As another manager lamented:

> 'What do you do? We've got nothing to kind of, and I don't think discipline's the right word, but it's kind of like as a volunteer you're signed up to the service promise if you like, our customer care, our values and behaviours, this is who we are, you're coming to the Trust and this is the organisation that you're a part of and this is what we expect to be projected and yes people have got a voice and yes they're empowered to do an awful lot of things, but

within the parameters of the National Trust… I think what… does happen here is people go 'oh the volunteers, I can't upset the volunteers' and actually, you know what, sometimes maybe we need to and just say… just challenge, not so much discipline, it's challenge I think'

(Joan, Manager)

A minority of volunteers too expressed concern about poor performance from volunteers. One example was a conversation between volunteers in one of the focus groups about a tour guide who they felt was giving incorrect information. The volunteers discussed how difficult it was to manage that situation, with views ranging from it being a staff member's responsibility to it actually being something volunteers should check for each other, as Linda said: "I think we would also have our own high standards".

For this reason, there were also a small number of managers who felt that there needed to be a tightening up of review processes for volunteers. Part of this was a need to go back to the formal Values and Behaviours of the National Trust and make volunteers accountable to them in the same way as paid staff are. As one of the managers indicated:

> I think maybe that's something we need to formalise so that we say if there's an issue this is the protocol that we follow as staff… it might not be a National Trust protocol, but it's something that we at [the property] feel is the appropriate way to deal with situations… I think actually if we are holding our volunteers accountable, we're believing that the values and behaviours is the right thing for us… to make sure we are all working towards one thing, then that in the end has to be the outcome, rather than just continuing it and 'oh we'll revisit it again, oh we'll have another chat, or we'll have a phone call next week', because it takes so much of the staff members' time.

(Stella, Manager)

A paid staff member indicated how important this was despite it being difficult to do:

> 'we are very grateful that they're [volunteers are] here doing what they're doing, but we need them to buy into what we are ultimately trying to achieve and if they're not doing that it's how to… you have those robust conversations to deal with it and erm… I think it's hard'.

(Kim, Paid Staff)

When coaching his paid staff team on dealing with volunteers who were deemed to be causing difficulties or engaging in problematic behaviour, one manager explained:

> I tend to sort of sit [the staff] down and say 'look this is difficult it's going to be a difficult process but it's happened on our watch, and we need to deal with it… if you have a particular instance of something that's really upset you then we're really clear, these are our values and behaviours and volunteers need to be held account to them as much as we are'. It's in everyone's sort of guidance notes, this is what's acceptable this is what is not, where I feel there's a difference is how, we how we deal with it… You know we are here, we are paid to make decisions and actually we can't run every decision past a committee of a hundred and eighty people… I do think we are getting to that point now where we're going to have to

take solid steps towards taking away people who are not performing and are not wearing the badge and advocating those values and behaviours.

(Charles, Manager)

What have we learned?

Performance management processes are necessarily more informal for volunteers than they are for paid staff. This is not a surprising finding given the number of volunteers involved, making it almost impossible for more formal processes to be implemented for logistical and resource reasons. Perhaps more importantly, there is a shared view across the National Trust (as evidenced in the nature of policies for volunteers) and between managers and volunteers themselves that formal performance management processes would not be appropriate. That processes for volunteers are more informal and ad hoc is what would be expected and is what is appropriate within a volunteering context.

The interesting question to raise is the extent to which the informal processes of volunteer performance management at property level, coupled with the more formalised policies and frameworks provided by the Trust are effective. Indeed, are they a) allowing managers to support volunteers effectively? b) deal with poor performance from volunteers that may affect business/conservation operations? and c) offer opportunities for volunteers to raise concerns, seek help and get the development and support they need? The findings seem to indicate that managers often feel inhibited in challenging poor performance and facilitating improvements, which can often lead to an increased workload for them and less than optimum outcomes in terms of visitor experience, conservation or property presentation.

Communication

This theme focuses attention on the ways in which volunteers and paid staff communicate with one another and are communicated to at a property level. Identifying a number of significant assumptions that staff make about volunteers and the behaviours that emerge from those assumptions, we are able to highlight a number of key differences in the way paid staff and volunteers are communicated with; namely in method and style and how these are perceived. We go on to consider the impact such assumptions, behaviours and perceptions are having on volunteer management, operations management and staff-volunteer relationships.

Methods of Communication

The National Trust is such a vast and geographically disparate organisation that communication to both paid staff and volunteers requires significant investment of both time and resource. On-line initiatives such as the Property Staff Academy and the Volunteer Academy are important resources for staff and volunteers in understanding how the National Trust operates, for locating support for dealing with operational and staffing matters and for identifying development opportunities. In addition, national events such as Convestival and regional and national training programmes are all forums for staff and volunteers to communicate and network. Communication methods at a property level are very much determined by the culture and processes of the property itself, however, there seemed to be an upward trajectory in the use of mass, technological forms of communication, or at least that was the volunteers' perception.

Indeed, even very practical considerations of time and space are challenging when it comes to communicating to volunteers, as Stella pointed out:

> They've got a team of two hundred volunteers… it's difficult to get round all of them I suppose… especially when they're in on different days you're never going to have the same conversation two hundred times with volunteers... and again space is an issue… if you had a meeting you'd never be able to get all of them in to one particular place… with the number of volunteers you're never going to please everybody.
>
> (Stella, Manager)

Volunteers at properties felt that methods of communication were becoming increasingly 'virtual' or technologically driven with the use of Facebook, Twitter, email and the myvolunteering website. As a case in point, volunteers had recently been tasked with submitting their own expense claims on-line and some departments had even had attempted to move to an on-line rota system for organising their volunteers. However, through our observations and focus groups we learnt that many volunteer managers were inputting expense claims on behalf of volunteers who felt that they could not or did not want to engage with the new technology. In addition, the use of social media and email to communicate with volunteers created a number of issues in particular when events had been cancelled or rearranged at short notice and volunteers had already arrived at the property or had begun their journeys only to find that when they had arrived they were no longer required.

Style of Communication

Given the variety in the size of the 'teams' operating at a property (e.g. House can have 200 volunteers and paid staff whilst the garden can have 20) there is always going to be a variety of challenges in the way that messages and information are disseminated and received. However, we observed an interesting set of assumptions operating in relation to how volunteers and paid staff communicate:

> I can get away from the politics here because I can just go out and drive off and get away from it…I don't tend to include them [volunteers] in that… there's been times when my colleagues have been jabber, jabber, jabber over the mess room table and they've all been around and it's just like… just watch… [it's] not appropriate, they're not here for that, they're here to come for a day… I try and keep any of that sort of stuff [from them]

> (Stewart, Manager)

In Stewart's case, he felt it was his responsibility to keep certain 'communications' from volunteers, particularly in terms of the 'politics'. In a paid staff focus group a number of paid staff spoke of the potential implications of volunteers having access to too much information:

> …volunteers do a fantastic job, but they are not party to all the information that we are and some things have to happen for a reason and they don't necessarily know that, so they need that direction from us.

> (Laurie, Paid Staff)

> Well yeah, because some information it's not privy for everyone's knowledge and if we tell volunteers they've got no sort of guidelines of what they can say to people and sometimes not all information can go out…

> (Chris, Paid Staff)

> …they've got no censoring thing about well… it's my employee and my employer and I need to be mindful of what I say about the National Trust…

> (Sam, Paid Staff)

Whether certain types of information are not communicated with volunteers for their own 'protection', 'to uphold the quality of the volunteering experience' or to protect the National Trust and the property the with-holding of information or at least the difference in what is communicated to paid staff and volunteers was experienced by volunteers as a general sense of marginalisation:

> I think a lot of volunteers feel side-lined that they're not part of the… every single person that volunteers here loves this house, loves this property, that is why we are here, it is something that is special to all of us, so we come here because we love to come here and we've made amazing friendships and relationships with other volunteers but you kind of don't feel part of it… It's almost like being… a servant below stairs.

