

## Woodcote Volunteers



### Our plans for the coming year

We had a very interesting and well attended Annual General Meeting in April. Thank you to our two guest speakers, Nicky Paris and Louise Haylett who both talked about their roles, which were, respectively, as the Oxfordshire Good Neighbour Scheme co-ordinator and our local Wellbeing Worker who is attached to the Goring and Woodcote Medical Practice. Both speakers identified the need for more social opportunities for our local residents who are housebound, isolated or have difficulty getting out. Nicky Paris identified a need for a befriending service in Woodcote.

The chair of the trustee board, Helena McBride, set out our achievements in the past year and our goals for the upcoming year, which include some exciting new developments.

Our goals for this year include, but are not limited to:

- Change our constitution to broaden the scope of services we are allowed to offer to our local community, to further assist in alleviating isolation, such as a befriending service
- Increase the number of jobs we undertake
- Recruit more drivers – we need at least 40 (currently have 38)
- Establish what the barriers are to people using our service(s) and work out what we can do to break these down
- Measure our (anticipated) success in reaching those in need who are not currently using our service

We are currently exploring the setting up a befriending service and will write more about this in coming months.

We were pleased to appoint two new members to our committee, Tim, who will advise us on all things technical and Janet, who will lead on organising our events. We are in the process of inviting another member to our committee who will be a much-needed liaison between us and our clients. More information to come on this too!

### Financial Hardship

We do not charge clients who need a driver; however, a client is asked to pay a driver's expenses at the rate of 45p per mile (there is a flat rate of £1.50 for drives within Woodcote). This is considerably cheaper than using a taxi but can add up, especially if a client needs to be taken further afield. Our office helpers will always tell you in advance what the approximate expenses cost will be. Please let us know if this would place you in financial difficulty.

## **Drivers needed**

Since 1983, our charity has been helping hundreds of people in Woodcote and surrounding villages who are unable to get about as before. They have mobility problems such that they are unable to use public transport or drive. You and I may take it for granted that we can pop to the shops, doctors, hospital appointments, the opticians, go out to meet a friend and the like. Volunteer Drivers change the lives of people who otherwise would find it difficult to do those simple things.

There is no minimum time commitment. You simply advise us from the outset what days and times that you are usually free. We do not expect you to be waiting by the phone for your jobs; we try to give at least 3 days' notice of a job. Occasionally we have an urgent request.

Our drivers find this type of volunteering very rewarding and you will meet some fascinating people. If you would like to know more, please either look at our website – [www.woodcotevolunteers.org.uk](http://www.woodcotevolunteers.org.uk), or call our Secretary, Jane Forde, on 01750 158274.

## **Fundraising Coffee Morning**

On Saturday, 24<sup>th</sup> June we are holding a coffee morning at the Community Centre, Woodcote between 10am and 12.30pm. We would like to be able to purchase some more mobility aids to help our clients get into and out of our cars and potentially, another wheelchair. Lots of lovely hot and cold drinks will be on offer along with delicious home made cakes! We hope you can join us. If you are one of our clients and would like to come, please ask us for a lift. We will try our best to provide a driver for anyone who would like to go.

## **TO FINISH.....**

We would like to say thank you to Philip who is joining us from June as a volunteer driver. We welcome you to our team and are sure you will enjoy your interesting and satisfying role.

We are losing one volunteer, Dawn, who has been with us for a year and thank her so much for her time with us.

As usual, if you need a driver, please don't hesitate to call our office on **01491 681171**. We collect from Woodcote and immediately surrounding villages.

**Please give us as much notice as possible before the date you need us.** One of our friendly office workers will answer the phone between 9.30 and 11am on weekdays (excluding public holidays) and you can leave a message on the answerphone at other times.

Find out more about us by looking at our website: [www.woodcotevolunteers.org.uk](http://www.woodcotevolunteers.org.uk)

Or visit our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/woodcotevolunteers](http://www.facebook.com/woodcotevolunteers)