



Melksham & District Link
E-Newsletter
Issue 19 February 2022



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Message from the Chairman.

“I expect (hope) you all read my email asking for a volunteer to take over from Heather as Link Secretary in October. Sadly, there hasn’t been any interest shown so far. All I can do is to ask again if any of you, your family or friends would be interested in taking on this role? Please do get in touch with either Heather or myself to discuss.

We’re looking at updating our website(www.melkshamlink.com) and would appreciate your views on what should be included for the general public and for the members section, which is restricted to Link volunteers? Please let me or Danny Holland know your views (danny-holland@hotmail.com).

As Covid is still with us, the recommendation is to continue with existing practices regarding mask wearing. Certainly, coordinators will be asking clients to continue wearing them. And also because of Covid, we have decided it’s safer to postpone again the Volunteers Cheese and Wine evening from 10th March to Thursday 12th May.

Most of our volunteers gave their opinion as to whether we should widen the service we offer to clients and the vast majority are in favour. At the recent Committee meeting the decision was to widen the service to include such trips as visiting day centres, relatives in care homes or hospitals, lunch and similar clubs on a 3-month trial basis. The big proviso being that we will continue to give priority to medical appointment trips and that non-medical trips won’t be allocated until the Friday of the week before they are wanted. As always drivers are free to choose which trips they will do. AND on that note, a plea to our drivers to let the duty coordinator know on the Monday of your availability for the following week, including weekends. It’s one call/text/email for you whilst it can

be 20 or more for the coordinator. A big thank you to those who do give their availability in a timely fashion.”