> (Freddie, Volunteer)

In a focus group discussion regarding how it felt to be a volunteer, Freddie went on to state: 'Don't treat me like a mushroom; don't leave me in the dark and feed me!' Here he is referring to the frequent use of tea, biscuits and cake that often accompany the volunteer briefings used to communicate changes at the property. The focus group went on to discuss a lack of consultation between paid staff and volunteers. Elsewhere, however, volunteers did feel they were communicated and consulted more readily; however, it was paid staff and management that always made final decisions. For some paid staff, they too felt frustrated by the ways in which volunteers' voices, opinions and ideas were often ignored or overlooked by more senior management:

> They're [volunteers] not happy … and they don't feel that visitors are enjoying the house as much as they used to … they've told me about it, I've passed comments on … and they can't see anything happening or any results coming back… I think that's just frustrating for them… they don't get opportunities to see [senior management], he's busy doing other things… and they just need to talk things through with people, it's a communication issue really… at the end of the day they're in the rooms with the visitors a lot more than me … I'm just passing through… so they see exactly what's going on and talk to people… and I don't think we're listening to what they're saying very well.

(Hilary, Paid Staff)

Here, Hilary is not only frustrated by the lack of communication and dialogue between senior management and volunteers but also the position that puts her in as someone who is in daily contact with volunteers who are clearly struggling with particular changes and initiatives. A volunteer in a focus group spoke of his frustrations about the way volunteers were communicated with at a property level:

> There's a way of telling somebody to go to hell in such a way as they look forward to the trip!

(Freddie, Volunteer)

In context, this quote refers to the perception he felt paid staff had of volunteers. Just as Hilary noted how volunteer concerns, opinions and ideas were ignored or dismissed by managers, this volunteer too felt that the way volunteers were often spoken to when they raised a concern or shared their thoughts was perhaps worthy of further attention.

Volunteer Communication with Management

Much of this themed sub-report has sought to focus on the ways in which communication of wider National Trust and property initiatives are communicated to volunteers. However, it was also evident that communication from volunteers to managers and even between volunteers themselves could also be problematic to the functioning of a property.

Organising a large volunteer workforce on a day to day basis is inherently problematic and one significant factor in this challenge is the way some volunteers communicated with their managers. Rotas, holidays, long-term absence and competing commitments all served to challenge any volunteer manager reliant on a substantial volunteer workforce. Volunteer managers reported how unreliable some volunteers were and the impact this had on the way they managed them and the

role volunteers played in their teams or departments. This extensive quote from a Volunteer Manager paints a picture of the challenges involved in managing volunteers and how this shaped their approach to managing them:

> We do scheduling on the new National Trust my volunteering website… but they don't always book in … they just turn up … sometimes they might say 'I'm coming in next week, see you next week' or 'I'm not here for three weeks'… we used to have a written diary which they didn't keep to anyway, so they didn't write in there anyway because they find its just casual- you know... We are reliant but we are not reliant, if you know what I mean? Great when they're here, they're one of our best assets…they turn up and that's really good and they're functional and they do a lot for us… so we just have to get on with it because sometimes some weeks we don't have many volunteers basically because they are on holiday… I try and work with 'we haven't got any volunteers' and then build it from there …

> (Alison, Manager)

Essentially then, this particular manager saw volunteers as an added extra which sometimes allowed for particular projects or jobs to get done more quickly than if they had not been there. However, given the somewhat 'ad hoc' nature of volunteers communicating their availability this particular manager felt it best for her not to be 'too reliant' on volunteers. Another volunteer manager also commented in relation to his 'Activity Involvement Record' that he has spent more time with volunteers on a particular day because two had "turned up unannounced". When asked whether that was a normal occurrence he explained how he had implemented his own rota system to combat these problems:

> …They used to and that was a real pain in the ass because … oh we'll fence today for example and…then none would turn up… so we have a dedicated rota system now … there's two weekly boards … and they physically fill it in or they ask us to fill it in when they're in… they either text or ring to say 'oh I can't make it this day, put me down for that day, so we swap it on the board and it works, it works really well.

> (Stewart, Volunteer Manager)

Some departments or teams, however, cannot afford for volunteers to 'not show up' or 'turn up unannounced'. In particular House teams required a minimum number of volunteers to be present for the House to open. In these settings, House managers or paid staff spent a significant proportion of their time organising rotas in an attempt to assure the house would be open to visitors. Indeed, organising volunteers, scheduling work and managing rotas were prominent features of almost

every manager's photographic depictions of their work such as this one taken by volunteer manager Hilary.

However, wherever possible, volunteers were generally engaged in project based tasks meaning the day-to-day operations were not reliant on volunteers per se (see Task Differentiation theme).

What can we learn?

Communicating with such a large and disparate workforce is always going to be a challenge for the National Trust. At a property level, communication is also difficult, particularly with large volunteer numbers who work part-time and perhaps non-regular hours or shifts. However, our data suggests that there is a distinct difference between the way volunteers and paid staff are communicated with and this has an impact on operational issues at the property and on the way volunteers perceive their volunteer experience.

What is perhaps most important for the effective management of volunteers is that 'communication' is not only to be perceived as an effective dissemination of information, but for there to be scope and opportunity for dialogue between paid staff and volunteers. Many volunteers want to feel that their ideas are listened to and their concerns are treated with respect in light of their affective commitment to the property, its spaces and places.

Equally, methods of communication also need to be effective in that they are timely and appropriate for the particular demographic intended for their use. We believe this should be negotiated at a local level, within departments. If a group of volunteers are happy with email, text and social media then this is clearly an effective form of communication, but for a group with little knowledge, interest or skill in such platforms then perhaps a white board in a shared space is going to be more effective. The pursuit of universal infrastructures for communication and management is therefore perhaps less appropriate.

Task Differentiation

The theme of task differentiation focuses on the ways in which our observations, interviews and focus groups revealed a significant difference in what volunteers are allowed to do within different teams at the same property and across properties. We outline the extent of these differences and reflect on the justification and explanations given for this differentiation by managers and volunteers. A key area of justification relates to notions of trust, which are dealt with substantially in the next report.

What do volunteers do?

In general, volunteers carry out different tasks than paid staff. As one of the managers summed up:

> In the main I would say we do have specific volunteering roles rather than it being roles that could be done by paid staff or volunteers, so it's quite separate roles really.
>
> (Sarah, Manager).

The extent of this differentiation varied across departmental areas but across both properties differentiation tended to be around the following areas (please note this table is only indicative and is not an exhaustive list of all tasks carried out, nor does it capture exceptional examples discussed later):

Department	Volunteer	Paid Staff
House	Room Guide Conservation cataloguing	Conservation handling Opening and Locking Up Work Rota
Garden	Weeding/Deheading Digging, clearing, preparing beds Pricking out Supervised planting out	Specialist technical jobs Chemical application Greenhouse work Garden Design Work Rota
Estate	Digging Clearing Supervised construction	Regulatory monitoring Use of heavy machinery e.g. chain saw Work Rota
Retail	Cash handling Supervised display duties	Cashing Up Stock ordering Design of displays Work Rota
Catering	Washing and cleaning Serving Food	Menu design Stock ordering Direct Food Handling/Preparation Cash handling and cashing Up Work Rota
Welcome Team	Information giving Tour guides	Ticket sales Work Rota

Explanations for the task differentiation

First, it should be noted that there was not necessarily consensus across properties or even between managers about the reasons or appropriateness for the task differentiation. Indeed, much of the rhetoric relating to what volunteers were allowed and not allowed to do was conflicting. Therefore, practice could differ widely across departments as the table above indicates. For example, one manager explains that she does not let volunteers use the till or handle money because 'it would take too much training on the till'. She goes on to explain:

> We are supposed to treat them [volunteers] as ordinary members of staff and ask them to do everything that ordinary members of staff do but that would take too much training really …and that's not what they're here for…so I don't treat them like that…

> (Katherine, Manager)

However, at the same property volunteers based in other departments, not only used the till but were also proficient in taking credit card payments too. On occasion, some of them even worked alone in the shop.

