

The OR Society Volunteer Celebration – OR61 4th September 2019

Speech by John Hopes, President of the OR Society

It is a great pleasure to have this opportunity to say a big thank you to the OR Society's volunteers. Like many charities the Society is dependent on the contribution from its volunteers, including all those individuals who are involved in:

- The Board and General Council
- Our various subcommittees and task & finish / working groups
- The committees that run our regional societies and special interest groups
- Our research, awards and accreditation panels
- The organising committees for our events and all the stream leads, without whom there would be no conferences
- Our outreach activities (OR in Education and Pro Bono OR)
- EURO and IFORS on our behalf

This year, in addition, volunteers played a valuable role in helping test and providing content for our new website. Also, we have volunteers representing us on the important Big Mathematics initiative.

The Society has 17 FTE staff who are critical to our operations. But, in addition, there are many hundreds of volunteers helping run the Society, and we could not begin to deliver all our services without them. In particular, our outreach activities could not exist without this input; and, in 2018, more than 200 members volunteered or offered to volunteer for OR in Schools (now OR in Education) or Pro Bono OR.

OR in Education achieved 50 volunteer visits last year, with 14 science fairs, 23 university visits and 13 school visits. Events of note were New Scientist Live and the Big Bang Fair reaching thousands of pupils and teachers, introducing them to the power of OR.

The Pro Bono OR Scheme has completed nearly 120 projects since 2013. Its volunteers have started projects with 24 charities since OR60, for organisations including Diabetes UK, the National Autistic Society and the National Institute for the Blind, totaling over 1400 volunteer hours.

I hope you find, as I do, that volunteering is a positive experience for the volunteer. It is not only an opportunity to put something back into OR; it is also chance to develop new skills and competencies, to build your network outside your day-to-day environment and to enhance your CV. Finally, and I think quite importantly, it is also great fun.

Overall ORS volunteers contribute around 5,000 person days per year, which is valued at £2.5m. The Society is extremely grateful to its volunteers and to their employers who make this time available to help the Society deliver on its charitable objects.