

SHOTLEY & ERWARTON GOOD NEIGHBOURS SCHEME REPORT

for the

Shotley Parish Council 2018 Annual Meeting

The Shotley & Erwarton Good Neighbours Scheme ("The Scheme") is a not for profit organisation with a governing Constitution. The Scheme has been running for 13 years, being launched on the 6th April 2005. The Scheme is managed by a Committee of 10 volunteers who are elected annually at the Scheme's AGM.

The Aims of the Scheme are "To provide short term help to the residents of Shotley and Erwarton such as transport, domestic support, and household assistance, with the use of local volunteers. Also to encourage self-help and friendship within the community".

We currently have 30 volunteers who have all had checks carried out with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in order to ensure their suitability to undertake volunteer tasks for vulnerable people. In 2017 we applied for a grant from the Shotley Parish Council to cover our insurance costs and were very grateful for the financial support provided and the grant of £200 received in September.

Persons requiring assistance from the Scheme make contact via our mobile telephone which is held by a Committee Member (the Duty Officer) on a two week rota basis. When a request is received the Duty Officer contacts volunteers to ascertain their availability to undertake the request.

In our last financial year ended 31st July 2017 we carried out 305 tasks for 61 local residents, an average of 5 or 6 a week. Most tasks are carried out during the "working week" but volunteers are available to carry out tasks over the weekend if required. The Scheme provides short term routine help only on an 'as and when' needed basis; it does not offer a 'regular' service and is not an 'emergency' service.

The majority of requests made ask for transport to enable clients to get to various appointments including at: Ipswich hospital; an Outpatients clinic; the dentist; Shotley Surgery; or the hairdressers. Other tasks requested include dog walking, shopping, simple DIY tasks and befriending etc.

For journeys beyond the two villages the client is invited to contribute to the volunteer driver mileage costs at 40p per mile. For a journey to Ipswich hospital and return a contribution of £12 is suggested and for a journey into Ipswich centre a contribution of £10 is suggested. When taking a client to an appointment the volunteer driver waits in order to bring them home again and, if required, assists the client to the clinic they are attending. The mileage contribution is the only payment a volunteer receives. Local trips in and around Shotley, Chelmondiston and Erwarton are 'free' to the client.

The Scheme is promoted by means of notices on the Notice Boards in the two villages, and at the Surgery and also in the Shotley Noticeboard. We are also working closely with the Community Connector Scheme. We are very grateful for this publicity about the work of our scheme. We also attend local events to raise awareness of the Scheme in order to attract both new clients and new volunteers. Any assistance that can be given to help promote awareness of the Scheme is very much appreciated. We are always looking for new volunteers particularly those that are willing and able to undertake driving tasks and who are available during normal working hours.

We have been fortunate at recruiting one new volunteer this year and have two more in the process of being recruited but the continued recruitment of new driving volunteers is essential to our ability to continue offering the much needed transportation service we currently deliver. Many of our current volunteer drivers are not as available as they used to be and we are particularly concerned also about the merger of the Ipswich and Colchester hospitals as this will no doubt require local residents to attend Colchester for appointments. Volunteer drivers willing to go to Colchester will therefore be even more important for us to recruit.

Debbie Dodd

Secretary

21st April 2017