

National  
Volunteer  
Management  
Conference

**Masterclass (*green*)**  
**Beyond good intentions:  
corporate volunteering that  
delivers**

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Social Sustainability Manager  
Gas Networks Ireland



# Introduction

- Social Sustainability Manager in Gas Networks Ireland since 2022.
- Passionate volunteer for over two decades.
- Background in continuous improvement, project management, HR, and stakeholder relationships.
- Stop me any time for questions, full Q&A opportunity at the end.



# Who Are We?



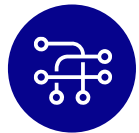
**700,000+**  
Connections  
and growing



**Future proofed**  
One of most modern  
networks in Europe



**Flexible**  
A secure, instantly  
available energy source  
which has made  
renewable deployment  
possible



**14,521km**  
of gas pipeline could  
wrap around Ireland's  
coastline 4 times



**Resilient network**  
Proven ability to meet  
demand in harshest  
weather conditions,  
ensuring security of  
supply



**Diversity**  
Supplying energy for  
power generation,  
heat and transport

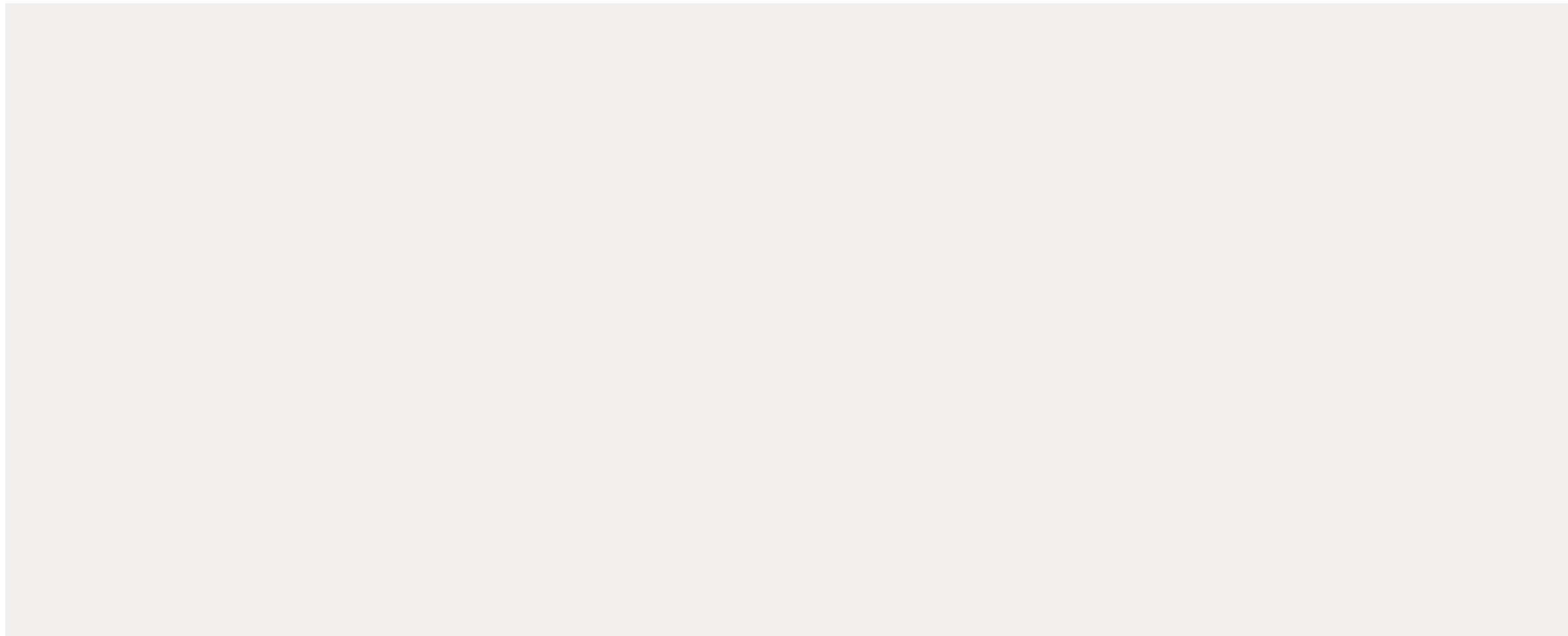
- Existing Pipelines
- Pipelines Owned by Others
- Interconnection Points
- Entry Point
- Renewable Gas Entry Point
- Decommissioned Entry Point