> I feel a bigger sense of responsibility in the shop, particularly when I'm on my own and there's a big queue of people because …there's only one till and you can only go so fast…

> (Linda, Volunteer)

Despite a considerable lack of consensus and variability in practice, certain shared understandings for why volunteers should not be able to undertake some tasks could be identified, involving:

1) Knowledge and skills gaps
2) Perceptions of volunteer preferences
3) Perceptions of appropriate responsibilities of paid roles
4) Threat to paid staff jobs

1) Knowledge and skill gaps

Some managers indicated that task differentiation was justified because a number of roles and tasks were seen as requiring a knowledge base and technical skills that most volunteers just did not possess. For example, around the conservation tasks, two of the managers indicated:

> [using the collection management system], we do [it] ourselves because it… requires a working knowledge of the collection and being able to picture something in your head... It would be quite hard for a volunteer to do...

> (Louise, Manager)

> I'm in the privileged position of managing the collection… and I can share some of my privileged role with the volunteers… it's only really us that ever take them out to clean them.

> (Olivia, Manager)

Here conservation skills were seen to be something relating to the paid staff members' training, qualifications and experience. Similarly, for those working in the estates and gardens of the properties, technical skills and competency were also of key concern in determining what volunteers could and could not do. Part of this related to regulatory requirements, either relating to health and safety issues around use of machinery and chemicals, or external monitoring regulations where it was deemed important that this was the responsibility of paid staff only. Overall, it was felt that volunteers did not have the skills or experience to undertake more than very basic roles in the garden:

> …volunteers are great and they get us there, but the backgrounds that they're coming from… they're not coming from professional horticultural backgrounds

> (Alison, Manager)

> in the garden…is the skill set they come to us with because we've got so many certain technical jobs… you can't leave them to do that… they haven't got the presentation standards we're looking for as well

> (Lee Paid Staff).

> We cannot afford any mistakes…you prune those very old orchard trees incorrectly, you could wipe them out for the next season or damage them irreparably. You use the wrong weed killer or use the weed killer incorrectly, you can wipe out the ancient wild life…

> (Simon, Manager).

Such views were also shared by volunteers, indeed most garden and estate volunteers indicated that many tasks should only be carried out by paid staff for health and safety reasons. Further, there was recognition by them of the presentation standards that were required for a stately home garden that most of the volunteers just did not understand:

> it is quite important because the garden is a well-known garden and impressions are important

> (Jamie, Volunteer)

2) Perceptions of volunteer preferences

Another reason given for the differentiation of tasks related to perceptions of volunteer preference. A view from most managers was that volunteers did not want roles which required or had a lot of responsibility attached to them. There was a strong view that volunteering work should be different to the paid work that volunteers had undertaken previously or for it to be more of a social activity:

> …that's the tricky thing really of just balancing the volunteer roles with what they want to take on and the responsibility, almost with the caveats that they bring with them which I don't blame at all, a lot of our volunteers have held down really great and professional jobs and don't necessarily want that level of responsibility when they come to volunteer

> (Sarah, Manager)

We've got the people that come from high jobs and they come to us and go… 'oh I think it's great here because we don't actually have to make a decision, we can just come and do work and then go home again', there's no sort of responsibility.

(Chris, Paid Staff).

Such views were also shared by many volunteers, for example:

So my thing is if they make too much about everything having to go through the computer I will just stop doing it because I don't have to do I? It was one of the reasons I retired… So I'm not now going to face doing a voluntary job that gets me wound up with doing emailing and looking stuff up on a computer, so that's different isn't it? I mean at work you either have to do it or leave really don't you if it's part of the job, whereas now I don't have to do it, so if it becomes too intrusive I shall say 'right I'll go and find something different to volunteer at.

(Rita, Volunteer)

Others concurred with such a view: 'I've spent thirty years in charge. I don't particularly what to do it anymore' (Tina, Volunteer); 'It is very different from the role that I had when I was working so it's quite nice its sort of almost like there are no responsibilities' (May, Volunteer); while another was glad that she did not have to face the responsibility involved in cashing up:

I'm still terrified even after four years, of being left on my own for very long because there's always something that happens that I don't know how to do… I just think 'Oh No it's a bit scary'…. I don't want that responsibility.

(Linda, Volunteer).

Part of the perception around volunteer preferences also relates to a view from those who manage volunteers that they need to ensure that volunteering is a satisfying experience. This was a particularly prominent view in the House departments where the tasks that paid staff often undertake are considered to be potentially dissatisfying for volunteers, often because they are seen as pressurised or as repetitive, administrative or boring:

We do have volunteers in… not so much on the day to day routine things… it's better for them to work with us on specific projects really… because they won't come once a week to vacuum the floors where the visitors walk… they want something a bit more exciting and interesting than that.

(Hilary, Manager)

I always try and have a variety of things for them to do because at the end of the day they're volunteering their time if they don't want to come and photograph a hundred chisels in a day that's fair enough

(Vera, Manager)

For some volunteer managers, this also meant deliberately protecting volunteers from stressful or dangerous situations:

I personally try quite hard to shelter some things, try to hide that from them because they're not working members of staff, so whatever stresses you have will be different from what they need to know… I mean everything's set out for them, it's all ready and all they do is turn up and do their bit and go home, you know there's no pressure on them for deadlines or they've got to finish that work… we just usually say well 'there's your jobs… just do whatever you want and don't you exhaust yourself.

(Val, Paid Staff)

During an observation of a paid staff member opening up the House at the same property, we asked whether volunteers would ever undertake this task:

No…[it's] just a security issue really…. This is heavy work and quite physical in the semi-dark. I would hate for a volunteer to get hurt.

(Sally, Paid Staff)

It is interesting to note however that this concern for protecting volunteers from boring or repetitive jobs was not always lived out in practice, for example despite Vera's statement above, volunteers reported having photographed and entered hundreds of chisels into the collection database over the past couple of months and they joked about dreaming of chisels and never wanting to see another. Indeed, for some volunteers, their opinion on the nature of their work contradicted those of the House paid staff and managers in that they felt they were given mundane work because staff were too qualified to do it:

They wouldn't ask paid staff to do this. They have too much expertise and it wouldn't be a good use of time… it wouldn't really be fair on them either.

(Margaret, Volunteer).

Indeed, these management narratives have to be set against a backdrop of the voices of many volunteers indicating that they regularly carry out tasks that are mundane, routine and even distasteful. For example, at the same property one staff member talked about the duties volunteers regularly undertake:

Well it's like… Fridays for us is dog poo day, so we go and pick up all the dog poo bins and we have the same people in everyday, we have… probably four in today and they know the job, but they still come in and its sort of no questions asked. They don't have to come in and do it… they know Friday is dog poo day.

(Chris, Paid Staff)

For garden and estate volunteers, most of their work could be classed as repetitive and routine-clearing ground, weeding, pricking out seedlings etc. One garden volunteer was very vocal about her unhappiness with the menial and boring tasks she was given and her disappointment that: 'sometimes [they] will let us plant something but it's very [rare]'.

However it should be noted that amongst the garden and estate teams, this volunteer was somewhat of an exceptional voice. Most volunteers did not indicate any opposition to, or dissatisfaction with, the tasks allocated to them.

3) Perceptions of appropriate responsibilities of paid roles.

There was also a shared view between many managers and volunteers that being paid, legitimated levels of responsibility whereas this seemed less appropriate for an unpaid job:

> I would never expect a volunteer to sell tickets to the public because there's all the messages about… it's a gift aid ticket, it's a standard ticket, and it's not that I think they couldn't do it, but when a member of the public challenges back, which they can do, I don't think its necessarily fair that they should have to take that kind of scrutiny or intense and sometimes not very nice questioning from people… I think in my head the difference is when you're paid to accept responsibility it's one thing and… when you're volunteering, is it fair to say to somebody I'm paying you to do it and I'm not paying you to do it, but I expect you to both do it exactly the same, to the same standard.

> (Sam, Paid Staff)

> I think it's that operational element that we all take responsibility for because we're staff which the volunteers can't or don't or shouldn't have to because they're there to do a specific job and the operations of everything and how it impacts it isn't their concern.

> (Val, Paid Staff)

Or as a volunteer similarly voiced:

> I think you want to be told what's happening and who's in charge, you want the staff to take responsibility…you expect the staff to do what the staff are paid to be there for.

> (Charlie, Volunteer).

