



2024/25

Supporter Recognition Event - Barnwell Village Hall

This year's recognition event took place on 1st October at Barnwell Village Hall. With a quiz night, food from Stanley Street Eats and drinks from Amps of Oundle. All who attended enjoyed a fun and friendly evening - this was good going considering the floods and rain on the night!

Congratulations to the winners of our Long Service and Outstanding Contribution certificates this year.

Over 15 years service - Giles Butlin, Finola Stovin, John Hewitson, Linda Reed, Maureen Weston, Robert Stead & Eleanor Rayden.

Over 10 years service: Ann Field, Denise Clareboets, Jan Jerwood, Jane Parsell, John Weston, Julia Clay, Julie Tame, Sue Farrell, & Tony Hoyle.

Over 5 years service: Angela Hook, Christian Hill, Donna Thomas, Hana Smid, James MacWilliam, Jennie Dodworth, Michael Barnwell, Pete Burdett, Pete Humphreys & Surinder Deo.

Special Recognition: David Varley, Celia Flory, Jane Finlayson, Jane Parsell, Jerry Hutton, Nigel Reed & Linda Reed



A message from the Chair of the Trustees - David Cashmore



In my 2023 annual message I highlighted the new developments in our community car scheme with the launch of RoadXS and our increased Befriending activity, along with the expansion into Group Befriending. I am very pleased to report that 2024 has seen all of these developments flourish, and VA remains as busy as ever...if not actually busier!

One of our key challenges this year has been to navigate the significant changes in the way grant funding applications are operated. Rachel Dixon has embraced this new regime and successfully secured ongoing funding for the organisation which is very good news; and not only secures VA's financial viability but also raises VA's status as a proactive leading charity in the area.

On the Trustee front, Peter Burrows retired earlier in the year and our thanks go to him for his many years of service to the charity. This year we have welcomed two new Trustees to the board: John Pick and Sandra Church, both of whom bring their own individual experience and skillset to the charity.

As a volunteer driver myself, I am constantly reminded of the value of the service VA provides, when I hear comments from our members such as "I don't know what I'd do without VA". In turn I don't know what VA would do without the invaluable support from the community, our volunteers and our office team; so on behalf of the Trustees ...

THANK YOU!

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Welcome from our Chief Executive & Charity Manager, Rachel Dixon

Welcome to the VA Annual Newsletter, which is packed full of updates and useful information, which I hope you will share, if possible, to neighbours or anyone it might help. I'd like to take the opportunity to highlight two recent changes nationally that have had an impact locally. The NHS are introducing long awaited new clinics and therefore, demand on our car scheme has increased. If you are able to, please allow as much notice as possible when booking your journey with the VA office. Important information we require: **Drop off location name and address, time of the appointment and the length of time you expect to be at the appointment.** These are important details that enable our team to schedule volunteer drivers in the most economical way.

A challenge that some of our community maybe be facing this winter, is that of the removal of the Winter Fuel Allowance. This has opened up the opportunity to discover if you are eligible for pension credit, below are some contact numbers of agencies who are best placed to provide advice for you. Now is the perfect time to find out if you qualify.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to wish all our supporters, members, volunteers, trustees and staff a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Financial Advice Routes:

Age UK Northamptonshire: 01604 611200

Community Law Service: 01933 313020

Citizens Advice, East Northants: 01536 265501



Meet our new Trustees Sandra Church & John Pick

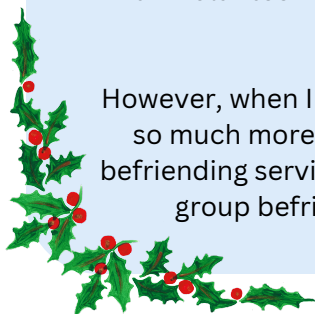


I am delighted to join the trustees of VA to provide support and guidance to the dedicated staff and volunteers of this amazing local charity. I have lived in Thrapston with my husband (and 2 cats) since 1997 and have seen it grow into a vibrant and friendly town.

