



Winslow Big Society Volunteer Newsletter

Spring 2022



Dear volunteers,

It is great to see almost all of our activities functioning again. It's also good to see more new faces joining us both as volunteers and customers.

We have recently been nominated for the Queens Award for Voluntary Service, which is the equivalent of an MBE but for a charity. We have got through 2 rounds and are now waiting to hear whether we have been successful. It's been a lot of hard work to gather all the evidence to present, a bit like OFSTED! Thanks to all who helped us so quickly to get this together, especially Tracey our new Secretary.

The other great news is that we have been awarded a grant to purchase a nearly new wheelchair car to replace the current one that has done us great service for nearly 5 years. Many thanks to the Winslow and Villages Community Board for their generosity. We are now actively hunting for the right one that will take most wheelchairs and scooters too. Thanks to our 6 drivers who make this scheme work so well. More on this soon I hope.

Vron

Have you a little time to spare?

We are now looking for people can deputise for some of our longstanding events. These include Lunches and Memories particularly. The events are well set up, and just need someone who can oversee them, ensuring that calls are made, rooms booked etc. As our volunteers' lives change, this is becoming more difficult for them to manage. So please seriously think if, may be with one other, you could take on one of these events. None are more than monthly, all have ongoing rotas for the jobs to do, it's just the overseeing of them that's needed.

Training for safety:

As a result of the work we have had to do for the Queens Award, the assessors urged us to incorporate some training for volunteers, to ensure our services are always safe both for the volunteer and the customer. As a result we have been working with Marilyn our Befriending trainer to put together some work on confidentiality, safeguarding and health and safety. We have now piloted an hour long session combining these three, and the feedback from those doing it was very positive. They said they thought there wouldn't be much to learn, but they now realise how much they had really not thought about much before. Talking with other

about what their role in the organisation is, they realised how vulnerable our customers are, and what could go wrong.

So we shall be publicizing this shortly, and aim to ask every volunteer to attend once after they've joined us. You have been warned!

Thanks so much to Marilyn for helping us with this.

Covid update.

There are a few more Covid clinics about to start, which Maggie is managing. Thanks to those who have volunteered to help. After that it will be autumn probably before there are any more.

Calling for more drivers!

Despite the reduction in journeys, we have also had a reduction in drivers since Covid, and quite often now struggle to cover journeys. If you like driving and wouldn't mind helping us maybe twice a month with a local journey, we'd love to hear from you. This is a commitment that can be on your terms not ours.

Please ring the general number if you can help.

New leaflets:

We have recently completely redone our leaflet with all our services on. If you'd like some to give to others please ring Vron on 712460.

Sad news:

As we go to print, we have just heard that John Keane has died. He was a great supporter of many of our schemes and had also been a volunteer from the beginning. We shall miss his smile and sense of humour especially, and send our sympathies to Sue and her family.

Gentle Walks:

Our numbers of walkers are now always about 8 - 10, and they are all off on a trip in the Community Bus to Watermead, as we go to print. It's great to see so many enjoying themselves in the fresh air. But it means we now need more walk leaders too, so if you might be able to help with a walk round Winslow (no fields!), please let Christine Dodds know on 714336. All walks are already planned and risk assessed.

Sitting Service:

This is now gathering pace, and we have 2 new couples matched to sitters. By matching individually, the cared for also has the benefit of the company of the same sitter each time. We so quickly can see the benefits, and the sitters are happy too. Win win!
If you know anyone stuck at home as a carer, please tell them about us.

Singing for Pleasure:

We are back in business again, with exciting themes including a Jubilee one. Tell those who would benefit from a sing and memory of good times with us!

Pen Pal service:

With the Patient Support Service, we have set this up so that isolated people can receive a letter from a matched volunteer. Always room for more people needing this service.

Exercise classes:

There is room in the face to face classes in Winslow for more people. If you or anyone you know would benefit from being a little more mobile, these classes are just for you. Why not come and try it out?

Summer playschemes:

August 2nd and 17th. We need more help to run these. If you can manage one or other date between 11 and 4pm, please let Vron know.

Dementia Friendly Memories group:

Sadly through a loss of most of our customers, this has had to close. If you know of anyone with some memory loss who might be interested in a structured monthly get together, please let Vron know. We are ready to restart!

What can you do to help?

The most important thing right now is to publicise our services, especially the new ones, to people you know or are new to the town, and might benefit from them. Tell them about them, give them a leaflet or ask them to ring one of us. Some of our activities definitely need more people to support them, for example Hard of Hearing, where people often need encouragement to admit that this is even a problem, and the group provides amazing support and often advice from experts coming to the meetings.

Specific vacancies for volunteers:

- **Aug 2nd and 17th play schemes**
- **Walk leaders**
- **Car drivers**
- **Telephone befrienders**
- **Help with publicity**
- **Admin help**

**General contact email: contact@winslowbigsocietygroup.info
General enquiry phone number (same as Car Scheme): 07508 330750
Website: <http://www.winslowbigsocietygroup.info>**