

14 April 2021

**PAPER CLASSIFICATION: OPEN**

**Board of Trustees**

**IET VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

(Paper by Dawn Ohlson and Katherine Bunting. If you have any questions on this paper before the meeting, please contact Katherine Bunting on 01438 767590 or by email [kbunting@theiet.org](mailto:kbunting@theiet.org))

**1. Issue**

To report on the work that has been completed on the development of the Volunteer Engagement Strategy for the IET and approve the overall strategy to allow implementation across all IET volunteer communities.

**2. Timing**

Board of Trustees meeting, 6 May 2021.

**3. For Recommendation**

The Board of Trustees is invited to approve the Volunteer Engagement Strategy.

**4. Background**

- 4.1. Volunteering is central to the IET and to delivering and achieving our strategic aims. With over 40 different volunteering roles, and multiple types of engagement across the IET, it is important each volunteer remains engaged with the IET's purpose. The Volunteer Support Working Party, on behalf of the Volunteer Engagement Board, has been working on drafting a Volunteer Engagement Strategy for the IET. The strategy aims to ensure that the IET continues to have the volunteers with the relevant breadth and depth of expertise
- 4.2. In producing the strategy, all Volunteers had been consulted via a Volunteer Survey which was sent out in August. Feedback to aid development was also sought through:
  - 4.2.1. The majority of Committees and Panels which report into all the IET Governance Boards were provided with a paper and given the opportunity to respond directly. Alongside, notifications were placed in Volunteer News to gain wider views of the volunteer community.
  - 4.2.2. All IET staff were informed via a Town Hall presentation and encouraged to provide their thoughts, whether they directly work with volunteers or not.
- 4.3. Following the October Volunteer Engagement Board further refinement had been incorporated to develop the final of the strategy. This final draft was approved at the Volunteer Engagement Board meeting in March 2021.

- 4.4. IETs Council were provided with an update presentation on the Strategy at their January meeting and fed back comments through to the Volunteer Support Unit.

## **5. Key Points**

- 5.1. The Volunteer Engagement Strategy can be found in Appendix A.
- 5.2. The Volunteer Engagement Strategy provides the framework for specific actions and commitments to be developed for the IET to achieve the ambitions for volunteer engagement. The framework also helps IET volunteers to understand: their place within the IET's vision; how their volunteer role feeds into the IET's goals; and how the importance of volunteers is understood by the wider IET. At the very heart of the framework is a recommitment to 'Volunteering with the IET means Global One Team Working'.
- 5.3. Following approval advice will be taken from the Communications team about how to communicate with volunteers which will include making it more visual. This will be part of the development process once approved by the Board.
- 5.4. Following approval, work on further development will begin with volunteer managers across the IET which will include mapping the 'what success looks like' for each section as well as how and when it is communicated to volunteers.

## **6. Risk**

Continuing to operate with volunteering areas not joined together in a single strategy could mean that the IET is not prepared for the changes in volunteering provision and potentially risk losing valuable volunteers and their potential.

## **7. Resources**

The Volunteer Support Unit will continue to support the Volunteer Support Working Party in development and communication of the strategy.

## Volunteer Engagement Strategy

### Purpose

Volunteering is central to the life of the IET and to achieving our aims now and in the future. We continue to strive to have a diverse and inclusive volunteering base; to ensure that volunteers have the competencies and resources to deliver our strategic aims. With over 40 different volunteering roles<sup>1</sup> and types of engagement across the IET it is important each volunteer remains engaged with the IET's purpose. By developing a Volunteering Engagement Strategy, we can continue to deliver the individual achievements of each of these roles whilst ensuring the relevant breadth and depth of expertise. Furthermore, by embedding the IET's 2030 strategy, its underpinning strategic themes and societal challenges within this Volunteer Engagement Strategy we can create a resource of volunteers who meet the needs of the engineering and technology community of the future.

