

NATIONS, REGIONS, GROUPS & FORUMS

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VOLUNTEERING WITH CILT

Meet John Henderson

Volunteering certainly can conjure up contrasting images: getting involved, supporting an organisation, maybe a charity, to assist with its aims, or perhaps throwing your hat into the ring for a mythical and uncertain quest, where bravery and fortitude are good bedfellows. With that in mind, what do you need to be a CILT volunteer?

Quite simply, the starting point is a passion for logistics and transport, wanting to get involved and have some influence over the sector. That is where my involvement began. I have been fortunate enough to have worked with some brilliant people and some superb organisations, so it felt natural to make my contribution to the sector I feel passionate about.

What can you actually do, though? There is no point trying to be the hero and overloading yourself, as your day job will suffer, so it needs to be sustainable. CILT has a national and regional structure, so through the Corby Office, I made contact with the East Midlands Region in 2007/8 and started to participate.

There was already an established programme, but refreshingly, I had a say, I could influence things. In conjunction with other volunteers, I was able to create suggestions for activities and listen to experience from a wide variety of sectors. I saw the power of events, but with a theme. We have all seen warehouses or bus garages; I wanted each event to have purpose, to start a debate and distribute knowledge. My favourite event was when I organised Mercedes-AMG Petronas and Eddie Stobart to come and talk about how F1 cars got to the starting grid in Monaco. On a freezing midweek February evening, 65 people attended. This leads to the other main purpose, as a networking opportunity, the chance for professionals to come together.

A fair bit of work goes into these events, but this all counts to your continuing professional development (CPD), so whilst you are volunteering you are learning. Where else would I get a chance to have this type of discussion? Being a CILT volunteer felt like a passport to get me through otherwise closed doors. For those keen to progress their career, this can be invaluable additional experience.

Another big piece of the puzzle was engaging with the next generation, an opportunity to go out and talk to school and university students about careers in transport and logistics, as well holding activity events to drive it home. I have got a lot out of my career and I wanted to share this passion and inspire a new generation.

The final piece for me was a chance to influence national policy. Contributions at a local level can form the basis of discussions with national government – pretty good for a relatively small commitment.

The key is to be realistic with what you can give, but it is a superb way to meet fellow professionals, expand your knowledge and develop your CPD, whilst being supported by the experience and resources of an internationally renowned organisation.

It is your sector, so why not get involved?

John Henderson CILT
Committee Member,
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✓ It is important to go out and talk to school and university students about careers in transport and logistics