Having worked for nearly 40 years in the NHS, in both a clinical role as a dietitian followed by various senior management roles, I want to use my experience of finance, governance, working with many staff groups and vulnerable people to help to provide strategic direction to the team. As the only Trustee resident in Thrapston, my initial focus will be to raise the profile of VA in the town and encourage more volunteers to become part of this worthwhile charity.

I have been involved with a people facing business in Oundle for many years, and retirement loomed. I was looking for something to get involved with and meeting both Volunteers and members of Volunteer Action it became evident what a vital service the transport scheme is. The Service makes a big difference to people's lives when they have appointments, shopping, hospital visits etc. and no means of getting there. Volunteer Action operates locally and in the surrounding area. Members tell me how nice it is to have a door to door service and also to have a friendly person to chat with. Volunteer Drivers certainly feel it is a vital service and an equally pleasant way to meet new people.

However, when I began to get involved, I very soon realized that Volunteer Action do so much more than the transport scheme. Another very important aspect is the befriending service. Both on a one to one basis or over the telephone. They also hold group befriending events bringing together people for social contact and entertainment.



The Community Car Scheme



Opening Times

(to book or confirm a journey)

Monday - Friday 9am - 1pm

01832 275433

Miles Driven by Volunteers = 131,000

Journeys completed = 12,500

Volunteering hours donated = 9,360 hours

A huge thank you to all our amazing volunteer drivers!



CHRISTMAS OPENING TIMES

Mon - 23rd Dec - 9am - 1pm

Tues - 24th Dec - **CLOSED**

Weds - 25th Dec - **CLOSED**

Thurs - 26th Dec - **CLOSED**

Fri - 27th Dec - 9am - 1pm

Mon - 30th Dec - 9am - 1pm

Tues - 31st Dec - 9am - 1pm

Weds - 1st Jan 25 - **CLOSED**

Thurs - 2nd Jan - Open as normal

Please make a note of the dates we are closed for bookings over the Christmas and New Year period.

We will be accepting **medical journeys only** between Christmas and New Year and up until the 3rd January 2024.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and support.

Please call the office to find out the name of your volunteer driver in good time for the journeys you book with VA.

Meet and Greet Pre-Book Volunteer Service



Do you require additional support in attending your hospital appointments?

Our volunteer will meet you at your chosen entrance of the hospital and assist you to your appointment.

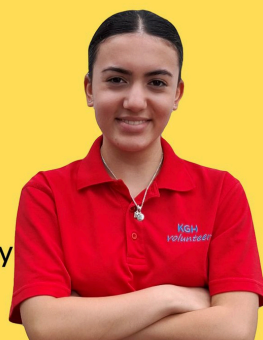
To book this service please contact **01536 491599**

Please note - this service operates;

Monday - Friday 9 - 3.30

Excluding Bank Holidays

Subject to Volunteer availability



Kettering Hospital Volunteers

Kettering General Hospital have launched a successful '**Volunteer Meet & Greet**' scheme (bookings details to the left of this page).

You can call and book a hospital volunteer to meet you outside the main entrance and they will provide an escort to your appointment. They will then bring you to meet your VA driver outside. They can also provide a wheelchair to support you on the day.

A similar scheme to the one at Peterborough Hospital - however you **must book in advance**.

Blue Badge application support

Did you know that Oundle Library can help you complete the online Blue Badge application? This is a vital service, as all applications and renewals have been migrated to an online system...only good if you have a computer!

Holding a blue badge, if you require the support, is also extremely helpful for our VA drivers, who are able to access closer access points for your journey.

Please call the number below to book a free of charge session with a helpful member of the Library team.

0300 126 3000

Befriending & Social Events

The Befriending Scheme demand has remained constant this year with many of our long-term partnerships continuing to see a positive impact and a steady recruitment of new volunteers to support the referrals we receive. A huge thank you to everyone and a warm welcome to our new volunteers. We are currently supporting 68 members with 65 volunteers.

This summer Angela organised and delivered a minibus day trip to Bosworth's Garden Centre, all attendees enjoyed a lovely lunch followed by a walk around the garden centre. Thank you to Oundle School for the loan of a minibus and the driver Duncan for the day. Keep an eye out for more details as Angela is planning to build on the success of this day for 2025.