The Volunteer Engagement Strategy is focused on supporting the IET's 2030 strategy, acknowledging the impact volunteers have for the IET and those they work with, as well as ensuring we have the right breadth and depth of volunteers to serve society's best interests as guided by the IET's vision and mission in the future.

Whilst it is acknowledged that volunteering can benefit the individual, as well as providing opportunities for learning and development, this Volunteer Engagement Strategy is focused on valuing volunteer engagement rather than providing individual volunteer strategies.<sup>2</sup>

Research around the expectation of our volunteers, including the outputs from our annual volunteer survey, has influenced this strategic approach. We have also held helpful discussions with other volunteer organisations and charities for best practice, including other Professional Engineering Institutions, the National Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Association of Volunteer Managers.

### Framework

1. IET will provide a global Volunteering Home for Life
2. IET will provide the right opportunities for new volunteers and volunteer-facing staff, to help grow our reach in depth and breadth
3. IET will raise the profile of our volunteers and volunteer facing staff to their peers and other stakeholders
4. IET will be a recognised leader in volunteering management
5. IET will provide the tools for volunteers to understand and be committed to the IET's strategies and societal challenges

1. providing a global Volunteering Home for Life

- a. Providing opportunities for learning and development in all roles and locations
- b. Overcoming perceived or actual hurdles to volunteering

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theiet.org/involved/volunteering-for-the-iet/volunteer-roles/>

<sup>2</sup> These will naturally be developed through this work from the different areas of the business.

- c. Creating a clear and transparent pathway for governance roles and other progression should it be desired. To include examples from volunteers already within governance of their personal journeys, regularly updated
  - d. Clear and transparent succession planning for each role and across roles
  - e. Recognising and celebrating the success of global volunteer-facing staff and volunteers
  - f. Providing a Volunteer community/network/family
2. providing the right opportunities for new volunteers and volunteer-facing staff, to help grow our reach in depth and breadth
- a. Promoting the benefits of volunteering to employers
  - b. Seeking out and implementing better ways of working; making it easy to volunteer; making opportunities more widely known, application processes simplified, creating new opportunities where relevant
  - c. Making it easier to acknowledge the value of staff
  - d. New volunteers immediately linked to a volunteer-facing staff member
  - e. Making it easier for staff and volunteers to talent spot future leaders and to signpost other roles across the Institution
  - f. Targeting key demographics and specialisms required to give the IET a stronger reach, including but not limited to attracting more Young Professional volunteers
3. raising the profile of our volunteers and volunteer facing staff to their peers and other stakeholders
- a. More engagement pieces in IET publications including profiles of individuals, teams, activities and outcomes
  - b. More focus on the involvement of volunteers and volunteer facing staff in IET success stories, with global contributions
  - c. Volunteer Extranet and IET Communities platforms to be utilised in creating online networks
4. being a recognised leader in volunteering management
- a. Achieving and retaining Investing in Volunteers accreditation from NCVO
  - b. Continuing to work across IET departments to ensure consistency in approach
  - c. Ensuring every volunteer and every volunteer-facing staff member knows how to access and engage effectively with our Global One Team Working communication key messages and channels
  - d. Development of volunteers and volunteer facing staff as individuals and in roles, ensuring they feel trusted in their role and empowered to make change
  - e. Encouraging engagement with each other and with IET staff, valuing the subject matter expertise of our volunteer facing staff in providing advice, counsel and continuity
  - f. Incorporating the behaviours into volunteer training and development
5. understanding and committing to the IET's strategies and societal challenges
- a. Introducing IET strategy and societal challenges into guidance documents and training, helping to ensure that each volunteer and volunteer-facing staff member knows how to contribute to strategic intent

- b. Each volunteer and volunteer-facing staff member is clear on how contributing to the wider IET strategy and societal challenges can provide opportunities for personal development and other personal benefits as well as helping to fulfil their role
- c. Engaging with IET strategists to seek further volunteer input into strategic reviews outside main governance
- d. Conducting annual Volunteer surveys to review and sustain outreach