

Finding original ways to attract and engage with potential volunteers is never easy.

A charity providing a holidays for children and young people living with cancer and other life limiting conditions, identified a need for additional help to maintain the garden areas of its two holiday cottages.

Trellis supported the charity by delivering a gardening workshop entitled 'Gardening Know-How for Year Round Interest Planters', free to those who could attend, its primary aim being to engage with potential garden maintenance volunteers as well as give them the skills and confidence to volunteer their help in the garden maintenance required.



Theory and demo session

The workshop was planned for a day and time that would mimic the time slot that potential new volunteers would be asked to attend in the future. This went some way to ensure that a natural selection/elimination process determined availability. An open invitation was extended via social media incl. Facebook, Twitter, local advertising and word of mouth.

The workshop programme involved learning new skills from a short theory lesson, followed by a very hands on, practical session. The theory covered: choice of composts, choosing plants for year round interest, design, how to ring seasonal changes and care of the plants.

A generous selection of shrubs, grasses, bulbs, etc was made available for the attendees to use their new knowledge to select plants .



Plant Selection



Team work

Working in 2s and 3s, the group completed the monumental task of rejuvenating the many tired planters around the property, and making almost as much conversation as they did inroads on the workload.

Several existing volunteers joined in the session and shared their personal experiences of volunteering with the charity and provided detailed information on the vital work done to ensure the continuing work of the charity.



New Contacts

The session concluded with a tour of the wider property, the cottages' accommodation, and of course, tea and cake!

The end result? The holiday home looked fabulously fresh extending an even brighter welcome to its young visitors and families, with the attendees all commenting on their joint sense of pride and achievement, along with taking home their new learned skills and knowledge.



Fresh views

The workshop met its main aim of successfully engaging with new volunteers culminating in two-thirds of the attendees signing up on the day to return for volunteer induction.