Further, if the management of volunteers was seen as an area of responsibility, then there appeared to be some resistance from volunteers themselves to volunteers managing or leading other volunteers. One of the managers, Sarah, indicated the difficulties that a volunteer faced when she was given the responsibility to take on tasks that would usually be part of paid work, for example processing and authorising volunteer expenses, conducting recruitment inductions, and making presentations on volunteer roles. She faced opposition and hostility from other volunteers and felt that she was not taken seriously by them. This was confirmed by other managers and also by volunteers themselves as the following quotes illustrate:

> we've tried in the past, [volunteer] day leaders just don't work for us, [volunteers] want to be managed by a member of staff, so actually that's the reason for the differentiation…it is the status of someone being paid to look after us means we're important to them

> (Louise, Manager)

> I think there is a reluctance amongst the volunteers to have a sort of team leader amongst volunteers… they don't want a hierarchy

(Pat, Volunteer)

4) Threat to paid staff jobs

Another interesting theme that emerged, albeit as a minority view, around rationales for task differentiation involved paid staff perceptions of volunteers threatening their jobs. As one volunteer indicated:

> If they trained me on the till… I could easily help out in the ticket office, but I'm very conscious that I could be taking someone else's job so I'm keeping a low profile on that… you have got to be careful that you don't stand on people's toes if they're getting paid.

(Ivy, Volunteer)

One paid staff member and one manager, also indicated that this was a consideration for them:

> If I think about it and I'm really honest with myself maybe there's a teeny tiny part of… when you think to yourself well if volunteers could do everything that we do then would they need anyone paid at the end of the day, so then you think oh and where would that leave me… volunteering in my own job… oh I don't know… I'm still in need of some money.

(Sam, Paid Staff).

> Some staff I've had in the past have seen the very good volunteers as a threat because they're very good and instead of actually seeing it as a personal development thing and saying that's great, I've got a really good volunteer, let's bring them on.

(Joan, Manager).

What can we learn?

In the main, volunteers carry out different tasks than paid staff, although paid staff may at times have taken on tasks, duties and roles usually undertaken by volunteers, often when they have gaps in volunteer provision. However the specific nature of this differentiation varies highly across departments, while the rationale for particular differentiation is largely determined by the individual manager with justifications for differentiation falling into five categories (the fifth being 'trust' which we analyse in more detail in a separate report). Yet, there appears to be relatively little opposition or dissatisfaction voiced by the volunteers regarding the tasks they were given. Most shared the view that some tasks are better left to paid staff, whether for reasons of technical skills competences or on health and safety/regulatory grounds. Some volunteers also shared the view of many managers that volunteer roles should not include areas of excessive responsibility. However, it is also evident that manager perceptions of volunteer preferences, particularly around repetitive or mundane tasks, may not be based on evidence or experience. Indeed, the variation between departmental areas around tasks indicated that volunteers were quite prepared to take on such tasks.

Trust & Fear v Autonomy & Creativity

The theme of Task Differentiation presented ways in which volunteers and paid staff largely had different responsibilities, roles and tasks. This theme further explores one particular explanation for why such task differentiation occurs and with what consequences, highlighting ways in which fear and mistrust often characterise the relationship and rhetoric that underpins the management of volunteers – something that is not present in relation to the management of paid staff. We go on to consider the impact such feelings and associated behaviours have on both the volunteer experience but also the work experience of paid staff particularly in relation to autonomy, creativity and operational efficiency.

When the lines become blurred between volunteers and paid staff

The 'Task Differentiation' theme detailed the way in which tasks were, in general, quite strongly delineated between what volunteers were and were not allowed to do. It also detailed considerable variations across departments and properties regarding the types of tasks that would be given to volunteers. Such differences in process and practice were the outcome of the discretion and judgements made by individual Heads of Team or volunteer managers (paid staff) and while we indicated some shared viewpoints, each manager often seemed to have their own rationale or justification as to why volunteers were or were not prohibited from certain tasks. As a consequence, there were certain pockets or small groups of volunteers perceived by managers as trustworthy, which meant that compared to most volunteers, a) they had more autonomy and control over what they did and b) they took on roles with more responsibility.

For example, a large on-going cataloguing project was run by a small number of volunteers (circa. 20) with one paid member of staff overseeing the project. The volunteers had been tasked with photographing and electronically cataloguing over 30,000 items at the property. These objects are a significant and valuable part of the properties wider collection and are therefore of immense economic, cultural and historical value to the National Trust, the property and wider national heritage and in this sense, the volunteers are given a huge responsibility in the handling and accurate recording of such artefacts. Of the volunteers working on the project their paid manager stated:

> The volunteers once they are trained up they can pretty much get on with it themselves …They are very careful…I think they have so much respect for what they are doing and the objects they are holding.
>
> (Vera, Manager)

Vera respects and values volunteers' capabilities and trusts them to carry out work tasks, relatively independently. In another example, despite the reluctance of many volunteers to have other volunteers manage them (and thus take on some duties usually reserved for paid staff), this had worked successfully for a small group of volunteers at one of the properties:

> For us [on our day] we have a husband and wife team who do our rota, we let them know when we're going on holiday, if we're not going to be in on time… we don't bother any of

the house staff, we let the two volunteers know if we're going to be in, if we're going to be late, what's happening, we organise it all between ourselves.

(Mo, Volunteer)

However, many managers made clear assessments relating to trust and risk with regard to the allocation of tasks to volunteers. For example, Stewart had a different perspective to Vera on who he would or would not trust in relation to the driving of the Ranger's Land Rover: 'I let trusted volunteers [who] have been with me for a long time to drive the Land Rover.' Trust had to be earnt in Stewart's eyes; he only let those who had volunteered in his team for a significant amount of time drive. New volunteers would not be permitted such a responsibility or associated task. Another paid staff member responsible for volunteers in the House also used 'trust' to differentiate the ways in which she managed volunteers.

We've got a book team that come in regularly and we tend to set that up and leave them to it … because they've been coming for so long we trust them.

(Hilary, Paid Staff)

In a similar vein, another manager, gave the example of a volunteer who has since gone onto a paid role with the Trust, who unusually was allowed to open and close the house, tasks usually reserved for paid staff:

…she became so au fait with the house that she would open and close the house for us. So we trusted her with the keys… but she knew our security inside out… it's really understanding the level of risk that you're prepared to actually hand over to someone and their understanding of that.

(Sarah, Manager)

Similarly, one of the managers spoke of the autonomy of the volunteers who looked after the bees on the estate as a special project, noting in particular the length of time experience these volunteers had:

…the volunteers that do it have been doing it for a long time and they're trained up on the bees so there's not a lot of management with them … the day to day management they do themselves with the overseeing of myself.

(Greg, Manager)

It is important to note however that these examples of shared roles tended to be minority views and exceptional cases. Similarly, while there were some occasions when volunteer and staff roles overlapped, even then, it would usually be with some supervision from paid staff, as one of the managers Louise went on to clarify:

We generally wouldn't leave them to do it on their own both for security and again we wouldn't want to be taking advantage of them… over the last few years we have been letting volunteers in to do those processes more and more actually, but there does always need to be us there as well.

(Louise, Manager)

Similarly, another manager commented:

> I've had an occasion when there are two or three volunteers on their own but because they know what they're doing and they're quite happy with that... [but] that's very few and far between that there's not a paid member of staff in the shop... I think it's around giving them support so they're not feeling like they're being left to run the shop and it's not that I don't trust them to run the shop, but I don't want them to feel like they're being relied upon to do that.

> (Kara, Manager).

Jack, a paid staff member, commented that even though they carried out the same tasks as volunteers, and even worked side by side with them on a daily basis: 'there is an element that we're the people that are in charge and take responsibility and there is a strong hierarchy that they [volunteers] know we're in charge'. As John, a volunteer commented, the general state of affairs seems to be that 'Volunteers should be kept on tap not on top, so there's only going to be so far you're going to be allowed to be in charge.'

