



Autumn Newsletter

September 2023 www.melkshamlink.com No.25

AGM 7.30pm - Thurs 12 October - Riverside

Wine/beer/nibbles - Please RSVP to Secretary Katherine Mills



River & Food Festival

Link makes its pitch

On a beautiful sunny Saturday Melksham Link took part in the annual 2-day River and Food Festival in King George V Park. The event continues to grow every year.

Along with other Volunteer and Charitable organisations a team of Link volunteers were on hand to talk to visitors about what we do. The main aim for Link is attracting new volunteers. Recruitment is the number 1 issue for many of the 41 Link Schemes operating in Wiltshire. Having a presence at this well attended event is essential to get our message across.



Website News

All of the important documents that Volunteers might need can be found in the secure Volunteer Section of our Website.

This can be accessed by clicking on the top right button of the main menu. Two-thirds of our current volunteers now have access to this part of the website. If you want to use this facility you just need to sign up on the website. Webmaster Ian Argyle will give you access rights.

There you can find a digital copy of the Driver's Handbook, the Expenses claim form if you have run out, together with past copies of the quarterly newsletters, as well as official documents like committee meeting minutes and policies.

There is also Ian's reflections on being a Link Driver - "Under the Bonnet" and the new Risk Assessment document.

The Committee

Sept 2023

Chair - Liz Rowley

Vice Chair - *Vacant*

Treasurer - Richard Clark

Assistant Treasurer - Phil Davis

Secretary - Katherine Mills

Drivers Rep - Martin Elson

Volunteer Support & Recruitment Officer - Pat Cook



Demand for Link up by 30%

Month on month comparison with last year reveals that we are getting more requests each month. On average we are getting 9 requests a day for a journey to a medical appointment. On exceptionally busy days this can be considerably more. The 7th June was a case in point when Link found drivers for 19 clients. The RUH is by far the most visited destination with 724 visits in eight months which is 42% of all journeys.

As we enter the flu jab season the demand is likely to continue at this level through to the end of the year.

Meet the Coordinators

We currently have 6 Coordinators who share the Duty Coordinator role. They are **Ron Walby**, who has been a long serving Link Volunteer, and is the go to person when the online software misbehaves, **Jackie Hislop** who has been busy training up our new Coordinators who have joined the team this year, and **Ruth King**, who uniquely is also a Driver as well as a Coordinator. Joining the team this year has been **Gillean MacDonald**, **John Rowley** and **Helen Romaine**. There is always space for another Coordinator so if you know of anyone who might be interested get in touch

Late Notice Requests

On the evidence of the last few weeks we are getting a flurry of late appointment requests. It seems hospitals are asking clients to come in at short notice more often. We were able to satisfy most of these requests. If this pattern is repeated in coming weeks we may have difficulties. With increased demand for our drivers it is essential that Coordinators know who they can ask to fulfil a request. Any availability, however small, can be extremely useful.

Just a reminder that it helps the Duty Coordinator immensely if they have a full picture of Driver Availability by close of play on a Monday, which is 4.00pm.

Annual General Meeting

Melksham and District Link's Annual General Meeting will be held on **Thursday 12 October 2023** at the Riverside Club, Bath Road, Melksham commencing at 7.30pm. This will be a fairly short, formal meeting followed by drinks and nibbles.

All the existing officers with the exception of Pat Cook will be continuing in their roles. Liz Rowley took on the role as Chairperson following the resignation of Richard Bell, due to ill health in January. Her appointment as Chairperson needs to be confirmed at the AGM. There is a vacancy for Vice Chairperson and Recruitment Officer to replace Pat Cook. If you would like to nominate anyone, please do so to Katherine Mills by **Friday 15 September**. You are welcome to nominate yourself if you wish. If there are any points you wish to raise at the meeting, please also let Katherine know by **Friday 15 September** to K_mills85@hotmail.com

The agenda together with the 2022/23 report and minutes of the last AGM will be emailed to you prior to the meeting. If you wish to receive a hardcopy of the documents, please let us know. We are looking forward to a good turnout so all are welcome, please feel free to bring a plus one. Drinks and nibbles will be available after the meeting. Please RSVP to Katherine so we can gauge numbers for catering purposes.



Practical Matters

Drivers

Availability by 4.00pm on Mondays.
Flexibility is Key.

Envelopes & Donations - hand in monthly - please don't hold onto them.

New brown envelopes can be collected from the Treasurers.

Do let the Co-ordinator know of any issues or concerns with clients or the assigned task.

We do have 3 blue Disabled badges for your use. Just ask the Duty Coordinator and someone will pop one off to you before the drive.

Some clients hoard the yellow cards. Recently someone returned a large number to a Link driver who assumed they were all his. One however belonged to a different driver they had had in the past and was given to a client on arrival at the hospital. You can imagine the confusion when the client phoned someone at home telling them they had finished their appointment and was ready to be picked up.

Remember to get these yellow cards back after every job.

Your Link Volunteer Driver today is
and you can phone them on
to arrange pickup for today's appointment.

Please use the main Link number to
arrange any new journeys.

Data up to Week
36
 Ending September 8th

2023 by
 Numbers
 (to Sept)

Demand Up by
30%
 Jan-June

1733
 Total Number of
 Completed drives

14
 Pinch point Days with
 15 or more
 completed
 requests

Busiest Day of the
 year so far with
19 Drives
 Wednesday 7 June



9
 Average number
 of requests
 per day

Busiest months
May & July
236 Journeys

Furthest
 destination John
 Radcliffe Hospital
 Oxford
 124 Miles Return
 3 Journeys

306
 Cancelled
 Trips

Percentage of
 Requests to RUH of
 completed drives
42%

**Top 4
 Destinations**
1 RUH 724
 2 Melksham Campus 110
 3 Spencer Leg Clinic 87
 4 Melksham Hospital 75

19 Requests for Weekend Appts so far

Days with least Requests
Friday 7 April 1 request
Monday 10 April 1 request