



Community Good Neighbours, Pontesbury and Rea Valley

The difficulties faced by many people, particularly over the last year has highlighted the need for a local network of support to enable people to remain healthy and independent & connected within their communities.

Many of the volunteers that came forward to help with deliveries of food and prescriptions during the first lockdown showed an interest in remaining involved to support the local community. We also had a team of volunteers that belonged to the Pontesbury Coco Befriending service. These two groups of volunteers have now joined forces to become **Community Good Neighbours, Pontesbury and Rea Valley.**

The aim of the service is to link a volunteer with a person who may be in need of a Good Neighbour volunteer for: a friendly chat; a phonecall; doing small errands or support to stay active & connected within the community. There is a dedicated phone number for people enquiring needing support (**Tel: 07944 891953**) which is answered on a rota basis by the members of the steering group.

There are now 40 volunteers being trained, all of whom receive a DBS check. Volunteers also receive ongoing support from the Community Good Neighbours Steering Group. The service follows all current Government guidelines for safety. So far the volunteers plus the steering group members have clocked up over 600 hours of volunteering time answering an average of 35 enquiries per month. Mostly these are requests for shopping/prescription delivery or befriending (**currently \*\*\* people are receiving regular phonecalls**). There is also a hardship fund for people in crisis. The fund is used to give immediate financial support. Anyone contacting the scheme is signposted, where necessary, to longer term support such as debt advice, local foodbank schemes or other support agencies locally.

The Scheme gets a lot of requests for transport to hospital appointments etc. This is a form of support that the steering group is exploring for the future.

The steering group includes experienced local volunteers, the Community Care Co-ordinator from the Medical Practice and the Parish Clerk.

Financial and other support has been provided by Severn Hospice, Shropshire RCC, Pontesbury, Minsterley and Hanwood Parish Councils, The Atherton Trust, Pontesbury Medical Practice, Pontesbury Charity, Allcare and other local businesses and individuals.