Lack of recognition of volunteer desire for creativity and autonomy

As established in the Task Differentiation theme, the majority of volunteers did not actively voice opposition to the tasks they were assigned. However, whether these skills are being used effectively is unclear. While some may not wish to undertake activities with responsibility, there are certainly some who do. A significant minority of volunteers at the two properties felt that their ideas and experience are underutilised and sometimes disregarded by managers in the wake of criteria used to make decisions about what tasks volunteers can and cannot undertake. (See Communication theme for support and other examples).

Amy, for example spoke of the way she felt managers were inhibiting property development, visitor experience and volunteer experiences by thinking of volunteer and paid staff roles, skills and tasks very differently.

> [some managers] have very fixed ideas about what skills we should and shouldn't have, but you know there should be an opportunity for people to come along and say 'look we could actually make this better if we did that and that and that'... and I think there isn't an opportunity for that.

> (Amy, Volunteer)

In a volunteer focus group, Brian and Freddie discussed how they felt their ideas were perceived by paid staff and managers:

> I do feel that we make recommendations or we have things to say about something that is proposed or being done, but it is water off a duck's back, what we say is not taken on board.

> (Brian, Volunteer)

Somebody who's got major business experience, who's run a big company says to you … you know I don't think you should be managing… running this part of your business like this, if you tweaked it you might make more money and I think people who have that experience and perhaps put that forward feel that it's heard but not listened to.

(Freddie, Volunteer)

I think there's a lot of potential, there's a lot of untapped potential in the volunteers…. I mean they pay lip service to it and like some big initiative will come from somewhere…we'll do this skills audit, so they do the skills audit but it doesn't actually mean that anyone's going to come along and say I've looked at that… I wonder if anyone has been contacted as a result of something that they've put down there…

(John, Volunteer)

Olivia's approach to managing volunteers' creativity and desire for more autonomy was slightly different. She indicates the way in which staff were keen to share their knowledge and experience with volunteers, recognising that while volunteers could/should not undertake the tasks, they should be allowed to share in some of the 'privileges' that came with being a staff member:

I'm in the privileged position of managing the collection… and I can share some of my privileged role with the volunteers… I think it's really nice to let them in to aspects of our world, so with our porcelain collection, [we] have done little handling sessions with volunteers and that for them is mesmerising because there are objects that they love, and they see in cabinets, it's only really us that ever take them out to clean them so the idea of sitting them down and putting a pillow on their knee and letting them touch them was a hugely moving moment for them… share with the volunteers the specialness of this place, the specialness of our jobs.

(Olivia, Manager)

Indeed, where volunteers were allowed to take responsibility, be creative and work independently, staff and management were overwhelmed by their dedication and commitment.

We launched this project in a really short period of time and I think in a couple of months our research volunteers, there are about 40 of them, they did 2000 hours of research and they produced 100 research documents… there's no way we could have launched this project without them and that period of kind of getting together with those volunteers and them sharing their research and just being such a big part of what we're doing and being behind us and supporting us.

(Louise, Manager)

Volunteers too spoke of the immense satisfaction and feelings of belonging gained from being involved in these projects:

I feel quite proud of [the property] … you want to make it work so when they're trying these new initiatives really it's encouraging and embracing it… there were meetings to explain

what was going to happen… there were various meetings… I was kept informed… so you felt part of it really.

(May, Volunteer)

Both volunteers and some paid staff feel there is and should be a clear hierarchy between volunteers and paid staff which will impact on the roles, tasks and responsibilities they have. However, where there has been an empowering of volunteers to exercise their own autonomy and explore their own creativity, interests and expertise on a particular project this has resulted in positive outcomes.

Implications of task differentiation for paid staff

Looking at the analysis within the previous theme and combining it with the findings on fear, trust and a lack of recognition of volunteer desire for creativity and autonomy, there is impetus to reflect on some of the problems that this situation causes for staff in their operational roles. Having such a significant disparity in what volunteers are permitted to do within different teams at the same property is complex and one that requires further analysis. In particular, the extent to which volunteers' roles, responsibilities and duties are thought about in any strategic way is an interesting question.

Certainly the issue of what to give volunteers to do is something that takes up quite a lot of the time of paid staff, but for the most part happens in a very ad hoc, 'fire-fighting' way from day to day. For example, this was particularly evident in Hilary's interviews and photographs. In response to the question, 'What does a good day look like for you?' she responded:

> Erm… I don't know a good day… there's enough staff in so I can just oversee and help with extra conservation tasks rather than do the general route clean…and the house gets opened in time without dashing about last minute…but [this is] rare.

Hilary is also a manager who feels under a lot of pressure, does not seem to have sufficient time within the working day to complete tasks and often takes work home with her as she explains:

> …all my office stuff I don't get time to do which I should be doing… all the planning side of things… I don't … I'm always struggling to try and cope with that.

The issue is that because of the perception that volunteers cannot be trusted to, or will not want to, undertake some of the routine tasks, the managers themselves have to take on these tasks. From her Activity Involvement Records we can see that Hilary is spending a significant amount of time every day opening and closing the shutters of the house and further time collecting rubbish, hoovering and cleaning the visitor route whilst still holding managerial responsibility for rotas, planning and volunteer care. Repeating earlier comments from other managers, when asked whether volunteers could help out with any of these routine tasks, she replied:

> … not so much on the routine things… it's better for them to work with us on specific projects really… because they won't come in once a week to vacuum the floors where the visitors walk… they want something more exciting.

As discussed in the Communication theme earlier, part of this also relates to the increased flexibility that volunteers have over *when* they work at the property compared to paid staff. While managers and volunteers both talked of the implicit understanding that volunteers will work a minimum number of shifts on regular occasions to help with workflow, dealing with the unpredictability of volunteer provision was a major task for paid staff and organising volunteer rotas took up a large chunk of time on a daily and weekly basis. This has implications with regard to task differentiation, as the following quote indicates:

> Can you really rely on a volunteer though because at the end of the day they can just not come in tomorrow, how can you sort of… rely that they're going to always be there.

(Les, Paid Staff)

However, there are some instances where volunteers manage their own rotas as in the example above from Mo, which indicates that it could be possible to give this duty to volunteers and to trust them to organise themselves.

What can we learn?

There seems to be a variety of reasons why volunteers were not called upon to assist struggling members of staff with their duties which would have clearly been of great benefit both to the wider conservation of the property and its collection but also the staff members themselves. First this involves the reluctance to give volunteers repetitive, mundane tasks, from fear that they will not want to do these tasks and therefore not come back. However, such tasks are undertaken by volunteers in some departments within the properties without much complaint. Therefore, a question to ask is whether this perception is actually based on evidence? Second, this involves the reluctance to give tasks with more responsibility and autonomy to volunteers because of lack of trust, and/or some view that this is not appropriate for unpaid roles. However, there are examples where in particular circumstances, volunteers do take on these roles successfully and efficiently, while there is a significant minority which actively desires such roles yet currently does not get the opportunity. Managers could be missing out on significant operational benefit in these circumstances.

Emotional Labour

In this fifth and final thematic analysis we argue that the management of volunteers is emotionally complex and demanding. In the absence of the conventional employment contract, and the control and compliance tools associated with this, extant literature around volunteer motivation has indicated that volunteers hold a different set of values with regard to the way in which they experience their 'work'. Here we add to that observation by arguing that volunteers demonstrate a strong **affective commitment** to the space and place of the properties at which they have chosen to donate their time. This means that volunteers invest highly in the spirit and story of properties, indicative of 'values and behaviours' advocated by the National Trust. However, managing volunteers with such strong affective commitment without the 'management tool kit' of the conventional employment relationship is challenging and complex. For these reasons we recommend an acknowledgement of the significance of emotional labour as a key leadership skill in the effective management of volunteers.

Affective Commitment to Space and Place

Almost all of the volunteers, along with some of the managers, who participated in this project, clearly articulated their commitment to the custodianship of the social and cultural heritage of the properties at which they volunteered and worked. They took pride in the detail, in the lived experience and in the creation of experiential value for both themselves as volunteers but also for visitors too. In much of our data we can map the National Trust's 'Values and Behaviours' (Think Long Term, Love Places, Inspire People and Share our Common Purpose) onto volunteer accounts of their experiences and motivations. In particular, the values and behaviours most prominent in the volunteer narratives we were able to collate were 'Love Places' and 'Inspire People' as can be seen and heard in the following accounts from Jane, Cathy, David, Jean and Amy.

