



Summer Newsletter

May 2023 www.melkshamlink.com No.24



Goodbye and Welcome

Over the last few weeks we've said goodbye to two long serving Co-ordinators, Jo Harries and Frances O'Donohoe. We wish Jo and Frances well and take with them our grateful thanks for shouldering this important role for Melksham Link for many years. The job of Coordinating can be tricky at times and it is so vital to our role in providing transport. Although we have 40 drivers on 'the books' matching them up to clients, days, times and locations is challenging.

We are fortunate to have recently gained three new Coordinators. We welcome Gillean MacDonald, Helen Romaine and John Rowley. We are very grateful to them for volunteering. Please bear with the new members of the team as they "learn the ropes".

Campus Display

Our Static Display at the Community Campus foyer created a lot of interest and offers of volunteers. We are very grateful to the Campus for allowing us the opportunity. A great many leaflets were taken over the three weeks the display was in situ.

Practical Matters

Yellow Cards

Please try to keep hold of these and ask clients to return them to you at the end of a drive.

Donations and Expense Forms

Please hand these in on a monthly basis. They must be with Richard Clark or Phil Davis on or before the first Tuesday of the month. If you 'save up' several months worth of donation envelopes before handing them in it does create an issue for our Treasurers; it can mean they have very large sums of money in their houses at certain times. (With 40 active drivers currently the donations add up).

Drivers Handbook & Website

I hope you have all received and read your digital copy of the new Driver's Handbook recently. It was sent out by email in February. It is now available on the Volunteers section of the website. If you have not done so please sign up for access to the secure area of our website - Melksham.com.

You'll find lots of useful information there. If you need a hard copy of the new Driver's Handbook please contact Liz Rowley **07540 996148**. We'll get a copy to you.

The committee

May 2023

Chair - Liz Rowley

07540 996148

rowleyliz58@gmail.com

Vice Chair - Vacant

Treasurer - Richard Clark

01225 708110 07960

285279

Richard.clark2@talktalk.net

Assistant Treasurer - Phil Davis

07580 269264

davis.phil@blinternet.com

Secretary - Katherine Mills

07749 499491

k_mills85@hotmail.com

Driver's Rep - Martin Elson

07773 581950

martinelson1@gmail.com

Recruitment Officer &

Webmaster - Ian Argyle

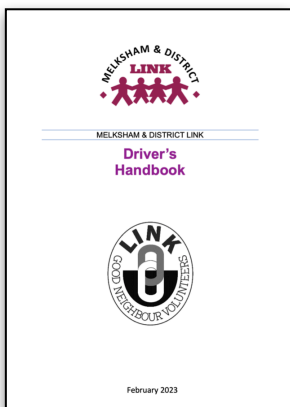
07920 194302

ian.argyle68@gmail.com

Volunteer Support Officer - Pat Cook

07543 681673

cook.pat@blinternet.com



Committee News

Martin Elson has joined the Committee as a Driver's Rep. Please contact him on **07773 581950** if there are any matters you wish to raise.

Ian Argyle has also joined the committee. He is currently our web master but has also volunteered to help with recruitment and Volunteer Support.

We would also like to invite others to join particularly if you can help with publicity side. Just contact Liz. And we do need a Vice-Chair



Coordinators Handbook

Fresh off the press is a Coordinators Handbook published this May for new Coordinators. Ron Walby & John Rowley pulled together existing resources and advice to create a Training guide for new Coordinators. It is already being used by our new recruits to guide them through some of the practical tasks they have to perform, such as how to input appointments into the online database, how to pull

together Driver availability and dealing with unexpected situations that might arise.

Who to Contact about...

Welfare

If you have any concerns over the welfare of a Client - Contact Ruth King on **07765 826950**,

Health and Safety -

Contact Peter Colegate on **01225 703779**.