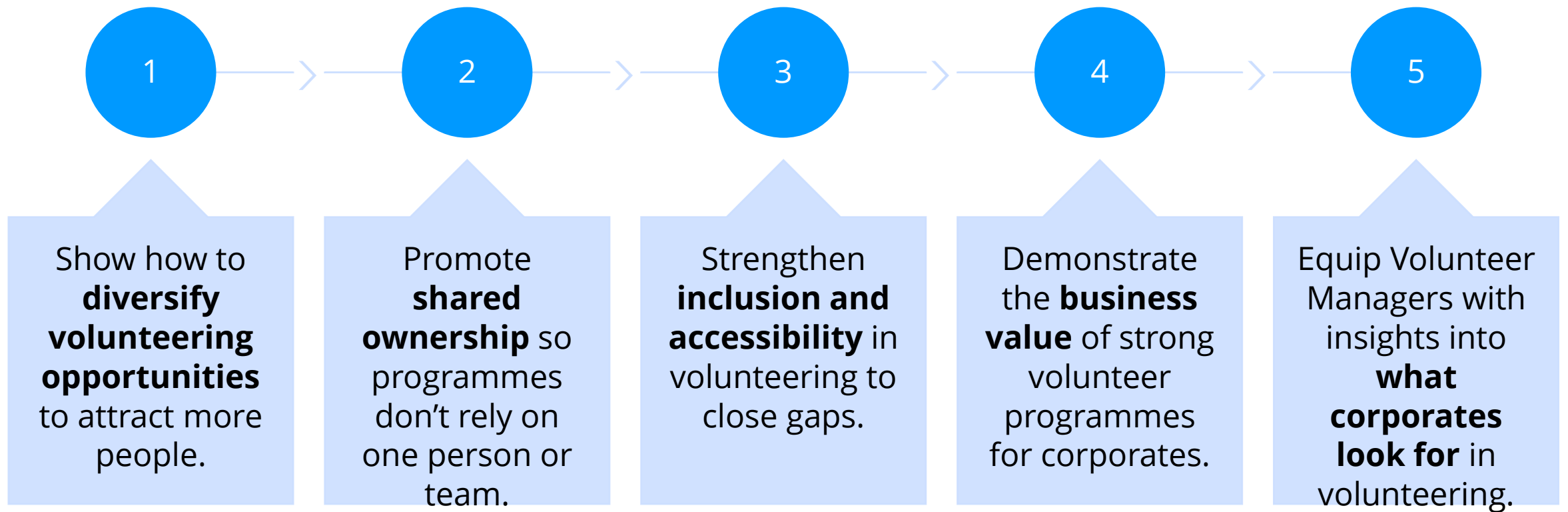
Kinsale Head Gas Field  
Seven Heads Gas Field  
Decommissioned May 2020

# Who's here?

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# Today's Purpose



# ACTIVITY:

## Blockers and Barriers

At your tables

Fill in the wall

Discuss as group

# Our Core Programme



# Our Investing in Volunteers Journey



2022

## Ask from Exec

What's best practice? How do we know if we're doing too much or too little?

Sept 2023

## Assessment

Six month process.  
Around 20 improvement recommendations.

Q3 2026

## Future plans

Recertification commences.  
Social Programme review to precede.

2023

## Investing in Volunteers

Not available for Employer Supported Volunteering...

