

AGE CONCERN BUCKS – GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEME

Background

Our long term aim is to develop, launch and support a Bucks-wide Good Neighbour Schemes which help older people to live independently in their own homes for longer, and which delivers the outcomes including some or all of the following:-

- social visit for someone who is normally housebound, i.e. befriending.
- collecting pensions and prescriptions, help with shopping
- help with pets and suchlike, walking pet, taking to the vet
- outings to garden centre, coffee mornings or pub lunch
- organising lifts to hospitals or doctors' surgeries
- help with gardening, window cleaning. light household tasks
- minor household tasks such as checking smoke alarms and replacing batteries if needed; additional DIY tasks can be referred to the Handyperson Scheme.
- using Age Concern Bucks Helpline and specific Admin support to provide information & advice, advocacy, welfare benefits checks, filling in forms, etc. and referrals to statutory and voluntary organizations.

Individual schemes are set up to cover one geographic community area, fostering supportive, good neighbourliness. Volunteers come from within that community and help their fellow residents who are more vulnerable, isolated, old, without transport or with mobility or health problems.

Each scheme would be set up in a geographical area and managed day to day by one or two main co-ordinators who recruit and co-ordinate volunteers to deliver the help requested by residents, and allocates the tasks and support as required. The project aim is for each scheme to be self sufficient and sustainable.

Progress Report - Chesham Town and Chesham Rural

The GSN Facilitator, Simon Beales, worked part-time on the project mid-January until April, when he left to take up a full time job in business. Mrs. Judith Vivis was recruited and trained for this post and started on 1st June.

Their brief over the few months of the project have been:-

1. Contact Parish Council, Local Area forums, NAGS, COPAG, Doctors and Health professionals, Neighbourhood Watch, Community Support Officers to talk to them about the scheme and raise awareness and support in the community.
2. Organise distribution and collection of GNS questionnaire to households in the catchment area.
3. Evaluate questionnaire feedback – will show need for service and recruit some volunteers.

4. Invite all volunteers/stakeholders to an open meeting. Explain the project; recruit a steering committee.
5. Prepare posters and leaflets
6. Hold a steering group committee meeting(s) to agree a constitution, elect officers. Plan to set up a bank account, source public liability insurance, arrange CRB checks on volunteers, mobile phone, plan launch, budget for basic running costs.

Questionnaires

Chesham Town (10,000 households)

1700 questionnaires are being distributed as a loose insert in the Bucks Free Press w/c 29th February. Completed questionnaires are to be returned to The Town Hall (thanks to the co-operation of the Town Clerk) or posted directly to Age Concern Bucks. Further questionnaires are being distributed via community groups and we hope to have something in the next Town Talk.

Chesham rural

320 questionnaires are being delivered to households in Ashley Green and Whelpley Hill by the Community Association.

500 included in the Hill top News to cover Chartridge and Wholesbury.

Latimer and Lee are still work in progress.

Publicity about the Good Neighbour Scheme as a separate article in each newspaper.

Budget

The Budget of £4000 has nearly been spent and we are continuing this project in Chesham thanks to another grant received. We are seeking a further six months funding to ensure this scheme is launched.