

Whetstone Good Neighbour Scheme

1st Annual Report covering period 18th July 2016 to 31st July 2017

WGNS was constituted on the 18th July 2016 as a Voluntary Community Support Service with three principal officers:

Chair	Barry Fisher
Treasurer	Monica-Jean Hoare
Secretary	Gail Firth

The primary objective of the scheme is to provide short term help to adult residents of Whetstone who need a neighbourly helping hand, whatever their age. Governance is by a Management Group consisting of the principal officers and a number of additional volunteers. The management group meets on average every 2 months and minutes of its meetings are published on the schemes Web site along with other relevant documents and notices for public consumption.

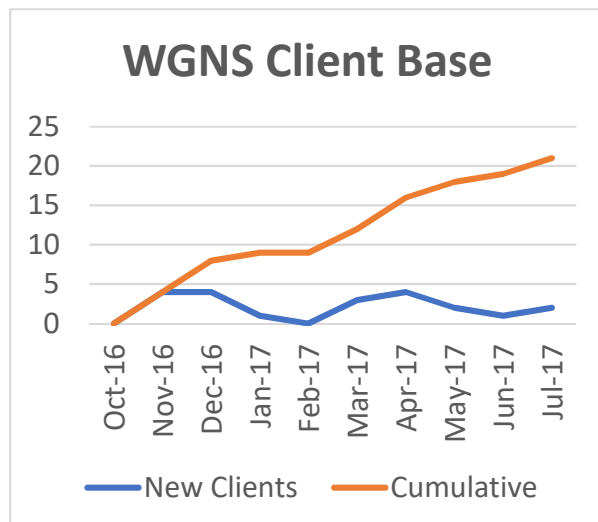
Preparing for delivering the service

Following the signing of the Constitution by the principal officers, the Treasurer opened a bank account. This account, with Lloyds Bank plc, is in the name of the scheme with the principal officers being the authorised signatories. Initial funding for the account came via the RCC and was topped up by a grant from the Shires Community Grant. The schemes funds are stable and have been boosted by donations from both clients and volunteers and, so far, from one fund raising event with a second planned for November.

In the period from signing the constitution to 31st October 2016 the team developed the procedures and processes to run the scheme along with the marketing material required to launch. To prove the processes, and avoid any danger of not being able to satisfy demand, it was decided to run a pilot scheme which launched on 31st October 2016. This was targeted on the Avon Drive area plus, with the support of COMMBUS, their customers in Whetstone. This approach has proven very successful and, since this time, other expected high demand areas have been targeted with a leaflet campaign and more lately a wider general promotion has taken place across the village.

Pilot Launch and ongoing service

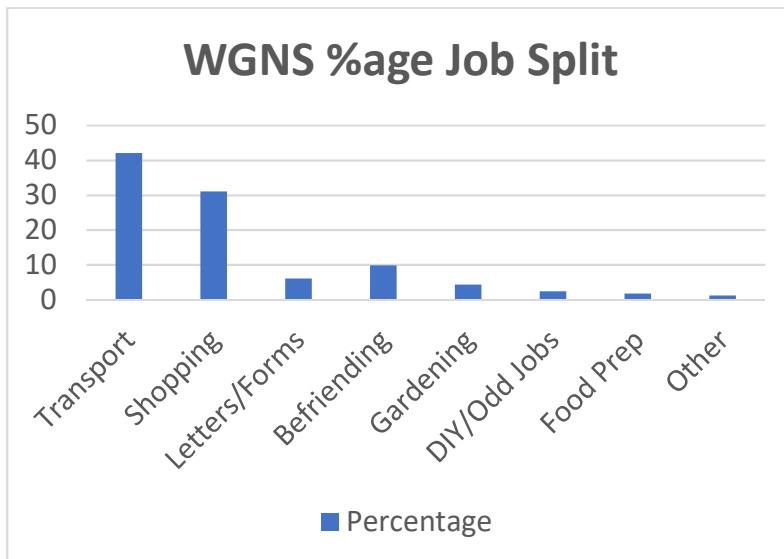
Since the pilot launch we have continued to steadily grow both our client base and number of jobs



