

# BASINGSTOKE NEIGHBOUR CARE

## AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2025

**Dear Volunteer,**

We wish to keep you informed of what is happening in the charity demonstrating how we are moving forward and how volunteers are making a real difference in the community.

We recognise that it is challenging to be kept fully informed, so we recommend looking at our website and Facebook account.



### WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR in 2025?

#### Personnel Changes

We welcome: -

- Ruth as our cook at the community hub
- Sam as our Community Projects Leader (replacing Kirsty)
- Amy who has joined our team of gardeners
- Gary who has joined us as a handyperson
- Sarah who has become a driving coordinator in place of Kate.
- Debby who has become a driving coordinator in place of Helen who has retired.

Plus, many new volunteers who have joined us across many of our services.

And we have said farewell and bon voyage to: -

- Kirsty, our erstwhile Community Projects Leader who is moving to Cornwall
- Dave, our handyperson who has retired.
- Helen who will be volunteering at a local school.

Our Board of Trustees continues to meet 6 times a year to direct the way the charity operates and progresses.

We are pleased to have 2 new trustees who joined us in September: -

- Judith with a particular interest in the Befriending Service
- Claire with a particular interest in policies and procedures





## Community Hub

In April, we launched the all-new Community Hub at Popley Fields Community Centre operating twice a month on the first and third Thursdays. This has been funded by Hampshire County Council.

This includes: -

- A freshly prepared 2 course lunch
- Bingo
- A programme of activities such as quizzes and Kurling
- A foot clinic (on the 3rd Thursday)
- A weekly exercise class under the Steady and Strong banner.
- Visits from the Princess Royal Trust for Carers (on the 3rd Thursday)
- IT Support provided by one of our volunteers
- Guest speakers.

This has been achieved through the herculean efforts of Kirsty and carried forward and improved by Sam, our new Community Projects Leader. In addition, we have Ruth, our cook and a team of enthusiastic volunteers who together with Sam have achieved this new and complex activity.



## Safeguarding

Such a hot topic in the light of abuses reported across the country. Melissa is our Safeguarding Officer.

When volunteering for us – if you come across something which might be considered a safeguarding issue, we have the procedure to enable your concerns to be investigated and where appropriate escalated to the relevant authorities.

## Driving Service

In addition to the varieties of journeys we have offered for many years, with the move of Citizens Advice offices to Chineham we provide assistance to get their clients to appointments there.

This year we have started to introduce regular driver refresher sessions for our volunteer drivers calling upon Hampshire County Council qualified assessors. This will help to ensure we continue to provide the best and smoothest rides for those we serve.





## DBS Checking (formerly CRB)

As part of our commitment to maintaining the highest standards, in addition to checking when a volunteer joins us (when applicable), we are introducing regular checks every 3 years. This programme is being rolled out gradually over the coming months.



## HOW ARE WE DOING?

**Driving Service** – We continue to expand with 12% more trips compared to the same period for 2024. Our coordinators led by Melissa work very hard to find volunteer drivers for requests received.

Our 63 volunteer drivers cover a wide spectrum of driving tasks covering Hampshire and beyond providing support for the journey and often for the duration of the appointment.

If you are a volunteer driver, be assured you are making a very real difference to those we serve by enabling them to get to appointments. Without your help, they could not get there and back.

**Befriending** – Like driving, we are providing more visits with a substantial increase over the same period in 2024. Demand exceeds our capacity to provide befriending. If you are a befriender, your regular visits and contacts make such a real difference to those you support. A chat and a cup of tea make such a difference.

**Community Cafes** – Our Tuesday morning café at Church Cottage in the town centre each week continues with 40 – 50 customers where they come to chat and socialise having a hot drink and a bacon roll at very modest prices.

If you volunteer at this or at Hill Rise, be assured your efforts are much appreciated by those who come along week by week – we have many testimonials that show you are making a real contribution to their wellbeing.

In October, we held an Older Persons Awareness Morning (OPAM) at which local organisations came along and had stalls offering help and information.

At the Wednesday morning Hill Rise café in Brighton Hill there are about 20 customers among whom there is such a camaraderie it is more like a club than a traditional café.

Each week there is an organised activity such as bingo, quizzes and New Age Kurling which many take part in.





If you are a volunteer at this café, it is almost like being part of a family and our customers much appreciate you being there.

**Social Group at Tadley** – This is slightly different to the community cafés – no bacon rolls but lots of cake! Like the cafes, the weekly sessions on Thursday afternoons continue to provide a friendly venue for both residents of Bishopswood Court and those living nearby. As with Hill Rise, there is an activity for all to enjoy. If you volunteer here, the success of these sessions is due in large part to your coming along every week.

**Handyperson Service** – This continues helping to sort out problems such as plumbing, repairing and painting. At present, due to capacity issues, this is limited to Basingstoke and its suburbs. Currently, this service is provided by staff, and the customer pays for the help at a modest and very competitive rate.

**Gardening Service** – This is provided in the same way as the handyperson service. There is significant demand for the service and it seems to stretch into the late Autumn and early Winter.



## WHAT ELSE HAS BEEN HAPPENING?

For the first time we had a summer social in the grounds of the Orchard as a celebration of volunteering – many thanks to those who came along and the staff who did much of the preparation work.

In June, we had a stall at the Sherfield on Loddon village fete.

In October, we took part in a quiz night at the Hub in Herriard with half of the money raised coming to the charity. We raised an excellent £349!

Updated leaflets have been designed to reflect all that we offer and will be available for you to share by mid-November. Please help yourself.

## WHAT'S COMING AHEAD

Although 2025/2026 is designated to be a period of consolidation following the major expansion of the past 3 years, we are looking forward to the future improving and extending what we do and then considering new services as and when the opportunities arise.





We are hoping to:

- Build a fundraising team – we need to raise up to £40,000 in this financial year to ensure we can continue to deliver our services.
- Build an events team – to be involved in representing us at local events such as village fetes, supermarkets and multi-charity events in the town centre.
- User Forums where our customers, clients and volunteers can contribute to the way in which we operate now and into the future.
- Extend the twice a month community hub to become a weekly offering.
- Make long term relationships with local companies with the aim of perhaps some sponsorship.
- Establish “Friends of Basingstoke NeighbourCare” so we can increase the numbers of people who want to be kept informed.



## **AND HAPPENING VERY SOON NEW & MORE COMPREHENSIVE WEBSITE**

We are about to launch our new website which will contains more information and resources.

### **Christmas Gathering 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025**

Once a year we have a Christmas gathering when volunteers and staff can come together to socialise and recognise the wonderful contribution that all of us have made to the success of Basingstoke NeighbourCare.

This year, it will be on Wednesday December 3<sup>rd</sup> from 5pm to 7pm and take place at the Irish Centre at the top of town.

We would welcome as many as possible of the volunteers to the gathering and we look forward to meeting you there.

**Quick reminder:** NeighbourCare has an Easyfundraising account! When you shop online via Easyfundraising, participating retailers donate to us at no extra cost to you. The donations may be small, but they add up—especially with more supporters. <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/>

Instructions are on the site. If you're booking a holiday or buying insurance, check for offers—these often lead to bigger donations!

## **FINALLY**

We wish you a happy and joyful Christmas and a prosperous New Year and hope you will feel able to continue to volunteer for us as and when is convenient to you.

Please feel free to contact the office or a trustee whenever you wish to. We are always ready to listen.