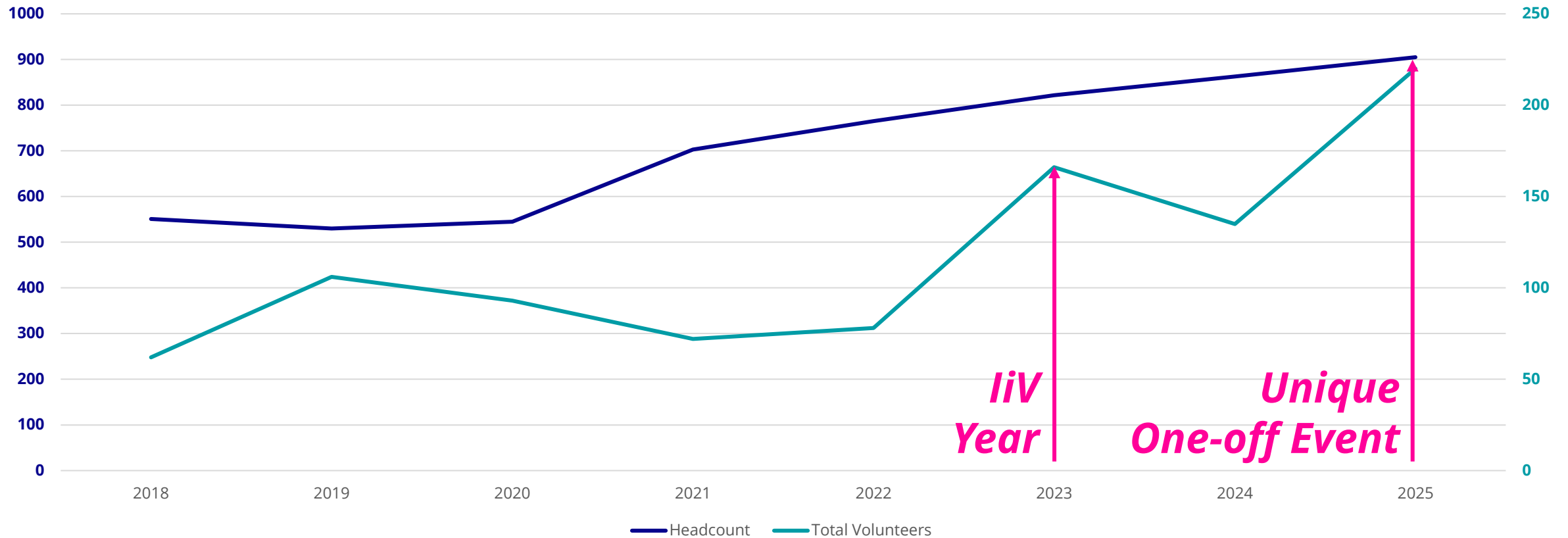
April 2024

## Success!

Passed our assessment with a stronger and more supportive programme.

# Volunteer Participation

## Headcount vs Volunteer Trends





How did we go

from 10%  
participation

to 25%?

## ACTIVITY:

Participation  
word cloud

Mentimeter

What drives it?

Themes

# Diversify opportunities

- Core programme focused on classroom or biodiversity/gardening activities.
- Needed more options.
- Novel element is always a winner.
- Introduced more variety:
  - Litter picking
  - Wheelmap blitz
  - Knitting!
  - Encouraged teams to come up with their own ideas

## Case Study: Abseil

- Team signed up for Croke Park abseil.
- Volunteering & fundraising.

**Next level:** review of the social programme.



# Shared ownership

- Coordinators.
- Promote as team building.
- Rope in service partners and suppliers.
- Training and development opportunity.
- Link to operational activity.

## Case Study: Coordinator (pictured)

- Recruits volunteers.
- Ropes in contractors.
- Organises events.

