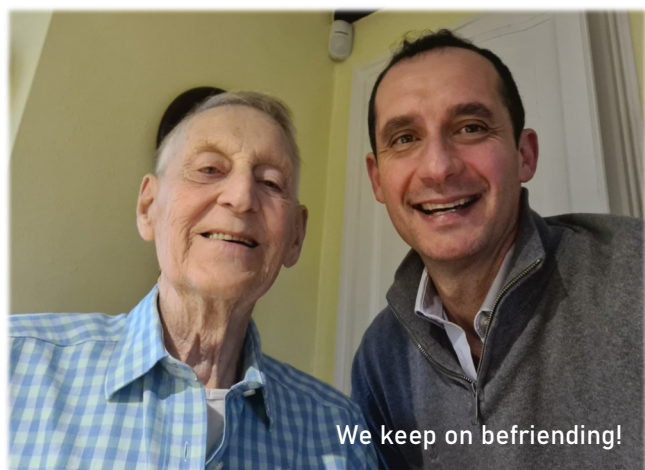




## Members' and Friends' Newsletter 2021-2022

### What We've Done

For Volunteer Action, like so many other organisations, 2021 has been a year of transition. During the lockdown we had introduced two new temporary services, Telephone Shopping and Friend on the Phone. Both proved to be very popular. When the lockdown was lifted, we were able to offer a more normal range of services. One, which many had missed, was Face-to-Face Befriending. That has now restarted and we decided to more than double the size of the Befriending by permanently adding Telephone Befriending. We have decided to computerise our Befriending record keeping to help us deal with the added workload. We have also made permanent another change introduced during lockdown – passengers now almost all pay monthly by invoice. We hope that the new approach is more convenient for our passengers who don't have to worry about having the right cash with them when there is often so much else to think about.



Volunteer Action has a board of trustees that meet every two months to oversee the running of the charity. Some of our trustees have been with us for many years, but all good things eventually come to an end. In the past year we said goodbye to three trustees. Colin Pendrill: who had been with us for 6 years but is still actively involved as a volunteer driver. David Bland was one of our longest serving trustees and had for many years acted as our treasurer. We will miss his depth of experience and wise counsel. Finally, Rupert Cadbury who had been a trustee for 16 years. His considerable IT skills were in constant use. His crowning glory was the creation of our Drives system which we use every day to take our bookings. We miss his expert knowledge at our trustee meetings. Fortunately, he still supports us with whatever IT problems arise. We are very lucky to have him.

Finally, you can't expect the chairman of a charity to write something without mentioning money. We fared well in 2020/21, making a small surplus. This year is looking less good but fortunately we have reserves. The trustees do spend a lot of time thinking about future funding.

*Stuart Anderson, Chairman*

Phone: 01832 275433

Email: [admin@volunteeractionoundle.org.uk](mailto:admin@volunteeractionoundle.org.uk)

Website: [volunteeractionoundle.org.uk](http://volunteeractionoundle.org.uk)

## Befriending at VA

Befriending face to face visits have now started again and how welcome they are proving to be! 'Pre-Covid' partnerships have resumed and we have set up extra pairings with new volunteers and members, with over 40 people currently being supported. Demand for our Friend on the Phone service has now diminished, compared to 18 months ago, but we are still supporting 60 people with regular calls.



While our Befriending Service aims at reducing our members' loneliness and isolation, our Volunteers also report how much they value and benefit from the scheme. It's not just a one-sided exercise. Real friendships develop. Bearing this in mind, do any members of our Car Scheme feel they could become a Befriender – either Face to Face or on the telephone? You would be helping another local person, gaining a new friend and supporting Volunteer Action. You can help from home or you could use the Car Scheme to get to and from Face to Face Visits. Please do get in touch to find out more.

Equally, if you feel you would benefit from using either of our Befriending Services, please contact the office.

## ! STOP PRESS – COURIER FRAUD !

*This is a true story of someone we know well.*

I met with this lovely, very lively elderly lady who doesn't look to be 82. She tells me the elaborate story of how she was a victim of a very serious scam/fraud back in September; the so called "Courier Fraud".