Befriending at VA

227 attendees at our monthly social events
(calendar included in this pack)

1:1 Befriending Volunteers have provided
2,993 hours of support.

If you feel you would benefit from a befriending relationship, please do reach out to Angela and her team on 01832 275433 who will be only too happy to discuss the options and process of matching you to a volunteer.



Photo of the Summer minibus trip to
Bosworth's Garden Centre

Group Befriending in East Northants & Corby

Group Befriending has now been active for 12 months and has really highlighted a need for companionship in the communities we serve. Both the crafting event in Kings Cliffe and the community café at Waitrose, Oundle have been very successful and in addition we have introduced a Thursday coffee morning at The Good Bean café in Priors Hall. In collaboration with SPRING social prescribing, we also run a weekly accessibility walk around the Boating Lake in Corby, which is always very well attended. During the summer, when Oundle School were on holiday and their 660 Club put on hold, we ran a VA Summer Club so that those same people would be able to continue with some social activities. There was an average of 20 people coming to each session and this in turn has led to our setting up monthly crafting sessions at Stronglands Court in Oundle, beginning in January 2025. To sum up – it's been a very successful year!



Group Befriending at VA

813 attendees at sessions in East Northamptonshire and
Corby!

Would you like to get involved in organising an event or cafe meet up? Please call the office on 01832 275433 to discuss.

Office Volunteers of Volunteer Action



The busy Volunteer Action car scheme office based in Fletton House, Oundle, is supported everyday, come rain or shine, by a volunteer base on a rota system. They help to answer phones, allocate journeys to volunteer drivers, complete regular admin tasks and so much more. On behalf of the office staff and the community, I would like to thank each and every one, as you truly are the backbone of the VA office.



**John Weston
Angie Holmes
Caroline Yeo
Mel Lee
Jennie Dodworth
Maureen Weston**



Together they have donated over **900** hours of volunteering time to the local community in the last financial year.

A warmest of welcomes to our new office volunteer joining us in the winter of 2024:
Ellie Johnston

Thank you to our supporters & partners of 2024/25



**North
Northamptonshire
Council**

Woodford & Co.
PROPERTY CONSULTANTS & AUCTIONEERS

**McCARTHY STONE
FOUNDATION**

Amps
WINE MERCHANTS
Oundle



**Brigstock
Living Advent
Calendar**



**Barnwell
Parish Council**

**Integrated Care
Northamptonshire**



Masonic
Charitable Foundation



Colemans

NHS
**Cambridgeshire &
Peterborough**

Augean PLC

**Northamptonshire
Community Foundation**
Giving back to our county

Oundle Vintage Festival with Oundle & District Care

Volunteer Action were invited to join together with Oundle & District Care to run the afternoon tea and cake at this year's Oundle Vintage Festival on 18th May. What an amazing and busy time it was!! Volunteers baked a truly tasty array of cupcakes, muffins, large sponges, tray bakes and scones with jam and cream. We paired a slice of cake and a cup of coffee or tea in a vintage tea cup and saucer on the day.

The doors opened at 10am and we didn't stop serving until 4.30pm. Volunteers from both charities worked constantly - but what a fun time it was!



Teams of cadets supported the event on the day with the clearing and washing up of cups and plates. We were entertained by a variety of different musicians that played throughout the day in the Queen Victoria Hall on West Street, Oundle. A lot of happy customers helped us to raise just over £2,000 - we shared this 50/50 between the two charities.

Thank you to The Oundle Vintage Festival team for inviting VA and Oundle & District Care to arrange the event.



Christmas Raffle Tickets



This is your last chance to purchase a Christmas raffle ticket (must be purchased by 16th December. The prize winning draw will take place on 18th December)
Prizes: £100 Waitrose Voucher, case of wine from Amps Wine Merchants, A family day pass for Sacrewell Farm, £30 Barn Garden Centre Gift Voucher

Priced at £1 per ticket or £5 for a book of 5 tickets – this is a much needed fundraiser for VA.
Please contact admin@volunteeractionundle.org.uk
or call 01832 275 433 to purchase yours today!

