

Befriending Report 2020

For the first half this year there was a steady flow of regular befriending visits or phone calls to a range of people. Some people were house bound due to illness or injury, some just enjoyed some extra company as relatives or friends live at a distance. Some people were also enjoying the occasional trip out to a café.

Sadly, the ability to meet face to face came to an end in March with the onset of the dreaded COVID 19. We had no choice but to resort to telephone befriending due to government instructions to Stay at Home. Some volunteers and clients were in the “shielding” category so for the safety of all, GNS decided to maintain a slightly increased telephone service. Luckily, we gained some new temporary volunteers who were either furloughed from work or just saw the need for extra support in such difficult times.

The number of people requesting and receiving calls increased as older residents found themselves confined to their homes with no opportunities to get out and about visiting friends or joining regular activities. Thanks to our increased numbers we were able to provide a friendly, familiar voice once or twice a week.

As things settled into a new routine a few recipients of calls found they were coping well and no longer required so much support. Also, a few temporary volunteers had to return to work or had other family issues and have therefore opted out for a while.

This year we have also had to say goodbye to Denise Croucher who has now moved away from the village. She was a great help in visiting new users of the befriending scheme and was well liked by the people she visited.

Caroline Walsh will also be retiring as a befriender and co-ordinator in September. She has been so generous with the time and care she has given to all our users. She will be sadly missed. I would like to offer a huge thank you to both Denise and Caroline.

Hopefully, we will find some additional volunteers to enable us to continue this valuable work as the strange situation continues. We also look forward to a time when we can all meet up and for some of our volunteers and “befriendees” to see each other face to face!