The criminals hacked her mobile phone and landline and pretended to be the 999 service, the police and her bank personnel. They explained that she was a victim of fraud and that they were investigating her case as they believed that the criminals hacked her bank account and that is why they "the police" were monitoring her. They were so convincing and elaborate in their replies and arguments, and convinced her to visit her two banks to collect large sums of money, claiming it may be counterfeit. They explained that the money needed to be sent off for fingerprint analysis, so she had to wear gloves and follow instructions how to bag the large amounts money she withdrew from her accounts.

They explained it was an undercover operation investigating bank corruption, so she was not to mention anything to the bank staff, once she got there to collect the money. They were on the phone supporting her each step of the way. The process lasted several days. They then explained how a courier, who was also undercover, would come to her house and collect her money, which she so carefully parcelled up. When she insisted, in the days that followed, that they provide her with a receipt for her money, they refused and stopped contacting her.

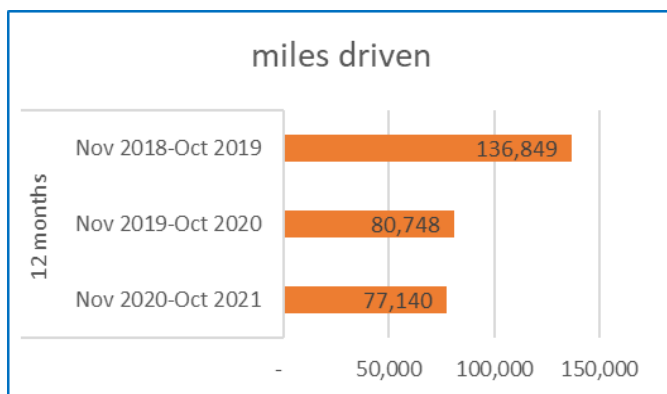
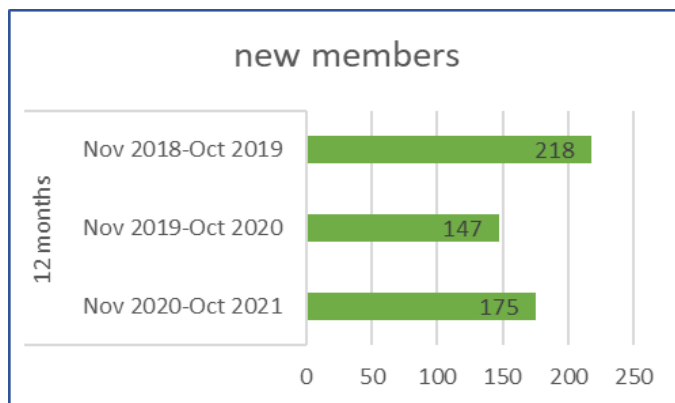
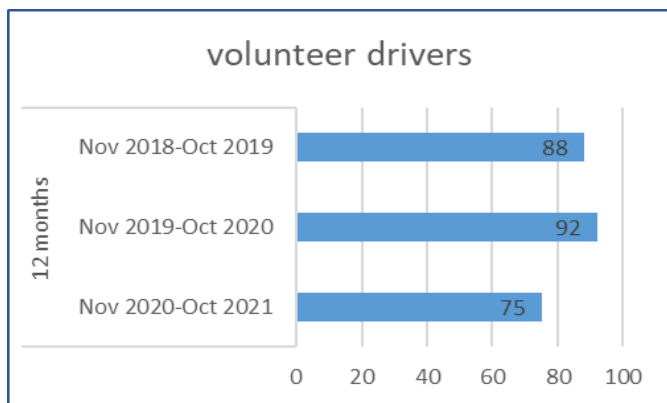
When she managed to get in touch with the real police, they started processing her case and informed her they had several similar cases in Northamptonshire. Unfortunately, the banks explained that it was difficult for them to return money to her due to the fact that she withdrew and gave the money away willingly.

