"As Lord Lieutenants you have been in the front line of the Queen's Awards for Voluntary Service ever since Her Majesty established them to mark her Golden Jubilee. It is the diligent work of you and your deputies that ensure grassroots voluntary achievements across our country are recognised by the highest award of its kind.

“As you know from your recent AGM, there are moves afoot to try to give you extra support in the great detective work you carry out, hunting down these successful community projects and providing detailed assessments. Key decisions on that will be taken over the next few months, and I am optimistic that we will achieve a far higher profile for the QAVS during 2015.

“This inevitably means that a new level of attention will be focussed on us and I very much hope that in anticipation of this you will all be able to get further under the skin of the work of volunteers in your Lieutenancy. The latest research shows that just under 150,000 registered charities in this country are run entirely by volunteers – and that figure is roughly doubled by those small volunteer groups that do not have charitable registration. With only 1200 of our awards made so far, there are clearly still rich pickings out there for future nominations.

“So I do hope that as we prepare to enter a new era for the Queen's Awards for Voluntary Service, you can help us make an extra special impact with the highest possible level of nominations for 2015.”

Martyn Lewis CBE, Chairman of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service
Thank you for supporting The Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service 2015.

Below you’ll find information on the awards as well as suggested wording you might like to use to promote the awards through your own communications channels, such as emails, community newsletters and social media.

Nominations close on 30 September 2014.

**Background information**

**What are the awards?**

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work done in their communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate the anniversary of the Queen's coronation and is equivalent to an MBE for volunteer groups.

Any group doing voluntary work that provides a social, economic or environmental service to the local community can be nominated for the award. Each group is assessed on the benefit they bring to the local community.

This summer there were 111 winners from across the UK, representing a variety of inspiring organisations – from those that mentor young people and work to reduce homelessness, to running transport in rural communities and helping those with mental health problems.

Some examples of this year’s winners:

- The Lantern Club in Buckinghamshire provides respite and day care activities for isolated elderly people with memory problems.
- Nowt2Do Project in Greater Manchester organises after school activities to reduce anti-social behaviour.
- We Step Together (WEST) in Glasgow assist adults with learning disabilities to engage with the wider community.
- Discovery Student Volunteering Swansea works with disadvantaged and vulnerable people in Swansea and Zambia.

**Who is eligible?**

Any group of two or more people doing volunteering work can be nominated for the award. The majority of the group must be volunteers, and more than half the volunteers must have the right to live in the UK.

To be nominated, the group should do work that:

- provides a service that meets a need for people living in the local community
- is supported, recognised and respected by the local community and the people who benefit from it
- is run locally
Volunteer groups should have been running for three years or more to be nominated.

**How are nominations made?**

Nominations for the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service can be made online at [http://qavs.direct.gov.uk/](http://qavs.direct.gov.uk/). Guidance notes can be found at [https://qavs.direct.gov.uk/guidance-notes](https://qavs.direct.gov.uk/guidance-notes) and nominations also require supporting letters from **two independent** people.

Nominations can come from:

- someone who benefits from the work of the group
- someone who is aware of the work of group

**How are the winners decided?**

Lord Lieutenants visit local groups to make an assessment. Their recommendations are then considered by the National Award Committee, some members of which are from the voluntary sector.

The committee provides a final shortlist to the Cabinet Office, which is sent to the Queen for her approval.

The winners are then announced on **2 June** every year – the anniversary of the Queen's Coronation.

**What is the prize?**

Winners receive a certificate signed by the Queen and a domed glass crystal which can be displayed at the group’s main meeting place.

The crystal awards are presented at special ceremonies arranged by the Lieutenancy offices and in the countries of Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Representatives from the group may then also be invited to attend a royal garden party.
How can I promote the 2015 Awards?

Please promote the awards through your local networks and communications channels. Below is some example content you might like to use.

- **Email or newsletter**

Do you know of a volunteer group that devotes it’s time to helping others in your local area and deserves a Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service?

The Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award given to local volunteer groups, recognising the outstanding work they perform within their communities.

Go to [http://qavs.direct.gov.uk/](http://qavs.direct.gov.uk/) and submit your nomination by **30 September 2014** to make sure they are considered for an award next year.

You don’t have to be part of the group, entry is free and you can make your nomination at any time. Notes to help you can be found at [https://qavs.direct.gov.uk/guidance-notes](https://qavs.direct.gov.uk/guidance-notes).

The winners are announced on **2 June** every year and they will receive a domed glass crystal and a certificate signed by the Queen.

Make your nomination for the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service 2015 today!

- **Social media** - suggested tweets


  ![tweet picture of voluntary group]

  [To be posted 15 or 16 September]

Suggested tweet for voluntary group who has won a 2014 award

- **Well done @*[insert group name]* awarded a 2014 Queen’s *[Award]* for *[Voluntary]* Service

  [tweet picture of voluntary group]

- **Press release**

You can also promote the award nominations by adapting the template press release below and distributing to local and regional media, including radio stations, local magazines and newspapers.

Any photos you have of presenting the 2014 awards to local voluntary groups should be included.
Draft press release

The Lord Lieutenant of [xx] urges local nominations for the Queen's voluntary service award

[Insert name], the Lord Lieutenant of [insert location], has today urged local residents to nominate voluntary groups for the opportunity to be awarded with The Queen’s Awards for Voluntary Service 2015.

The Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service is the highest award given to local volunteer groups across the UK to recognise outstanding work in their communities. The awards were created in 2002 to celebrate the Queen’s Golden Jubilee and winners are announced each year on 2 June – the anniversary of the Queen’s Coronation. Nominations for 2015 close on 30 September 2014.

Lord Lieutenant of [insert place], [insert name] said: “Over the last year I have been honoured to meet hundreds of inspiring people in the local community who give thousands of hours of their free time to voluntary groups. If you know of a voluntary group that makes a difference in the area where you live please nominate them for a Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service.”

Local winners of the award for 2014 include:

[Insert bullet point outlining previous winners and how their voluntary group helps the community]

Any group of two or more people that has participated in voluntary work for more than three years can be nominated for the award. Full details on how to nominate are available at http://gavs.direct.gov.uk/.

Notes to editors

1. Lord Lieutenants are the monarch’s representatives in their lieutenancy. There are 98 Lord Lieutenants who cover all areas of the UK.
2. This year there were 111 winners of The Queen’s Award Voluntary Service from across the UK. Winners included The Lantern Club in Buckinghamshire who provide respite and day care activities for elderly people with memory problems and Nowt2Do project in Greater Manchester, which organises after school activities to reduce anti-social behaviour.
Follow the Awards process

June

Winners of latest QAVS round are announced - by Cabinet Office, Buckingham Palace and London Gazette

September

30th September – closing date for nominations

October

All nominations are checked for eligibility and assigned to correct category & regions

November, December & January

Lord Lieutenants are notified of nominations

February

Lord Lieutenants conduct site visits to all nominated groups

March

Mid Feb - Lord Lieutenants return their citations and local assessment forms

April

Submission to Minister for Civil Society on shortlisted groups

May

Final all Committee meeting

Sub Committee meet to assess nominations.

Letters to unsuccessful and pooled groups

Letters to winners

A list of shortlisted groups sent to Buckingham Palace for final approval

List of winners sent to Crystal and certificate suppliers

Letter to winners

Garden Party List sent to Buckingham Palace

Lieutenancy offices receive crystals and certificates for groups in their area

Nominations for the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service can be made all year round but need to be made by September 2014 to be considered for the 2015 awards.
Further information:

More information on all of the above can be found at https://qavs.direct.gov.uk/

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