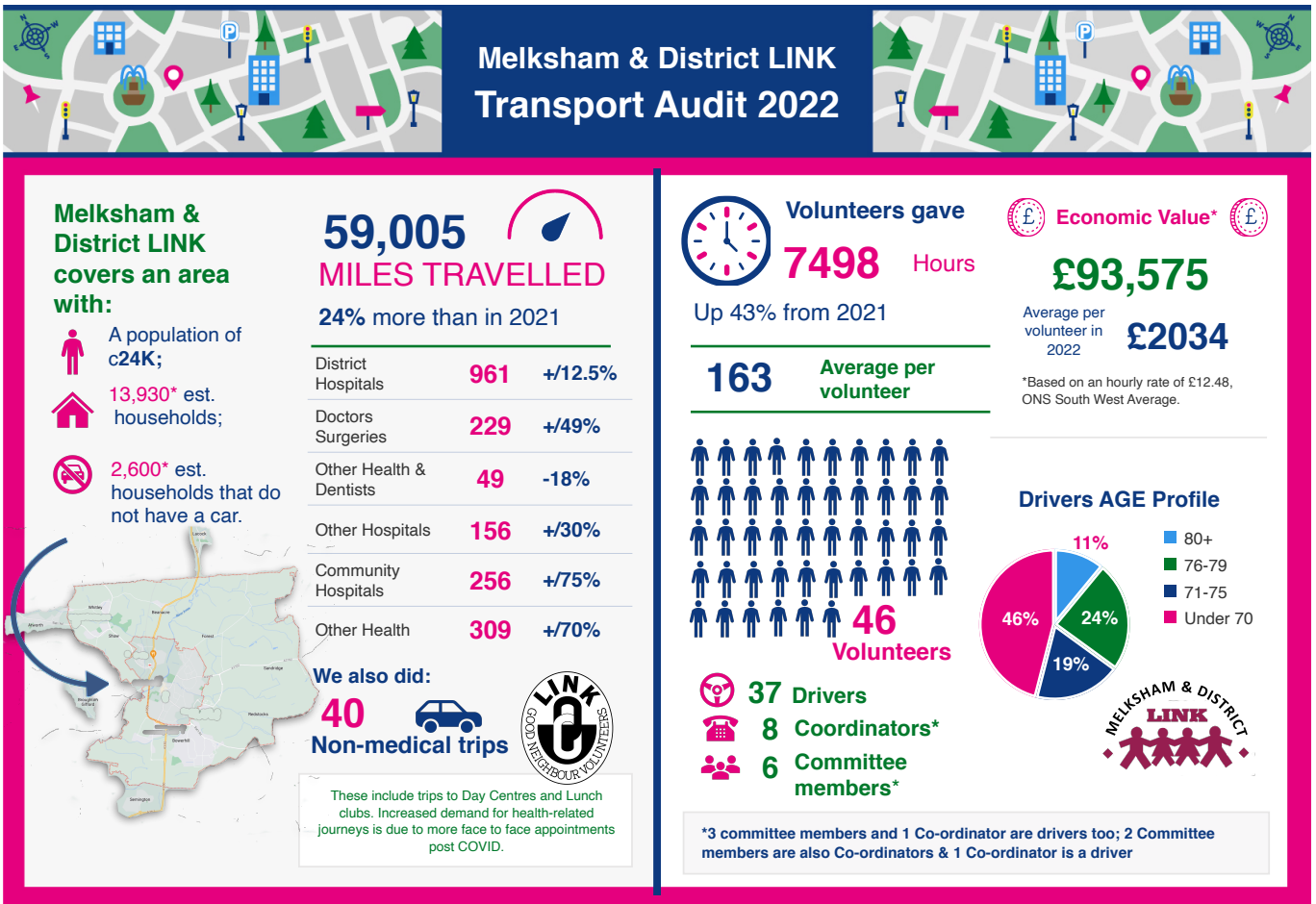
DBS & SAGE Driving Assessments

Peter Simmonds deals with your DBS. If you have any issues he can be contacted on **01225 709156**

Feedback

If you have any issues during a drive don't hesitate to let the Duty Coordinator know on the Link phone **07979 129052**

They can make a note to alert other drivers or contact the correct person to deal with the issue.



Part of the static display at the Melksham Campus. The template used by Community First was adapted to feature data about Melksham Link in 2022.

Link makes a valuable contribution to the Community. A snapshot of one week.

As most of you are aware from your own personal experience Melksham & District Link really does provide a vital service for our community. Here is a snapshot of one week in April.

The last week in April was chosen on which to shine a spotlight.

In that week our team of drivers completed 65 requests for Drives. Monday was the busiest day that week with 16 requests, the least busy was Tuesday with 9 requests. Overall Requests were up 58% on the previous week.

Our current pool of drivers is 40 strong. To satisfy the 65 requests 30 drivers were used. 7 of the team were on holiday or unavailable. 2 drivers with availability were not used.

52 Individual clients were driven to their medical appointments. One Client had 5 appointments in that week. Four Drivers carried out 4 drives each, and 5 other drivers undertook 3 separate drives.

There were 6 cancelled appointments.

The earliest appointment was 6.45am for an appointment at the RUH. The latest time was 4.15pm. Driver Graham Thurlow was up with the lark for a 6.00am pick up for that RUH run. Driver John Duffin had the latest pick up time that week with a 3.45 collection of a one-way trip from the Old Silk Works in Warminster to the client's home.

The furthest destination was Bristol Royal Infirmary, the nearest was Melksham Campus.

A top 10 of destinations was headed by the Royal United Hospital in Bath with 26 journeys. This will come as no surprise, as it has become almost a second home for many of our drivers.

Bristol Royal Infirmary and Gifford's Surgery were joint 2nd with 5 visits each. In all 21 different destinations were visited. Of the 65 journeys, 57 were Wait & return, 8 were 1-way. Our drivers covered 1,864 miles, of which 936 miles were journeys to the Royal United Hospital. The true figure will be higher since the driver's journey to the client has not been included in this headline figure.

In the week 35 of the 65 were Distance journeys, that is Bath and beyond. 13 were Local, while another 17 were destinations outside Melksham but short of Bath.