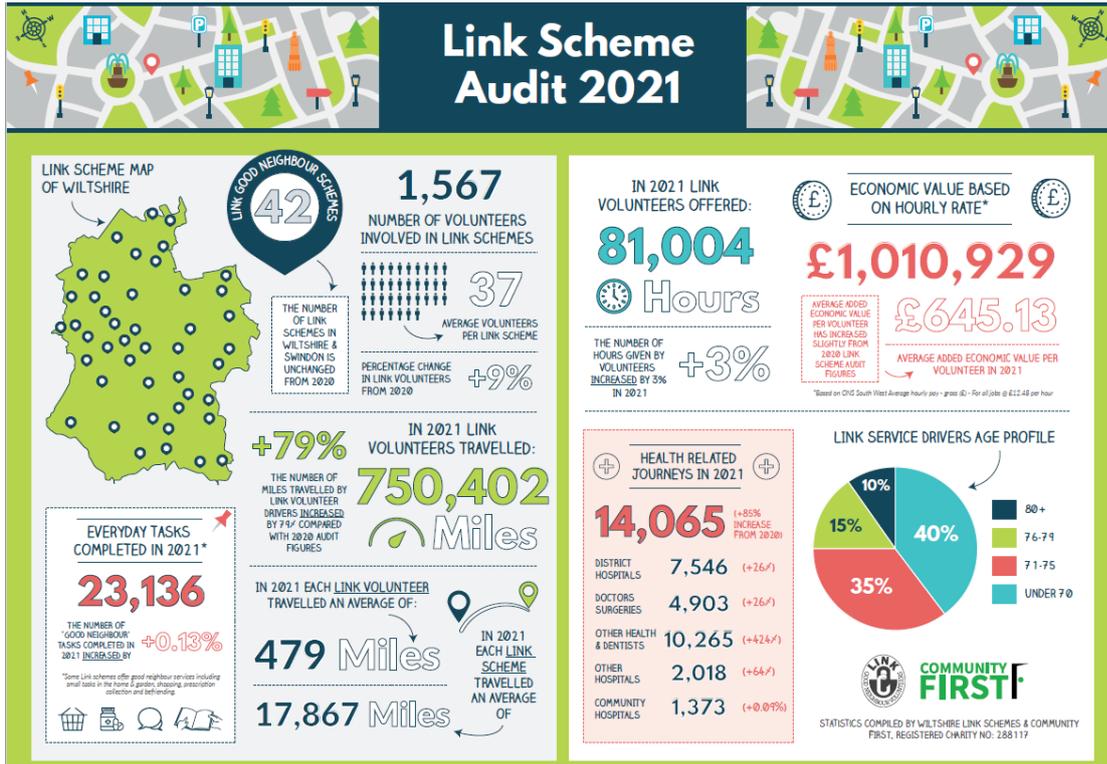
Kind regards

Richard

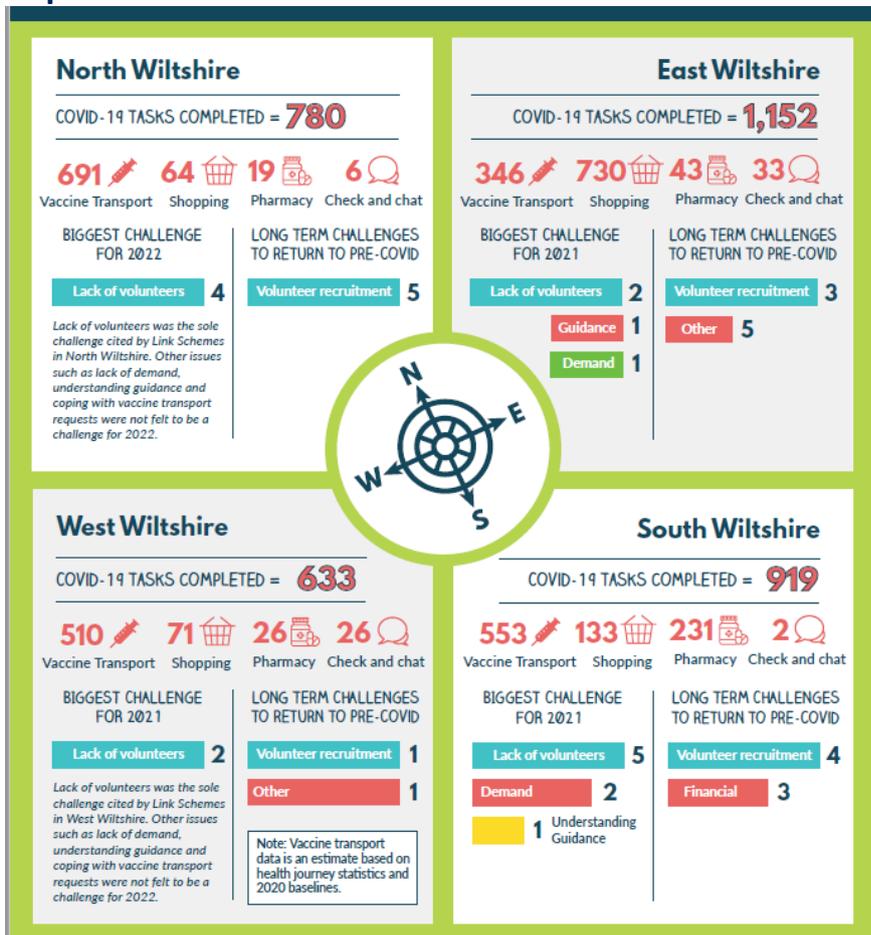
Link Audit: Melksham & District Link Comparison Stats.

Type	Destination	2019	2020	2021
District	Great Western Hosp	88	37	46
Hospitals	RUH Bath	1044	507	799
	Salisbury District	27	7	9
Community	Chippenham Hospital	71	23	47
Hospitals	Devizes Hospital	16	3	12
	Melksham Hospital	107	26	53
	Marlborough Hospital	3	1	0
	Trowbridge Hospital	31	12	32
	Warminster Hospital	3	1	2
Other	Bath Circle	18	9	37
Hospitals	Bath Clinic	31	24	20
	BRI	23	19	17
	Bristol Eye	16	4	11
	Bristol Southmead	51	29	13
	Devizes Green Lane	9	0	9
	Others	133	13	13
GP Surgeries	GP Surgeries NE Wilts	34	0	5
	GP Surgeries West Wilts & Devizes	197	161	149
Other	Dental Care	57	22	49
Health	Opticians	12	6	11
Journeys	Devizes Treatment Centre	49	9	32
	Leg Clinics	164	17	49
	Covid Jabs	0	0	79
	Trowbridge Health Centre	0	2	10
	Dorothy House Lymphedema Clinic	0	0	12
	Other Health Journeys	48	10	0
Non-Health	Care Homes	31	6	9
Journeys	Respite Care	49	10	0
	Alzheimer's Day Centres	0	0	30
	Others	47	0	0
	Grand Total	2359	958	1555
	Miles Travelled	74641	33872	47660
	Volunteer Hours	9005	4210	5250
	Number of Volunteers	45	47	54

Wiltshire Link stats from Community First



Impact on Covid-19 Stats



Open Door

Open door has remained closed for 2 years now. At the recent committee meeting it was decided that Open Door would remain closed and not reopen. The committee were very mindful of the health of the hostesses and the Covid situation. The committee would like to record a big thank-you to the hard work and dedication of the hostesses over the past years, namely Doreen Drew, Tessa Missen, Bridget Parker and Elaine Thomson. An open-door style coffee morning is held every Tuesday in That Meeting Space (formerly the Art Café) by local community groups.