When asked to draw what it felt like to be a volunteer at the property, Jane drew herself smiling proudly dressed in Victorian costume. In explanation of her image she gives more detail of how it feels to volunteer:

So I've just done a really quick scribble, which I didn't finish, of me in Victorian costume at the Victorian … Christmas festival … because *I think it helps me sort of… step into the sense of the history of the place and to kind of… communicate that to other people* and I've also done myself you know… smiling because I like that it makes me feel happy when I come here volunteering and the sense of… *the spirit of the place and the history and the fact that erm… I love meeting the other volunteers and all the visitors and putting a smile on their faces and trying to give them a bit of an experience to treasure.*

(Jane, Volunteer *emphasis added*)

To quote the Trusts' Values and Behaviours, Jane is articulating her joy and commitment in 'valuing special places and the role they have in people's lives' – both visitors and her own, as a volunteer. We can also see that through that commitment she is hoping to 'inspire people to love special places' too. Dressing up in Victorian costume is a way of bringing the past to life, to 'step into the sense of history' in order to 'keep the spirit of the place' alive.

Another volunteer spoke of the '*story*' and her '*love'* of helping visitors to enjoy the place:

> I look at [property]… the story of [property] which is the story of the people who lived there and worked there and I love helping visitors to come and enjoy [property].

(Cathy, Volunteer)

That love of the place is exuded by David's passionate account of his experience of embodying the character of a 'Butler' in the property where he volunteers, including buying his own props in order to '*get things across'* to visitors, particularly the children:

> …when I was the butler I did the whole hit, I bought my own waistcoat, I bought my own pocket watch… right and it was a working pocket watch and it still is… 1905 and I stand there and they [visitors] come in and I have a whole pantry full of them and I got told off the first week because I blocked the outside corridor because they all wanted to come in and when the little children came in I'd kneel down and talk to them across the table and I remember saying to them… it was the 18th of December and I said 'and what are you doing for Christmas, you're going to have a nice time aren't you, but we're not no, no the master has invited sixteen guests and I'm the footman that's going to have to look after them' and I said 'but he has given me a ticket for Boxing day, which we're allowed to have our own day on Boxing day', and they're all like 'yeah'… and I said 'I'm going to a football match'… 1910 this is… 'I'm going to a football match… oh yes I said it's a new team that's been formed this year they're called Liverpool' and all these little kids were going 'Liverpool, Liverpool'… and it's all those little things that *get things across to them* you know…

(David, Volunteer, *emphasis added*)

Similarly, Jean captured his love of the garden space and satisfaction in being able to share that with visitors in his drawing:

I just love the gardens… I chose the cedars of Lebanon because it does fascinate me and over the years you do research into the trees and it's lovely when you're taking people round, you can give them little stories … You've got two people standing at the edge of the terrace there… and looking because that's always the nice thing to sort of meet them on the terrace when you're doing a garden tour.

(Jean, Volunteer)

Volunteers spoke passionately about their love for the house and the gardens in the settings they volunteered, to explain and justify the reasons why they continued to volunteer.

> Well that's the whole reason we're doing it. Isn't it? I mean we were given this property because [they] had this art collection and wanted it to be preserved and if we're going to show people around, they want to look but they also want to listen and they also want to understand what it's all about.

> (Amy, Volunteer)

These accounts are imbued not with a commitment, pride or love of the National Trust, per se but to the stories, people, objects, spaces and places of the individual properties at which these people volunteered their time. We think about this as an ***'affective commitment'*** (Meyer & Allen, 1991)**,** one that is both emotionally and aesthetically embodied. These volunteer accounts of their volunteer experiences evidence a deeply held commitment to maintaining an authentic representation of the past in the here and now. This is not about presenting a positive corporate image or behaving in a way that will be acknowledged and rewarded by management but is about upholding the spirit and story of the space and place. This, it seems is the 'true calling' of a large number of National Trust volunteers.

A number of managers involved in the project, recognised certain characteristics or elements of the affective commitment held by their volunteers, as Hilary attests:

> They've [volunteers] always got a strong love of the property itself… or some link with the people … from the property you know… the families…
> (Hilary, Manager)

This sense of an intimate connection to the spaces and places that are the properties was not the reserve of volunteers but was certainly more readily articulated and more frequently recited by volunteers as opposed to paid staff and managers. A small number of managers did, however, demonstrate a similar kind of affective commitment to the place and space of the properties where they worked.

> I'm so immersed in it… I think you have to have a certain passion, a certain engagement with where you are and what you're doing and actually I can go and sit by the swimming pool like they [the original family] would have done you know and you kind of get a sense of the place.

> (Louise, Manager)

> We're planting trees that will be there for three hundred years… there isn't another garden like [this one], … I always wanted to work here.

> (Alison, Manager)

The love of the 'space', having a strong desire and passion to engage in activities such as; *'the lost art of horticulture'*; working out in the fields and paths of the estate; planting out the parterre and the terraces; pruning the ancient apple trees; moving amongst the artefacts in the house; opening up the shutters; uncovering the furniture; reading through letters, receipts, finding a hidden diary entry; - these were just a few of the myriad of images and experiences evoked by many of the managers in their interviews and in their photographs.

Overall, volunteers who participated in this research project passionately articulated their affective commitment to the properties at which they volunteered. Paid staff, in comparison, tended to focus their descriptions of their experiences around processes and tasks they undertook, which often included the management of volunteers. By way of contrast, some managers and Heads of Team demonstrated strong affective commitment but others did not, again focus is on the task-based elements of their role.

The Complexities of Managing an Affectively Committed Workforce of Volunteers

Volunteers work within a space that is largely free of the constraints and controls of a conventional employment contract. This perceived 'freedom' coupled with their strong 'affective commitment' seems to have facilitated the emergence of, what we term an **'unregulated emotional landscape'**. Essentially, it is this combination of autonomy and affect that combine to create a complex, sometimes difficult set of relationships to manage.

Our concept of a **landscape** describes the context in which the manager and volunteer or group of volunteers interacts and completes tasks and processes necessary to achieve the operational objectives of the property and of the National Trust more broadly. The absence of the ordinary constraints of the conventional employment relationship, coupled with the affective commitment demonstrated by volunteers, creates a space imbued with emotion. This emotional landscape seems to be **unregulated** by the usual social constraints (i.e. feeling and display rules and norms) that exist within contractual employment relationships (e.g. deference, compliance versus authority and control). This is not to imply that the National Trust does not attempt to regulate the emotional landscape by way of written policy, the formalisation of processes for managing and regulating volunteer behaviours and the avocation of desirable values and behaviours, however, in practice volunteers are unaware of the existence of much of this regulatory framework, managers are reluctant to utilise it and finally, and perhaps most importantly, none of these things have the same 'bite', impact or consequence as they do in a conventional employment relationship because ultimately volunteers are not financially dependent on the National Trust.

Testament to the existence of such an 'unregulated emotional landscape' is the recollections from all of the managers interviewed at both properties, of interchanges with volunteers characterised as somewhat difficult, challenging or extreme. What is also important to note here is the resonance of these emotional exchanges beyond the immediate interaction, i.e. their lasting effect and impact on the individual and their future interactions. For illustrative purposes we offer three accounts of

incidents in which managers have been berated, often publicly, by volunteers. These encounters are imbued with emotion in relation to the managers re-telling of the incident, demonstrating the lasting effects of such encounters but also in the way the volunteers are said to have delivered their critique – often angry and outraged – and at times personal in nature.

> … [I]got completely blasted in the face by a volunteer on property who was the most rude person I've ever met and was just horrible, absolutely horrible … and I [was]almost gobsmacked, didn't know where to go, what was the point of it in the first place. I've had a couple of incidents like that… after that incident initially it was like I can't do this… I can't do this job. I can't manage volunteers …

> (Stella, Manager)

> I've had a volunteer … in the shop in front of visitors … shouting at me … saying … I'm the rudest person that they've ever met.

