Wiltshire Good Neighbours

Report for Atworth Parish Council AGM

In the time that I have been the Good Neighbour for Atworth I have visited 9 clients with either complex needs, unresolved issues or are returning with new queries. This is in addition to the numerous clients that I have telephone calls with and meet at clubs that just require some information or signposting. As Good Neighbours we work closely with partner agencies such as Age UK, Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service, Wiltshire Bobby Van, Wiltshire Police Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Wiltshire Council Adult Care, to name a few.

Here is an idea of the sort of information and assistance that I give:

Grants & Benefits Checks

- General benefit entitlement checks
- Help with obtaining Attendance Allowance
- Grants for helping to pay fuel bills
- Grants for repairing/maintaining the home

Home & Personal Safety

- Organising fire safety checks and the fitting of smoke detectors
- Door and window locks checked and replaced if necessary
- Key safes fitted
- Organising personal alarms
- Information on local traders such as builders, cleaners, etc. from Age UK traders list/reputable companies
- Information on local care agencies

Transport

- Help with accessing Link and the RUH Hopper
- Organising bus passes
- Organising blue badges
- Organising prescription home delivery service

Other

- Organising audio books and equipment for the blind
- Library home visits
- Signposting to local clubs and societies
- Signposting to Age UK befriending service

In addition to this, over the winter months we offer a service called “a winter’s journey”. Through this we guarantee to either visit or contact the client a minimum of 6 times, and if we have particularly bad weather to ensure that the client has food in the house and is managing to keep warm. On the initial visit we can check that the client is on the most cost effective energy tariff for them, check that they have loft/cavity wall insulation where applicable; discuss ways of reducing energy usage and how to keep their homes warm. I am running a curtain exchange where I can pass donated curtains onto clients to reduce heat loss at doors in particular. I also have some survival packs to give to the most vulnerable that contain a fleece blanket, hot water bottle, warm socks, thermos flask and soup. I have been able to support clients by applying for grants from the Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation Trust towards their fuel bills and this can range from £150 to £300 depending on their age and financial circumstances. The criteria for this is that a recipient should be on pension credit and be in fuel poverty; the definition of which is that a person spends 10% or more of their income on their energy bills. The trust are able to give this help thanks to the generosity of people who donate their winter fuel allowance from the government to be redistributed to those who are in much greater need.