In this snapshot week Melksham Link satisfied all requests for medical transport. It is a tribute to the time and effort that all Drivers and Coordinators put in that maintains this vital service.

There are days when requests outstrip the resources and the drivers we have. These are the days when Coordinators scratch their heads to juggle and shuffle, calling in favours, to keep it all working.

Our Snapshot was revealing and very positive

Three Key Findings

1. RUH is the No.1 Destination for Melksham Link. In April as a whole there were 60 visits
2. As the month went on demand grew. Over the 4 weeks in April there were 44 requests each week on average.
3. Little evidence that Health service strikes or two bank holidays dented demand.

ONE WEEK BY NUMBERS

Last
Week of
April
Week 17

1864

Miles
Clocked
on Link
Journeys

40

Active
Drivers
in Week
17

30
Used

936

Miles
covered
in
journeys
to RUH

Monday
was
busiest
day

16

Requests

58%

More
requests
than
previous
week

65

Requests received
for Transport
RUH No1
Destination
26 Journeys

52

Clients
Transported
during
week

£836

Value of Miles
Covered

6

Cancellations



**Earliest
Pickup Time
6.00am for 6.45am
appt. at RUH**



Royal United
Hospital - Bath
No.1
Destination

26

Journeys

Top 3 Destinations

1. Royal United Hospital 26
2. Bristol Royal Infirmary 5
3. Giffords Surgery 5

4 Drivers made **4** Journeys

5 Drivers made **3** Journeys

13

Local Drives
within
Melksham
(20%)

*Week Managed by
2 Coordinators*



Melksham & District Link is one of 42 schemes that operate in Wiltshire providing a service to help those who have no other way of getting to their medical appointments.

The demand for our service continues to grow. In 2022 our drivers covered 59,005 miles, while making 1,960 trips to Hospitals, Surgeries and other health destinations. Some were local within Melksham, others were to Hospitals in Bath, Bristol and Swindon.

Our volunteers gave 7498 hours during 2022, up 43% on 2021.

Melksham and District LINK is a registered Charity and is part of the Good Neighbour Scheme supported by Community First in Wiltshire.

Melksham & District Link
Registered Charity No. 1044337



How can you help Melksham Link?

Melksham Link Volunteers perform a number of different roles, including driving, coordinating and administration.

If any of these roles interest you please contact us to find out more. We are currently recruiting more volunteers.

Contact: **07979 129052**
Email: melkshamlink@gmail.com
www.melkshamlink.com

We are always looking for new volunteers to support Melksham & District LINK. If you want to meet new people, make friends and give something back to your community, we want to hear from you!

To find out more about volunteering with LINK, please give us a ring on **07979 129052** or send us an email to melkshamlink@gmail.com. One of the team will make contact with you.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

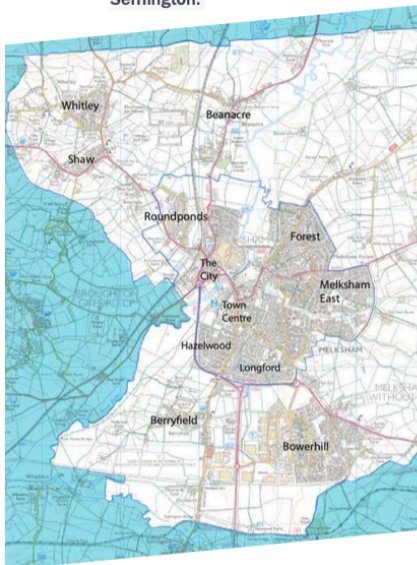


Melksham & District LINK serves

Melksham and the surrounding villages.

These include:

- Shaw
- Whitley
- Beanacre
- Forest
- Bowerhill
- Atworth
- Broughton Gifford
- Lacock
- Semington.



Charity No. 1044337

Do you live in the Melksham area?

Could you spare a few hours to help your local Link Scheme?

We need

- Volunteer Drivers
- Coordinators
- Committee Members

Melksham & District LINK is always looking for people to support our service as a volunteer.

Volunteering is a great way to stay active, meet new people and help vulnerable and isolated residents in your community. Volunteering roles include drivers, coordinators and committee members.

We can offer you training, and induction to support you in your volunteer role. We will also reimburse volunteer drivers for mileage and travel expenses incurred through their role as a volunteer.



Volunteer Drivers take clients to and from medical appointments, wait for them in between. A mileage allowance of 45p per mile and out of pocket expenses are paid to Volunteer Drivers. Totally flexible. Hours/Days/Time - You Choose.



Link Coordinators take phone calls from clients and match their needs with available Volunteer Drivers. Link Coordinators may need to prioritise requests for help with transport, depending on volunteer numbers. Laptop and phone provided to record details. Empathy & good organisational skills. Working from your own home 2 or 3 days every 4 weeks.



Administrative/Committee - There are a variety ways volunteers can be involved with helping to organise and oversee our service, supporting volunteers and maintaining links with other community and volunteer organisations locally. It may include help with publicity or recruitment.