



GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEMES NEWSLETTER



December 2023

WELCOME



Hello

It's been a busy first month for me: I've held four borough meetings (read on for information about what was discussed); attended some AGMs and committee meetings; distributed the annual survey (don't forget to complete this if you haven't already!); completed my DBS training and started carrying out checks and answered your email and phone enquiries. Phew!

I have had such a lovely warm, welcome from you all - thank you! And you've been very patient while I'm getting up to speed with everything - thank you again!

On the to-do list

- Look into setting up new schemes in areas of Surrey which lack volunteer drivers
- Continue to explore the best computerised model for schemes which want to move from a paper-based system
- Order more lanyards
- Collate the survey results
- Run a volunteer recruitment campaign across Surrey

I look forward to meeting more of you soon. In the meantime, the best way to contact me is via email - gns@surreyca.org.uk

Merry Christmas to you all.

Justine

Each year we ask you to complete our survey. The results help us to uncover the level of demand and identify future support needs for the schemes.

We'd be grateful if you would complete this year's survey which you can find here

TAKE SURVEY

**Closes
5 Jan**





Meeting

BOROUGH MEETINGS

Four borough meetings have taken place this month. Vicky Rushworth from Luminous, joined us to talk about how feedback about healthcare services can be channelled through their Healthwatch Surrey arm. Surrey Community Action's Warmth Matters project officers also joined us to talk about the support available for people who may be struggling to heat their homes this winter.

Guy Padfield-Wilkins from Woking Community Transport attended the Woking/Surrey Heath meeting to give an update on the future of community transport in Woking, which is in jeopardy as funding cuts are made. They currently provide 40,000 trips each year in the borough.

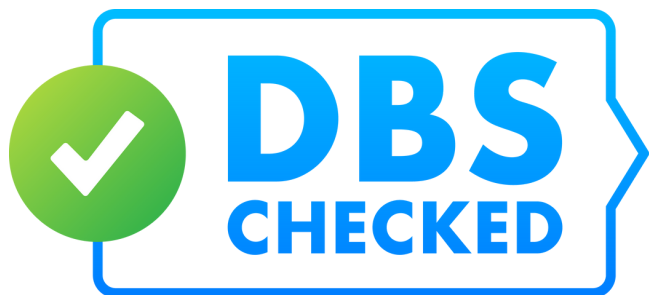
Richard Davies of Waverley Hoppa joined the Waverley meeting to talk about the services provided by the organisation including hospital transport.

Some common queries emerged during the meetings:

- Problems with hospital parking
- Problems with short notice of GP/hospital appointments and cancellations
- Volunteer recruitment
- GDPR
- DBS checks
- Mileage payments

The last meeting will take place at Astolat on Thursday 25 Jan for the schemes in Guildford – but if you haven't managed to attend a meeting so far, you are more than welcome to come along. Please email me – gns@surreyca.org.uk to let me know.

DBS CHECKS



DBS certificates should be checked annually. Where a volunteer has signed up for the update service and has given you permission to check their status, you can check this online. If you cannot check someone's status online and their certificate was issued more than three years ago, then they should apply for a new one.

Surrey Community Action provides an in-person and online [DBS service](#).

In-person checks at our office in Guildford cost £9.60 each. On-line DBS checks cost £35.52 (please note price increase).

Volunteers can register for the update service once they receive their certificate - it's free, quick and simple to do.

It is a legal requirement for ALL volunteer drivers to have a DBS certificate.

More information about the DBS process can be found [here](#).

MILEAGE

A common concern raised in the meetings is the HMRC mileage rate, which despite the rise in the cost of fuel, has not changed.

Mileage can only be paid to volunteers at 45p per mile. 5p per passenger per mile can also be claimed by a volunteer.

If the organisation a volunteer drives for, pays more per mile than the approved rates, the volunteer may have made a profit and may need to pay tax on the excess amount.

More information can be found [here](#).



NHS ISSUES

Inconsistencies with acceptance of the Driver on Duty cards at hospitals is an issue. The situation is fluid and seems to change without rhyme or reason!

Healthwatch Surrey is collecting your feedback to raise this with the NHS. I am also liaising with Surrey County Council to try and get this resolved too.

Wifi/phone reception issues have been raised as a problem at East Surrey and Ashford hospitals and again, Healthwatch are helping with this issue. I have attached a current list of hospital parking arrangements.



Late cancellations and invitations to appointments by surgeries and hospitals is also a growing problem.

Schemes are increasingly having to scramble for drivers or cancel jobs with very little notice. We've noticed an increase in calls to our offices from people desperate to secure transport for a last minute appointment. Some of these requests are also for transport to a medical appointment on a Saturday and Sunday.

Healthwatch are going to raise this issue too.

GDPR

We ran a very well attended GDPR course this month and received some great feedback about how helpful it was.

Although schemes have policies which mean that they don't keep information longer than necessary, some schemes have said that their insurance companies have requested that they retain all records to meet the terms of their insurance. If this is a specific requirement by your insurance company, then you'll need to adhere to their request and be able to demonstrate if necessary that this was a requirement made by them.



RECRUITMENT



Research from NCVO shows that volunteering numbers have not recovered from the pandemic. Many organisations in Surrey are reporting a decline in volunteer numbers.

There is no quick-win with volunteer recruitment - you need to try lots of different methods, many times to be effective.

Some suggestions from groups were:

- Leaflet drops (is this something your Guide or Scout unit can help with?)
- An article in your local MP or councillor's newsletter
- Stalls at village fetes and at supermarkets

Your local volunteer centre can also help with recruitment.



Car Canes

Have now arrived. If you couldn't collect yours at the annual meetings, please email to arrange a collection date

FEEDBACK

I've asked for your feedback following the meetings. You've told me that:

- You find the meetings useful
- You'd like more time for general discussion and connecting with other schemes
- Two hours is the right length of time

Some of you would like to see the meetings take place twice a year. Others would like to see the meetings take place in different locations. The preference for morning or afternoon was evenly split.

Moving forward, I'll trial some additional meetings and in different locations in early summer to see if this is useful.

CONTACT

The best way to reach me is via email: gns@surreyca.org.uk.

You can also call me on 01483 774101.

I work Monday–Thursday and I am away between 19 December – 5 January.