> (Joan, Manager)

> It can be difficult when they think they know best… 'I've been here twenty-five years, this is the way it should be…I know it much better than you…and the fact that you've just put that… that is just absolutely ridiculous and I'm going to tell everyone it's ridiculous!

> (Olivia, Manager)

Many of the strong views held by volunteers on particular issues, which had on occasion manifest in a so-called public 'outburst' towards management, were often shared by paid staff as is evidenced by the accounts that follow. However, paid staffs felt less able to speak their minds or share their concerns with their line managers in the same way as volunteers were able.

> I agree with the volunteers. The volunteer complaints are being dismissed as 'bad behaviour' by management. As paid staff we cannot express our opinion or feelings, we just have to 'toe the line.

> (Sally, Paid Staff)

> I'm finding it really quite tough … because I know the volunteers aren't happy... I can understand their concerns over it … but I can't influence that… we've got to work with what we've got ... and I am finding that really quite hard.

> (Hilary, Manager)

The absence of the employment contract in the volunteer-management relationship effectively levels the playing field by re-constructing the relationship as a space free of many of the social and feeling rules that shape our emotional landscapes within conventional employment contexts. In the case of volunteers, there is much less need to 'bite your tongue' or 'toe the line'. This coupled with their strong affective commitment to the property, its spaces, stories and spirit, creates an 'unregulated emotional landscape' in which volunteer behaviours are often cast as 'challenging', or at best 'different' to the behaviour of paid staff. But is there another way of seeing this situation? To what extent could volunteer 'outbursts', emotional responses and resistant behaviours be seen as

valuable to the National Trust and the property contexts? As we have evidenced, in some cases paid staff are envious of volunteers' freedom to self-expression. Paid staff have been shown to sometimes share the same concerns as volunteers but feel unable to speak out to senior management. Our observations support the view that in some situations and circumstances, although difficult and uncomfortable, volunteers' unregulated behaviour may be a valuable input that is being overlooked or disregarded by management. However, there is no doubt that regardless of whether the opinions or behaviours of volunteers are perceived to be right or wrong, good or bad, the lived experience of managing them can be difficult, uncomfortable and trying.

Those who manage volunteers are engaged in a perpetual paradox in that on the one hand, they need volunteers, usually in high number, to keep the property open, to provide a service or complete a task. Indeed, the crucial contribution of volunteers was mentioned by all managers. On the other hand, the paradox of this situation is that managers often have or feel that they have very little control over the way that this volunteer contribution is executed; in many ways they appear paralysed by the potential perceived power of the volunteers. This is often connected to anxieties and fears about the potential consequences of how upsetting one volunteer, or a small-group, can have a much more widespread impact. For example, the possibility that volunteers could walk out en masse and stop the property opening or that disgruntled volunteers would go to the press and make negative comments about the properties were mentioned by almost all managers.

What we observe in the way managers reflect on and narrate volunteer behaviour and their subsequent 'management' is once again imbued with emotion. There was a real sense from some managers and paid staff of feeling intimidated by the volunteers as a collective; "*you're faced with what seems like, and I know it's overactive in our heads really, but it seems like an army of people*" (Charles) or *'when they're en masse they feel the power together"* (Alex). For many of the managers, managing the volunteers had become '*a daunting and intimidating thing*' (Chris) or at the very least, *'the most challenging part of my job'* (Hilary). The emotional tone of the day-to-day reality of managing volunteers, and in certain situations, of being a volunteer, is therefore arguably difficult and challenging. Essentially, the paradox of relying on a volunteer workforce that you are unable to control (in the conventional sense of the term) due to fear of their collective power and their 'emotional' behaviour can lead to managerial paralysis, with volunteers being often cast as problematic and unmanageable.

Effective Management

Within conventional management theory and much of management practice, emotions have been pushed beyond the boundaries of organizations in the belief that 'efficiency should not be sullied by the irrationality of personal feelings'[6]. Emotions are perceived to be 'out of place' and therefore have been systematically marginalized within the context of organizations (and, arguably, society more broadly). In this sense, within conventional management theory, emotions are seen as marginal or disruptive to the functioning of the modern organization. And yet, in the context of volunteer driven organisations what if emotions are actually the key to understanding management and organisation?

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[6] (Hancock and Tyler, 2001: 130).

By re-analysing the data through an 'emotions' lens, we come to see and hear a different kind of story. Without hesitation we can say that some volunteer managers shared, appreciated and valued the affective commitment demonstrated by the volunteers. These were the managers who would work late at night to prepare signage, put up Christmas trees in August for the 'Volunteer Christmas Briefing', bake flapjack and perhaps most extraordinarily spend the weekend on site dressed as a 1940s bride:

> It was a couple of weekends ago, it was my Sunday off, we had a 1940s wedding weekend and one of the volunteers desperately wanted to make a 1940s wedding dress from parachute silk and the pattern we got would only fit me so I kind of spent my Sunday off dressed as a 1940s bride and the only reason I did it… was for this particular volunteer who would have been really upset and actually she was so happy, she was in tears…

> (Louise, Manager)

Some managers had even gone so far as attempting to harness the potential of this type of commitment and interest, commenting that the stories about the property resided in the volunteers and these stories had been drawn upon to inform recent 'property re-presentations'. For example, volunteers knitted squares into blankets in the 'Make do and mend' room, collected wartime Christmas memories into memory books which were then displayed to visitors and engaged heavily in researching the archives for interesting facts and ideas. One of the managers Vera, spoke of the way that her volunteers had taken real enjoyment in finding out all the gossip and stories about the House and the family, revelling in what was described as *"the soap opera"*. Louise, another manager commented:

> They're part of it, they feel like it's theirs and they want to be here to do it. Those people [volunteers] would frequently comment … 'I feel like I live here'.

From the volunteer's perspective an effective manager seemed to be one that demonstrated a knowledge and commitment to the space and place of the property; someone who shared their affective commitment. In comparison, managers who seemed to struggle most, were those who did not visibly share, embody or acknowledge the values and behaviours that volunteers perceived to be important i.e. sharing their affective commitment to an 'authentic' re-presentation of the property, maintaining heritage and legacies. The recent commissioned research (2015) on the 'cause' of the National Trust also supports our findings in this respect.

It was evident, particularly from the participant-produced photography exercise that some managers did not appreciate the importance of the 'space and place'. In fact, some of the managers did not include representations of the properties at all, or of volunteers. Interestingly, the interviews with these managers revealed a pertinent casting of volunteer behaviours and motivations as bad or difficult. Speaking about a particularly problematic experience of implementing a change at the property, Charles recounts the arguments presented by volunteers who were against the changes:

> …how [they] think that the early family [of the property] would've wanted things to stay as they are, blah blah blah. You know we can all evoke ghosts, ghosts of the past to our cause…they've lost the sort of backward step of looking at it as 'I've come here to volunteer

and support whatever the Trust is doing'… they have an unhealthy sense of ownership about what we're doing.

<div align="right">(Charles, Manager)</div>

For this manager then, the 'story', the 'place' and the 'spirit' to which volunteers refer and often embody, are constructed as 'ghosts of the past', a hindrance, even as a form of resistance to change. The affective commitment being demonstrated by the volunteers was cast as 'an unhealthy sense of ownership' by Charles. By way of contrast, a few volunteers reflected on a previous manager who they felt shared their affective commitment in that:

> He had the basic love of … he loved [the property] … twenty years of research and he was so knowledgeable… But he was strict; he ran a tight ship… He was strict with standards… he was there all the time.

<div align="right">(Cathy, Volunteer)</div>

This manager's, love, knowledge and exacting standards indicated his affective commitment to the space and place of the property, coupled with his continued presence both physically (living on site) but also in tenure (twenty years). These factors made him a 'good manager' and he had earned the respect of the volunteers. Similarly, Sarah, a General Manager was very clear about what happened to her properties' volunteer satisfaction if managers were not deemed to be visible enough 'to care':

> 2013 it was a really tough year for me… I would say volunteering here had hit rock bottom… because I wasn't actually spending time here, of course they didn't know what I was doing elsewhere, but…they didn't want to hear any of that, it was about actually you're not spending time here and therefore you don't care about [the House] and you don't care about us.

