



Winslow Big Society Volunteer Newsletter

July 2021



Dear volunteers,

I hope you are all finally managing to get a bit of life back. But what amazes me is the response you continue to give to my very bizarre requests for one off help, as well as the regular things. Within 2 hours of posting an email I seem to have a flurry of responses, followed by many more! It is so reassuring to know that people still want to help and aren't too anxious about being out. We have continued to recruit new volunteers over the pandemic that want to stay with us, and now have 120! On a more sombre note, we are sorry to have lost quite a few of our regular customers during this time, but have received some lovely messages from relatives saying how much the Big Society meant to their loved ones, and have been remembered in donations after. It's great that this is the positive memory for such customers in their last months.

Let's hope we are on the end of this part of the pandemic at least soon. So thanks as always for all you do.
Vron

“What people said about Covid clinics:

“I think it is important to recognise the wonderful work and dedication of you both in supporting and organising the volunteers, juggling rotas and filling in at short notice when needed. So from all of us at Rotary, a very “big thank you”.

“Our last clinic was yesterday and I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of 5W to thank you all for everything you have done to help us over the past six months. Without our volunteers it wouldn't have happened. We managed over 21,800 vaccines between us and so have benefitted a lot of people. You should all feel very proud to have been a part of making this happen, from all of us at 5W.”

Covid update.

Whilst all clinics are finished here at least for now, we are still operating the weekly phone contact in a very informal way now, but those receiving calls are still fairly housebound and delighted it's continuing.

Sue and team are on standby for any news on Booster clinics in the autumn. So watch this space!

Other activities:

We are gradually reopening our regular activities, see list at the end. We have taken a very flexible safe approach on this, to ensure customers and volunteers are safe. Details will continue to be posted in the Parish Magazine, as well as on notice boards and especially the website. **Do use this to get up to date information and to recommend us to other customers and volunteers.**

What else have we been up to?

We have quite a few new services that have sprung up in lockdown, which will continue after, at least for now:

1:1 Accompaniment Service:

For those who have developed anxiety or reduced mobility as a result of lockdown, we match the customer with a volunteer for 6 weeks. The aim is to work outwards their goal, eg to walk up and down a sloping drive again, to get out with their dog alone etc. This has been really successful, customers really valuing the individual approach.

Decluttering:

We have been using the time to help locals who are hoarders to get their things sorted and cleared. This is on an individual basis, and the most recent one was a team of 12 over a whole day. I hear great things about how this really helped this very sick couple.

As a result of this work, we are now better known, and hope that referrals to all our services

will come in, particularly from the needy who we must continue to serve.

Sitting Service:

This is now up and running with our first match. A volunteer is matched with a couple, to enable the carer to leave home for short local periods. By matching again individually, the cared for also has the benefit of the company of the same sitter each time.

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.

Parkinson's Exercise Classes:

Thanks to Sue Keane and Liz Mostyn, working with Sandra Pratt who runs our normal exercise classes, Sandra is starting up special classes for those with Parkinson's from August. This is another great example of working together, using all the expertise we have. We wish Sandra and the team very success in this very new venture. It has taken a lot of work and also training for Sandra to get to this point.

Wheelchair car:

We now have new logos on our car, which make it look very smart, and provide us with more publicity. The car is being quite well used now, but we are always in need of more drivers, so if you'd like to volunteer just for this, please contact Vron. You can read all about it on the website.

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!

Information Updates.

Town posters are still being changed and our website updated as things change. Within the website there is a link to our Facebook site and twitter feed. Even if you are not registered on these you can still see the posts. Posts from Norden House(3W), are often posted here too. Please share any relevant information with WBSG clients without internet.

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
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