booked. As at the end of this reporting period on 31st July 2017 we had booked 153 jobs. Client feedback has been positive and 9 of our clients nominated the scheme for the Best Community Group/Achievement Award in the Blaby District Council Annual Outstanding Achievement Awards. We have been selected as finalists and will find out the results on 5th October at the awards dinner. Our services fill a gap in the community support services whilst complementing other schemes, such as COMMBUS. Our volunteers have been able to

demonstrate a variety of skills and flexibility of approach which beholds a service customised to each client's requirements.

The biggest difficulty we anticipate is being able to secure time from enough volunteers to handle the potential job load. Our objective is to keep the level of volunteers balanced to the demand for resource. This will therefore remain a major focus on our promotion of the scheme. Analysis of the mix of jobs has shown that most require action between Monday to Friday and that over a third are for transport for one thing or another.

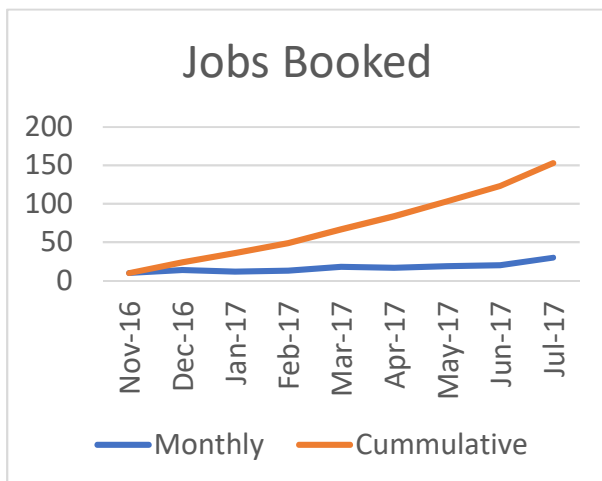


It is our intention to refine our offerings based on the demand from our clients. Each client's needs are different and we will work with them to find the best way of providing the right level of support, be that by our own efforts or helping them with introductions to another scheme or service where they are geared towards long term service.

Marketing

We have invested in suitable marketing materials and tools to

enable the scheme to promote its services and need for recruits. We have also secured Roller Banners to use at events to help get our message over. Our experience so far suggests that most new clients come because of letterbox drop of leaflets. We feel that to keep the message current for both recruits and clients we need to do at least one leaflet drop per annum, funds allowing. One of the options being considered is to get these sponsored.



Thank you

The success that has been achieved in launching the scheme is a result of the efforts of the whole team of volunteers. It doesn't matter if this has been in client facing activities or behind the scenes. Without the effort and commitment of everyone we would not have achieved the position we are in today. So, a big thank you to all concerned. We would also like to acknowledge the help, support and encouragement of both Blaby District Council and the staff at the RCC.

We would also like to thank our clients for their support and encouragement. As the purpose for our being, it is so encouraging to receive their positive feedback and their efforts in nominating the scheme in the Blaby District Council Outstanding Achievement Awards 2017.

The Future

As you will see from the figures attached, we have come through our first year in a strong financial position which means that we are able to continue the scheme for a further year. However, we must recognise that in each year we need to raise the funds for the following year. Our objective will be to maintain a low-cost base where we raise sufficient funds from donations and fund-raising events to at least cover the following years primary costs. Secondary costs will be covered from similar resources as well as looking at secondary funding such as grants and/or sponsorship. Operationally efforts will be targeted at increasing our available volunteer base and client base so that we can cover as many Whetstone Residents as need a neighbourly helping hand.

Barry Fisher

Chair

Whetstone Good Neighbour Scheme