

# How local businesses can help you

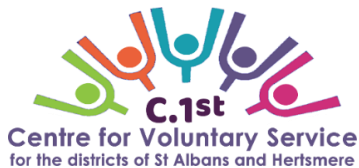
Harnessing support from the private sector  
to benefit your community organisation

# Who is Communities 1<sup>st</sup>?



Communities 1<sup>st</sup>:

- Is the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) for St Albans & District and Hertsmere Borough
- Is the Local Volunteer Centre for St Albans & District, Hertsmere, Broxbourne and East Herts
- Supports local communities via our Wellbeing Services, delivered from hubs across Hertfordshire
- Delivers training and skill-share events to individuals and community groups



# Our Better Business programme



- Actively seeks to create and develop links between business and the local voluntary sector
- Enables businesses to embed themselves in their local communities by creating volunteering activities and signposting to engagement opportunities in the community
- Supports local community groups and charities by accessing expertise, facilities and volunteering support from local business



# Examples of Better Business engagement





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- Series of GDPR workshops across six months to 14 voluntary sector groups, delivered by local training consultancy
- Loan of vacant space by local automotive business for groups' seasonal activities



# What do businesses want from engaging with the voluntary sector?



Job satisfaction for their employees	Team building	Staff retention
Attract new talent in a competitive recruitment market	Meet their ESG / CSR targets	Showcase their sustainability credentials
Attract new investors	Grow their client base	To know their support has made a genuine impact in the community





# What can community groups gain from local businesses?



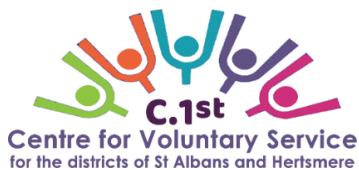
- Volunteers
- Skills and expertise
- Coaching opportunities
- Advice on strategy, planning and upscaling the delivery of your services
- Mentoring at the CEO level
- Access to Trustees
- Loan of space or facilities



# How it can go wrong...



- The business becomes your client
- A one-off activity that's not really needed
- Negatively impacts your capacity as an organisation
- Puts strain on existing volunteers and staff
- Causes anxiety or distress to your service users



# How it can go right



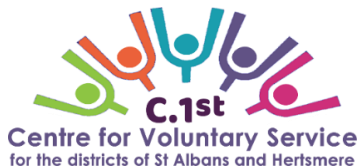
- Equitable relationship between you and the business, built over time
- Time taken to understand each other's needs and priorities
- Supply of large volunteering groups for occasional need
- Skill share and coaching leading to increased reach and capacity for your group
- Temporary use of empty facilities, or equipment loan
- Variety of support accessed across a long period of time



# Planning is everything



- What support do you need – right now, in six months, in a year's time?
- Identify the challenges in your organisation
- Are you lacking skills and knowledge? Access to workspace or storage space?  
A source of occasional volunteers for events, etc.?
- Research local businesses around you. What do they do? How many staff?  
Do they have departments (HR, IT, Sales & Marketing)?
- Use social media. Consider following businesses you might like to work with.





# Build relationships for the long-term



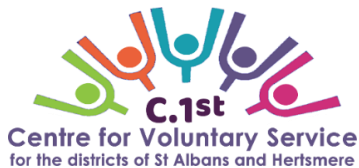
- Avoid one-off, transactional volunteering events
- Use the first event as an 'ice-breaker'
- Stay connected with your contact
- Thank them for their volunteering support
- Include them in your newsletter / comms mailing lists
- Let them know what you're doing and don't be afraid to ask for their support



# See it from the business's point of view



- Larger companies may have a CSR/ESG strategy and objectives, set at board level. Your contact may be limited in what they can engage with
- SMEs and sole traders have to be responsive to business needs and may need to postpone an activity at short notice
- Businesses operating nationally will often pay for remote staff to travel to a volunteering event and will reasonably expect the activity to take place
- Businesses want to see and understand the impact they have made



# How Communities 1st can help



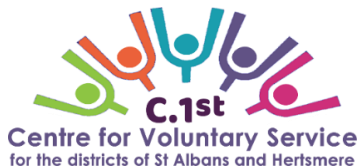
- We represent our membership locally and advocate for the Voluntary Sector across Hertfordshire and beyond.
- Established relationships with large and small businesses across Herts
- Help to broker support and build partnerships between local business and voluntary sector groups
- With the knowledge and understanding of your group's needs, we can actively seek support from local businesses on your behalf



# What to do now to be Better Business ready?



- Talk to your colleagues, trustees, volunteers and service users. Identify the challenges, obstacles and support needs of your organisation
- Brainstorm – What support do we need?
- Identify the businesses around you that might be able to help
- Write down a ‘Wishlist’
- Share the information with your contacts at Communities 1<sup>st</sup> and ask us to help.  
We can approach businesses on your behalf to source the support.





# Questions and Discussion