**Next level:** tie to commerciality.



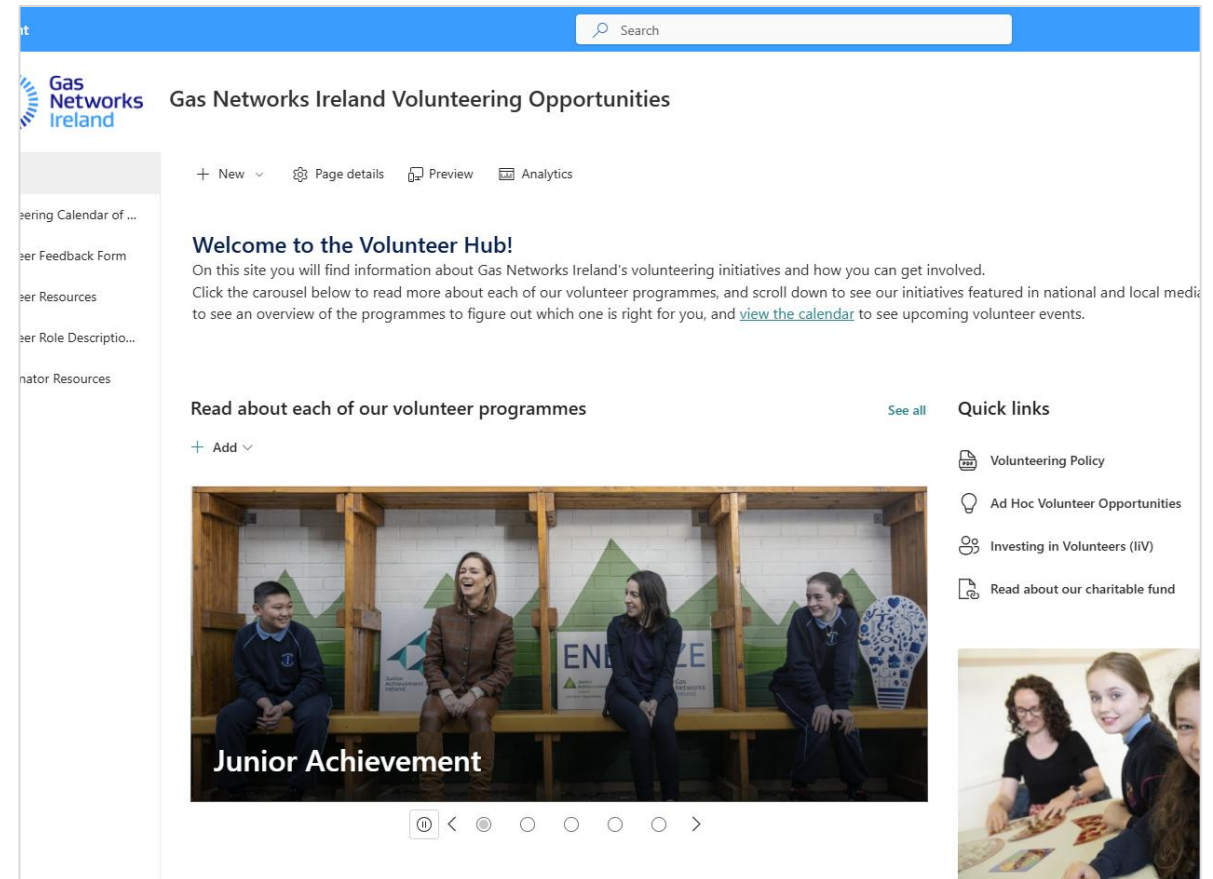
# Inclusion and Accessibility

- “You tell me”.
- Range of commitments, no ongoing ask (except coordinators).
- Role descriptions and Volunteer Hub.
- Regular comms.
- Annual recognition event.

## Case Study: Ad Hoc EOIs

- Reach out to new joiners regularly.
- Maintain a database of people who want one-offs.

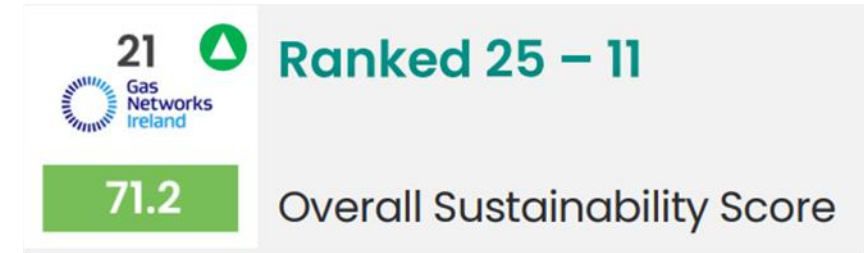
**Next level:** update policy to include time off for volunteering.



The screenshot shows the 'Gas Networks Ireland Volunteering Opportunities' page. At the top, there is a search bar and the Gas Networks Ireland logo. Below the logo, the page title 'Gas Networks Ireland Volunteering Opportunities' is displayed. A navigation bar includes options for '+ New', 'Page details', 'Preview', and 'Analytics'. The main content area features a 'Welcome to the Volunteer Hub!' section with a brief introduction and a link to 'view the calendar'. Below this, there is a section titled 'Read about each of our volunteer programmes' with an 'Add' button. A carousel image shows four people sitting on a bench, with the text 'Junior Achievement' overlaid. To the right, a 'Quick links' section lists: 'Volunteering Policy', 'Ad Hoc Volunteer Opportunities', 'Investing in Volunteers (IIV)', and 'Read about our charitable fund'. A small thumbnail image of people at a table is visible in the bottom right corner.

# Business Value for GNI

- Brand reputation and external recognition.
- CSRD alignment – best practice and peer comparison.
- Employee attraction and retention.
- ESG credibility.
- Smooth operations.



## Case Study: RepTrak Ranking

- Sustainability score is socially weighted.
- Rose from 42nd place to 21st place the year after liV.

**Next Level:** more resources allocated to social sustainability.



# Corporate Interest



**Alignment with their strategy**



**Advance their business agenda**



**Local connection**



**Positive media coverage**



**Easy**

# ACTIVITY:

Insight into  
Action

In pairs

Three changes

Discuss as group

# Outcomes for GNI

95%

said volunteering increased their sense of inclusion in GNI

*"It was a great opportunity to connect with coworkers and to chat to people – some new friendly faces to say hello to around the office."*

85%

noticed a very positive impact on their sense of company pride

*"Initiatives like this really help build a sense of community and purpose across the organisation."*

100%

of volunteers would return to the programme again!

*"It's not everyday we get to share our experiences with young minds. It was a pleasure to see them enthusiastic about science, engineering, and safety topics."*

90%

of volunteers felt it had a positive effect on their mental health

*"Always a good break in work life balance and well worth it."*



Gas  
Networks  
Ireland

Q&A





Gas  
Networks  
Ireland

# Thank you!

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