She informed me that the event took a toll on her psychologically, as this ordeal was going on for several days. The criminals were so credible that, in the end, she could not discern what was real and what was not. She knew that she had to be strong, as she was putting herself through the same procedure all over again with the real police and bank staff.

This short article does not do the story full justice as this lady underwent great psychological trauma and suffered great financial loss, all of which cannot be encompassed within just a few paragraphs. Please be fraud aware. If you are concerned call Action Fraud on 0300 1232040, or speak to us and we will report for you.

## The Car Scheme in Numbers

These graphs are for the most recent 12-month period ending in October 2021, with comparisons to a year previously and a year before that – which takes us back to pre-Covid. You will see that we are still a long way off pre-pandemic levels when measured by miles driven. Our fabulous drivers have mostly stuck with us (once it was legal for them to drive!) and we have continued to sign up new members at about our usual rate.



**We are looking for a volunteer to join our trustee board.**

**If you have IT skills and experience and can offer to advise us, please contact the Chair of Trustees, Stuart Anderson, on our usual office number: 01832 275433.**

**Please pass this on to anyone you know who may be able to help us.**



We are pleased to announce a potential partnership with Pink House Arts, a local Community Interest Company, who would like to work with us to deliver craft sessions, probably on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis. These would be aimed at Befrienders, Befriendees and Car Scheme members. If this is the sort of activity you enjoy, please get in touch – no commitment, but we will add your name to our list. Possible activities could include card making, air dried ceramics, construction projects (e.g. bird feeders), weaving, glass painting, but Pink House Arts are open to suggestions from you.

01832 226 268

[info@pinkhousearts.org.uk](mailto:info@pinkhousearts.org.uk)

[www.pinkhousearts.org.uk](http://www.pinkhousearts.org.uk)



In these times of extremes we are still making the miles that matter!



## HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT US

### Thank you!

We are delighted to acknowledge the financial support we get from a wide range of individuals and organisations. A £5 one-off donation from a member or a friend is as welcome as the local authority funding we receive.

### VA Quiz 2021



The now traditional VA annual quiz is back for 2021. We would be very grateful if you could promote this quiz among family and friends. The quiz costs £1 per copy and is available:

- At outlets in Oundle
- Directly from VA

If you can help us, the quiz can also be purchased in packs of 5 or 10, which we would then ask you to resell. The packs can be collected and paid for in cash at Fletton House (let us know you're coming), or you can pay by BACS and we can email you a PDF of the quiz which you can print off or send electronically to your friends. Or any other sensible combination of the above, including delivery. We would greatly appreciate your support.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

### Ways to donate

1. For those who like a little 'gamble' there's the 100 club.
2. For those who like online shopping, there's the *easyfundraising* platform.
3. For those drawing up a will, please consider a legacy.
4. All one-off donations are very welcome, however big or small. You can donate through the website or by cash, cheque or bank transfer.
5. If you'd like to support us in the longer term, please consider setting up a standing order and donating annually, or monthly.
6. If you are a taxpayer, please complete a gift aid form and your donation can be increased by 25%. (see options 4 and 5 above).

The relevant form is enclosed.



### 100 CLUB



FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN CASH PRIZES EVERY MONTH AND SUPPORT VOLUNTEER ACTION, PLEASE JOIN OUR 100 CLUB. A MEMBERSHIP FORM IS ENCLOSED.



### A new and simple way to raise funds for Volunteer Action

There are over 4,000 shops and sites on board ready to make a donation – including eBay, Argos, John Lewis, ASOS, Booking.com and M&S – and it won't cost you a penny extra to help us raise funds.

All you need to do is:

1. To get started, search for *easyfundraising*, choose 'support a cause' then search for Volunteer Action.
2. Register (joining is free) – remember to untick receiving marketing info from them!
3. Start shopping.
4. After you've checked out, the retailer will make a donation to Volunteer Action at no extra cost to you whatsoever!
5. Every time you shop online, go to *easyfundraising* first to find the site you want and start shopping.

There are no catches or hidden charges and Volunteer Action will be really grateful for your donations.

*Thank you for your support.*

P.S. Links will also be directly available through the website or Facebook page.