GOAL

Market stalls and Fundraising

Thank you to everyone who has donated their time to join us at a Village Hall and Street Market the last year, from The Conker Championships to Thrapston Charter Fair and visiting villages in between, we have enjoyed every one of the events and seeing everyone! We still have the Oundle and Thrapston Christmas Markets to look forward to on 30th November and 7th December.

A huge thank you to Thrapston Beer Festival and Brigstock's Living Advent Calendar for choosing VA as charity recipients this year.

Colemans of Oundle have also chosen VA as the charity recipient for their fundraising Christmas Cards this year - please do pop in and purchase a pack.

Thank you to Graham Drage who raised over £450 in a sponsored walk in 2024 and to the London Marathon runners Vic & Carl Cocking who raised a whopping £2,623!
Could you help raise funds for VA with a sponsored walk or similar? We would love to hear from you!

How to leave a gift to Volunteer Action in your Will

If you, or your loved ones, have benefited from the support and service that Volunteer Action provides, why not consider leaving us a gift in your will. I hope that the information below will help to answer any questions you might have about leaving this special gift to the Charity:

Why should I leave a gift in my Will to Volunteer Action?

Gifts left to VA are absolutely vital to our work. They enable us to run our essential services for older people - including our Community Transport Scheme and Befriending Services. They help us to expand our work and look for new ways to tackle the issues facing people as they get older, such as poverty, loneliness and isolation. Much of what we do would not be possible without gifts in wills.

There are 3 main types of gift you can leave in your will:

- A residuary gift is a percentage of your estate once any specified gifts have been made to friends and family. Many of our supporters choose to leave this type of gift because its value will be dependent on the value of your estate at any given time rather than a set amount. This provides supporters with more flexibility when deciding how to ensure that their loved ones are well looked after first and foremost.
- A pecuniary gift is a specific amount of money. It's worth bearing in mind that the effects of inflation mean that this type of gift is likely to lose value over time and may end up being less than you initially intend.
- A specific gift is a gift of a specified item – such as a personal possession, land, buildings or stocks and shares.

Is it difficult to change my will to leave a gift to Volunteer Action?

Not at all. In fact, if there are no other changes you want to make, you might decide to add a supplement to your will to make an amendment (known as a codicil).

Let us know about the gift you have chosen to leave VA today on admin@volunteeractionundle.org.uk - we thank you for your support.

Become a Friend of Volunteer Action

You can choose to become a Friend of VA by setting up a regular, monthly donation via Standing Order in any amount to suit you. This monthly amount helps to support the services we provide to the local community.

You will receive a monthly update via email, an invite to our social events to say thank you to volunteers and supporters and a warm feeling knowing that you are instrumental in the survival of a vitally needed service in East Northamptonshire.

Please use the details below to set up your standing order to Volunteer Action on a monthly basis - any amount you can comfortably donate will help us continue our much needed service to the community.

Bank name: CAF Bank
Account Name: Volunteer Action
Sort Code: 40-52-40
Account Number: 00031964



Other ways you can help support the Charity



We really appreciate the support we receive, both in time given by our volunteers and in terms of financial contributions.

Below are some ways that you could help to support the charity whilst shopping online at no extra cost to you, Gift Aid information and also info on our popular 200 Club, a chance to win each month whilst providing much needed funds to help VA support as many people as possible.

Join the 200 Club

Don't forget to renew your membership or join as a new member for 2025's 200 Club - we have increased the numbers available and increased the prize money! - Payment details on the membership form enclosed.
Recommend us to your friends and family - it is now open to all!
Join us today and help support VA!



A new and simple way to raise funds for Volunteer Action

Please remember to use easyfundraising every time you shop online! Over 7,000 brands will donate, so you can raise FREE donations for us no matter what you're buying. These donations really help us out, so please sign up if you haven't yet. It's easy and FREE! You can get started at:

easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/volunteeraction



Are you a UK taxpayer? If you are, this means we can claim extra money from HMRC on top of your donations (with your completed form). An extra 25p for every £1 you donate at no extra cost to you!

Gift Aid forms are available for collection from our office or we can post to you. We can also email a PDF - please call the office for more details.