If at some point in the future the situation changes and there is a definite need for an open door type the committee will review it.

Cheese & Wine Evening New Date

The committee has decided to delay the social evening until Thursday 12th May; Covid is still about and we feel it will be much safer when the weather is warmer and the room can be ventilated more. More details to follow closer to the time.

New Coordinators

Dee Pesse writes "After a recent ad for a coordinator on social media, I've had two encouraging responses. Nothing in tablets of stone yet, but I think at least one of these ladies will be on our rota within a few weeks"

Safeguarding Awareness

Dee Pesse writes "There was a distressing incident recently which is worth sharing. Our driver Bridget Pitcher got no reply when she called to pick up her client at the arranged time. There was no next of kin emergency number for her to call. She informed the duty coordinator Jo, who decided to call a committee member. I picked up the call, and after speaking to Bridget, we (Richard and I) decided to call at the client's house. Despite knocking, phoning and shouting through the letterbox, no one came to the door. We could hear a faint almost inaudible response, and looking through the letterbox, Richard could see the client sitting in his chair. I thought the safest bet was to call an ambulance. They were extremely busy but said they'd get there asap. We only had time to wait for about twenty mins, but realised the ambulance had arrived when walking close by later that day. Richard spent time talking to social services, to alert them to the fact this man probably needed their help.

I called local hospitals, but there was no record of our client being admitted, but I was driving by the clients house a couple of days later and noticed the door was ajar. When I called the clients landline, it was answered by a lady who was his niece. She informed me that sadly he had died while waiting for the ambulance. If Link had not been involved, he could still be there now, as it was clear that no one was looking out for him.

Bottom line is could drivers please call the coordinator if no reply from clients when you arrive to pick up. You never know what's happening the other side of the door.

Non-Medical Appointments.

As from Monday 21st February 2022, on a 3-month trial basis. we will take clients to non-medical appointments, subject to the provisos listed below.

1. Medical appointments will take priority over non-medical.

2. Clients booking a non-medical trip must be told that there is no guarantee that a driver will be available for that or any future trips and that medical appointments take priority.
3. Allocation of drivers for non-medical trips will not be made until the Friday of the week prior to the appointment.
4. No more than 50% of the drivers still available for the relevant day can be asked to undertake a non-medical trip. The other 50% of available drivers should remain on standby for late medical appointments.
5. Clients for non-medical trips must be of the same category as medical ones, in that they must have no reasonable alternative means of attending their appointment. Coordinators will need to question such clients closely, but diplomatically, to establish a real need.
6. Clients for non-medical trips will be given a brown donation envelope in a similar way to medical trip clients.
7. Only those drivers who have expressed a willingness to undertake non-medical trips should be asked to do so.
8. In general, only the following non-medical trips will be accepted and even then, the client must comply with eligibility as at 4 above. In doubt or difficulty coordinators should refer to the Chairman, who will consult with other Committee members as necessary.
 - a. Attending the Free Lunch Club at Bowerhill on a Wednesday.
 - b. Attending a day centre, e.g., Alzheimer's centre.
 - c. Visiting a close relative in a care home or hospital.
 - d. Visiting a terminally ill close friend or relative in a hospital or hospice.
 - e. Attending a U3A health & fitness club in Bowerhill.

Drivers Availability

Just another reminder to all drivers to let the duty coordinator know on the Monday of your availability for the following week, including weekends. It's one call/text/email for you whilst it can be 20 or more for the coordinator. A big thank you to those who do give their availability in a timely fashion. This one thing makes it so much easier for our coordinators and they really appreciate it. Thank you.

Starters and Leavers

A big welcome and thanks to the following new volunteers who have started recently

- Philip Davis – Driver
- Henry Lumley – Driver
- Liz Lumley - Driver

Farewell and thank you to these volunteers who have resigned recently.

- Emma Putman – Driver
- Sue Chislett – Driver
- Jon Hall – Driver
- Jim Law - Driver