

Celebrating Volunteers

We are delighted to be celebrating some of our long-serving volunteers. In our Community Transport Service, we would like to thank Geoff Houghton and Peter Rooney, who have been driving for us for 20 years, Sheila Doyle (18 years) and Gary Kensall (15 years). Jill Bryant has been helping to run the community transport office for more than 15 years! A huge thank you for your dedicated support. This vital service, praised daily by its members, could not happen without you.

Our Good Neighbours Service Co-ordinators wish to celebrate their longest serving volunteers and several volunteers who have gone above and beyond. A massive thank you to Debbie Balkham, Hannah French, Lyn Fournier, Pauline Taylor, Linda Harrison, Maggie Watts, Linda Wilson, Jane Stow, Cynthia Bowman, Barrie Branchett and Peter Gregory. They have supported isolated residents for a combined 60 years !

Since April 2023, we have focused on collecting volunteer testimonials and stories, Good Neighbours Service volunteer, Kate, appeared on BBC Radio Kent. We've organised driver meet ups for drivers to share their views. We are delighted to be organising The Folkestone & Hythe District Excellence in Volunteering Awards.

Going forward we want to dedicate more time to celebrating the contribution volunteers make to our community. We are excited for the future of our charity.

About Us

Kent Coast Volunteering covers Dover, Folkestone & Hythe and Thanet, designing and delivering volunteer involving services with a unique expertise.

Our staff and volunteers are inspired by the difference they and KCV make, most live in the communities we serve and our culture is shaped by our shared values about the power of volunteering and social action.

Our core purpose is volunteering – we are here for the individual and the organisation.

Kent Coast Volunteering 2024 AGM

Connecting
communities through
volunteering and
volunteer-led projects





Introduction

In the year Oct 2022 – Sept 2023, KCV experienced a rollercoaster of successes and challenges and a change at the top of the organisation. The Board of Trustees was delighted to welcome Emma Cooney to the new position of Charity Manager, in April 2023. As a long time staff member she understands the Charity, believes in what it does and is fully invested in its future.

Despite our challenges, particularly regarding funding our core activities, at the 2022-2023 year-end, we are in a better position than expected to continue to do the work we believe in, supporting our communities. We are proud of our achievements during this period and the impact we have made, fulfilling our mission to connect communities through volunteer-led projects, improving people's quality of life.

Vision

Our Vision and Mission continues to be a future where Kent's coastal communities improve their quality of life through the power of volunteering and social action, connecting communities across East Kent through volunteering and community-led projects.

Mission

Volunteering is at the heart of everything that we do. Our service has always been focused on those that are most disadvantaged, including the elderly, disabled and people who are economically disadvantaged.

Supporters

We are grateful to the many funders and donors who have all contributed to the services and projects of KCV, they include in alphabetical order -

Age UK Herne Bay & Whitstable, Armed Forces Covenant, Charles Burnett III Memorial Fund, Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust, Dover District Council, Edward Gostling Foundation, Folkestone & Hythe District Council, Folkestone Town Council, Garfield Weston Foundation, The Inman Trust, Kent Community Foundation, Kent County Council, KCV Christmas Raffle and 500 Club, The National Lottery Community Foundation, NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, Philip & Connie Phillips Foundation, Roger de Haan Charitable Trust, The Sobell Foundation, Tudor Trust.

Leadership

KCV Trustees

Long-time Trustee and Volunteer Driver, John Sutton, became our new chair in 2023, and outgoing chair Eddy Pugh remained on the board to help steer the charity into the future.

Long-time trustee Suzy Addley stepped down in March 2024 and we thank her for everything she has done to support KCV.

We hope to welcome coopted board member John Gallagher as a trustee at our 2024 AGM. And we extend a warm welcome to Cameron Fitzwilliam-Grey who joined us at last year's AGM. His insight into the sector has already proved invaluable.

Thank you to our dedicated trustees John Sutton, Eddy Pugh, Heather De Souza, Vebi Kosumi and Anouska Ladds, who continue to serve on our board, enabling us to do what we do connecting communities and making positive change.



Project Outcomes

While volunteer driver numbers of our Community Transport Service are still low after Covid, our drivers manage more than 500 trips a month getting people to and from medical and other health related appointments across Kent.

We currently have more than 1000 members of the service, part funded by the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board, which supports some of the most isolated in our community.

After a hectic Autumn, our office team are forging ahead with volunteer recruitment and have started a campaign featuring client quotes and volunteer driver stories to be shared on social media. Parish and Town councils are sharing our posters, and offers of help to spread the word across the districts are coming in, including from Kent County Council. All the support from our community is much appreciated.

Thank you to our dedicated staff, all our volunteer drivers and our brilliant team of office volunteers who make this possible.

Project Outcomes

Despite our funding challenges, limiting the reach of our service, our volunteer befrienders continue to do good work changing lives in our community by combatting loneliness and isolation and boosting wellbeing as part of our Good Neighbours Service.

Stories such as volunteers inspiring clients to leave the house and go into town on a regular basis - something they have been unable to do for years - show how important this service is.

We are exploring ways to adapt the service while focusing on community need to make it more attractive to funders. We are poised to restart our Dover service, on hold since March 2023, and we launched our first crowdfunder for 'Super Befrienders,' a pilot project.

We thank long-time supporters The Philip and Connie Phillips Foundation and Age UK, Roger De Haan Charitable Trust and Folkestone and Hythe District Councillors and Folkestone Town Council for stepping in to support the service.

Project outcomes

Our Tudor Trust Project is coming to an end but we are proud of what it achieved, quarterly networking and learning forums, best practice resources and training, and a volunteer matching service. It became match funding for the 3-year National Lottery Community Funded project establishing volunteer connectors in Dover district and Folkestone & Hythe and for the first time introducing a Best Practice and DBS Coordinator and a Fundraising and Project Development Manager, who has done great work establishing a Gift Aid system for the charity for the first time. In February 2024 we welcomed our new deaf Accessibility Coordinators.

A few highlights:

- 750 Volunteer-Involving Organisations receive our VIO newsletter and invitations to events and training. 780 potential volunteers receive our monthly volunteer bulletins.
- Collaborations with Kent Volunteer Partnership delivering best practice training and promoting volunteering and sharing volunteer-based surveys to the sector.
- Collaborations with various support agencies supporting hard to reach people.
- A volunteer open day at RSPB Dungeness attracting 244 people through the door.
- Network and Knowledge sessions with 100% positive feedback: "really supportive, great to have organisations all under one roof. Thank you."
- New website launched making our offer clearer and with more functionality.