<div align="right">(Sarah, Manager)</div>

What can we learn?

Without the explicit and implicit constraints of the conventional employment contract, we argue that there is a re-construction of the employment relationship as a space freer of the social and feeling rules that otherwise might shape emotional landscapes within traditional employment contexts. This has led to managers working in what we term an 'unregulated emotional landscape'.

Volunteers demonstrate a strong affective commitment to the space and place of the properties at which they volunteer. This is often referred to as '*love*' or '*the story*' or '*the experience*'. Volunteers' identity is tied up with these qualitative elements of the properties and they are strongly committed not only to preserving material objects and National Trust revenues but to the properties 'affective' qualities and resources; the stories, the legacy, the love and the drama. They are passionate about communicating and sharing this commitment with other volunteers, visitors, outside agencies and paid staff.

The absence of a conventional employment relationship and the volunteers' affective commitment exist in what can sometimes be an uneasy symbiosis which makes managing volunteers a highly complex, often difficult and sometimes uncomfortable task. Yet, it is one that is undertaken by the

majority of paid National Trust staff. A key area of difference between managing paid staff and volunteers, then, involves the extent to which managers are exposed to the emotions of those whom they are managing and consequently, their ability to manage these emotional experiences.

Recommendations for National Trust Policy & Practice

1. **Recognise emotional labour as a key leadership and management skill**

   Having an ability to remain calm, make volunteers feel valued and listened to, consider their feelings and make them feel a key part of the team is often hard, relentless emotional work but it is one that pays dividends. Volunteers are a highly committed, vocal and often fearless voice in the National Trust but they are also an incredibly valuable resource for these very reasons. Management of volunteers is emotionally complex and needs to be acknowledged as such. The importance, skill and ability to perform emotional labour is a key leadership skill in the management of volunteers. The ability to perform emotional labour in a sustained and authentic way is likely to be the determining factor between those that succeed in harnessing the commitment, resilience, energy and support of volunteers and those that antagonise them or are seen as less effective. Those who manage volunteers should be given specific support and training to help develop their abilities to perform emotional labour in a management context.

2. **Assess the impact of long term secondments**

   Volunteers tend to be of retirement age, with many volunteering at the same property for a considerable number of years whilst managers and paid staff are considerably younger and are often at a property for a much shorter period of time. Whilst this is not necessarily problematic, the process of long term secondments can exacerbate these differences. Volunteers quickly 'fall in love' (see Cause and Effect, 2015) or in our terms develop an 'affective commitment' to the stories, places, spaces and artefacts of a property. As a consequence of the time spent volunteering and their love for the place, they often go on to develop a substantive knowledge of the property, its legacies and its history. However many paid staff and managers, as a consequence of regular secondments to different sites and properties, can struggle to maintain a comparable knowledge base and articulate their affective commitment. Given that we have indicated how important demonstration of this affective commitment is for positive volunteer-manager relationships, this can lead to tensions between volunteers and managers particularly in times of change. One volunteer neatly commented: 'Management will come and go but volunteers will still be here'

3. **Encourage local empowerment**

   The 'love' of the property (affective commitment) demonstrated by volunteers, managers and paid staff is something the National Trust should celebrate and invest in. The 'Cause and Effect' (2015) project, showed that volunteers have a much stronger affiliation and commitment to the local properties than to the National Trust as a wider organisation. However rather than this being something that requires amendment we call for an appreciation of the benefits and value of this phenomena. We recommend that the Trust retains the property at the centre of the National Trusts' values, beliefs and mission. Local decision making and the empowerment of interested and committed parties should not be feared. Our recommendation here differs slightly to that made in the 'Cause and Effect' research in that we do not see that there is anything problematic with volunteers feeling a greater sense of belonging or commitment to a property than to the wider Trust. Our interpretation of the 'One Team' idea is a resilient property team which includes both paid staff and volunteers. We also call for an appreciation of the ways in which paid staff and volunteers interpret the wider National Trust values and behaviours, initiatives and policies in the context of their own properties' setting. Whilst the 'Cause and Effect' research identifies '5 key principles of focus to create a stronger shared cause' (2015:6) we argue that our evidence base suggests that moving away from a more property based shared cause may actually be counterproductive to volunteer and paid staff experiences of the National Trust.

4. **Be responsive to volunteer voices**

Volunteers often felt a sense of marginalisation with respect to decision making, property developments, ideas, skills utilisation and creative input. Indeed, in part, some managers expressed opinions regarding the role of volunteers that would support such treatment. The National Trust and property management need to work to explore the assumptions and ideas that shape and underpin the way volunteers are treated, thought about and managed. Volunteers need to be given a collective voice at both a property and national level. They need to feel valued, heard and see themselves as key players in the future of their properties.

5. **Reflect on the appropriateness, utility and impact of the Volunteer Recommendation being a KPI for property managers**

In the main volunteers and paid staff undertook different tasks within properties. Indeed, there was a considerable degree of variation between departments within the same property. Management's discretion and 'common-sense' judgements seemed to provide the basis for many of the differences in the ways tasks and responsibilities were allocated. These differences raise a significant issue worthy of reflection and further enquiry, namely; to what extent is the Volunteer Recommendation score being used as a KPI at properties appropriate or useful in this context? To what extent are managers and paid staff putting pressure upon themselves, having a negative impact on operational efficiency and limiting volunteer agency and autonomy in a bid to create what they perceive as positive volunteer experiences in order to improve the Volunteer Recommendation Key Performance Indicator?

Recommendations for Property Practice

1. **Recognise the on-going requirement for change as 'An evolutionary re-telling of your property's story'**
   Change is an inevitable reality for National Trust properties. Maintaining visitor numbers requires different and innovative ways to re-present the properties. However, such changes in re-presentation, need to be framed for both volunteers and paid staff as part of the property's evolution. Rather than 'change' which implies difference, grief and loss managers might consider using a language of 're-presentation' or 're-telling' from a different perspective. This is to emphasise the fact that previous versions of the 'story' are not no-longer valid and neither were they 'truths' or more 'authentic' but instead these are opportunities for telling different sides to the multi-faceted legacy of your property.

2. **'Speak about your love of the property'**
   Both volunteers and paid staff need to openly articulate their love and knowledge of the properties at which they work. Volunteer managers who were better and more willing to articulate their passion for the story of place were perceived by volunteers to be more effective managers. At the same time, volunteers who felt the story or experience of their property was being harmed by changes implemented by management were often accused of behaving inappropriately and disrespectfully. Yet their actions stemmed from a deeply felt connection and protection for something they care about. A more prominent articulation and celebration of everyone's love or connection to the property could help create a shared frame of reference in challenging circumstances.

3. **'Identify assumptions and justifications for operational differences in volunteer tasks and responsibilities'**
   Which tasks are undertaken by staff or volunteers are decided on the basis of the discretion of line managers and Heads of Team. We recommend all properties undertake an **Operations Audit** to map where these differentiations exist and what are the assumptions that underpin their existence. Where possible it would be useful for properties to challenge some of the assumptions held by managers and for them to experiment with different ways of engaging with volunteers.

4. **'Offer support and opportunities for volunteer managers to share how they are feeling'**
   Managing volunteers can be emotionally complex and demanding. It is important that managers and paid staff feel supported in their attempts to do so. Not only does this mean them having access to volunteer management resources such as policies but also to have the emotional support of their line managers and peers. Sharing ideas, challenges and successes are an important part of maintaining volunteer managers' well-being.

5. **Do not fear volunteers, harness their passion, persistence and power'**
   The local empowerment of volunteers is imperative in the improvement of volunteer-staff/management relations. Volunteers demonstrate an immensely powerful commitment to the properties at which they work and their voices, ideas, creativity and autonomy should not be stifled or bounded without justification. Listening to volunteer voices, getting them involved and using their knowledge base and skill sets to enhance the delivery of the visitor experience is vital for a successful property. This needs to be developed through 1) emotional labour support and training which will allow managers to be more responsive to volunteers, and 2) the adoption of more coherent and nuanced communication approach. This will help empower both managers and volunteers, improving operational effectiveness, management well-being and the volunteer experience.

Appendix 1: References

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