

## Setting up a Good Neighbour Scheme

We hear from two Good Neighbour Schemes that are currently up and running in the areas of Chinnor and Radley.

### Radley Good Neighbours

Yvonne Milward is Chair of Radley Good Neighbours, which has been running for two years:

“We are a group of friendly and warm-hearted volunteers who offer help and support to those living in Radley village, who need help with things like: shopping and collecting prescriptions, visiting and befriending, occasional transport, help with paperwork, light housework, basic DIY/maintenance, changing light bulbs, replacing batteries, checking smoke alarms, help in the garden, with pets, reading to people with visual impairment, and help with using the internet.

Our Good Neighbour scheme is part of a network of schemes which cover many parts of Oxfordshire, and which provide support to many people. Our users include older people, people with disabilities, people who are housebound, people temporarily in need through illness or anyone who may be isolated.

At the beginning we had a small Committee to set up the scheme, sort out application forms and policies, and with the help of Volunteer Link-Up we launched in January 2013, on one of the snowiest evenings of the year. From small beginnings we now have a group of users and their families who are very appreciative of what we do; we have become very central to the life of the village. I do encourage others who are thinking about starting a scheme to go for it!”

### Chinnor Good Neighbour Scheme

Martin King is Chair of the Chinnor Good Neighbour Scheme, which has been running for nearly 4 years:

“We have a small but dedicated band of volunteers and have been able to help over 130 people in Chinnor (and surrounding villages) in a number of different ways. In the last year we have helped our clients with odd jobs such as shopping, collecting prescriptions, getting to/from appointments, or even just sitting and having a coffee and a chat.



Volunteers at Chinnor Good Neighbour Scheme

At present over 90% of our jobs involve driving, but we are in a rural location with little in the way of public transport and people need to get to appointments. We continue to explore ways of helping clients in other ways, and these are growing, albeit slowly.

Our volunteers really enjoy what they do, they like the flexibility of their involvement and it has given them the chance to meet and get to know some really lovely people. Our clients are also very happy with the service provided, and their donations are sufficient to make the scheme financially viable.

It is very satisfying to all concerned that the Chinnor area now has an established and well respected Good Neighbour Scheme. We have been helped by our Parish Council, local organisations, the Good Neighbour Scheme Support Service, and Age UK Oxfordshire to get to our current position.

Having received so much support ourselves, we have also been in a position to pass on some of our knowledge and experience to our colleagues in Thame, who are in the process of setting up their own scheme.”

### Find out more

Volunteer Link-Up provides the Good Neighbour Scheme Support Service in Oxfordshire as part of the Community Information Network, offering advice and guidance to existing schemes and to communities wishing to set up a new scheme in their area.

If you would like to find out more about setting up a Good Neighbour Scheme in your area, or if you or someone you know would benefit from these services and support, call **01993 776277** or email **oxfordshiregns@hotmail.co.uk**.