

Kent Coast Volunteering

Connecting Communities In
Dover, Thanet, Folkestone & Hythe

GOOD NEIGHBOURS SERVICE

Our Good Neighbours Service is a volunteer befriending service aimed at reducing the feeling of loneliness and isolation among older people. Our dedicated team of volunteers provide companionship that has even been described as 'lifesaving' by the people they visit. This simple act of friendship makes such a difference and we would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to all our amazing volunteers.

The difference you make!

It has been an incredibly busy few months and we have loved speaking with you and finding out what a difference you have made to the lives of others. Below are just some of the highlights you have shared with us (names have been changed). If you have similar stories to tell then please do let us know as we love to hear from you.

- Derek had become housebound and developed agoraphobia. He had struggled to visit his wife in a care home and was finding his home incredibly difficult to maintain. He also missed meeting up with friends in the community where previously he had enjoyed a coffee in a local café with friends. With the support of his volunteer, Amanda, he has been getting out and about again. He's been out for coffee, visiting favourite local attractions, spending time with his wife and also he has been to look at a supported living placement where he would ideally like to move. Amanda has shared all this with us and social services are now helping to support Derek with his next steps.*
- Fred had experienced both the recent loss of his much-loved wife and also a brain injury. He had become anxious about going out and was finding it difficult to sort through his wife's belongings. With the support of Dave, Fred is now laughing again, going out for coffee and walks. They describe one another as friends and both enjoy the time they spend together enormously.*
- Annabel has lived with complex health conditions for much of her adult life and without support is housebound. She loves to cook and garden but misses interesting conversation. She has recently been matched with Harriet who has described meeting Annabel as like finding a sister. They are enjoying spending time getting to know one another in the garden and the kitchen as they share their joint interests in food and plants.*
- Enid's son was concerned that she was unable to leave her flat following a prolonged stay in hospital. Debbie began visiting and realised that both Enid and a close friend of hers had similar backgrounds with their husbands both having been miners and hailing from the same part of the UK originally. Debbie plans to introduce them and Enid's son plans to bring Enid to a coffee morning that Debbie runs.*

The simple act of giving your time to meet for a cuppa and a chat has led to these and so many other wonderful, life-changing stories.

Thank you for all that you do, you are brilliant!



The GNS Team

Who are we?

This year the team has been made up of three Good Neighbours Service Co-ordinators: Sarah, covering Dover, Deal, Folkestone and Hythe, Heather covering Thanet, and Michaela supporting them both across the whole area. These roles have been made possible thanks to the generous support from our funders and we would like to say a big thank you to:

The Philip and Connie Phillips Foundation with Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust, Crowdfund Kent and Social Enterprise Kent.



Loneliness is something that I am sure we have all experienced at some stage in our life. I have personal experience of it and feeling like I had no one who cared. Just a kind word or a hello can be all it takes to change someone's day/week. So, imagine spending time having a cup of tea or a walk with someone who may not see anyone for weeks. I am looking forward to meeting volunteers who can make a difference and help make someone feel less alone. Working with volunteers is so rewarding and knowing that you are making a difference is truly satisfying.

- GNS Coordinator, Sarah Murnane

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Joining the team has shown me how vital volunteers are in making a difference to those in our society who are lonely and isolated. So often these people are unseen and it shouldn't have to be this way. Volunteering is so brilliant because it allows you to really make a difference to the life of someone else by the simple act of having a cuppa, a natter or a walk - how easy is that! It's something we can all do, so if you have an hour or so to spare once a week, please get in touch with us and change someone else's life.

GNS Co-ordinator Michaela Luckett

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Social
Enterprise
Kent

Volunteering is a great way to help

Goodbye!

We bid a fond farewell to Heather who has been our Thanet Good Neighbours Service Coordinator for the past year. Kent Coast Volunteering would like to say a huge thank you to her as she takes a well deserved holiday before retiring this month, we wish her well. Her compassion and kindness has shone through in her role supporting older people and we will miss her greatly.

Heather says: 'It has been a pleasure working with you all and I have been so impressed by the time and commitment you give to this important role, so thank you all very much'.

The Thanet GNS service will be taken on by Sarah and Michaela.



Join us for a virtual cuppa and a catch up

Dear Good Neighbours Service Volunteers, you are invited to our Virtual Cuppa Catch up . Bring a cuppa and [click the link](#) to join us on:

Tuesday 16 September 2025 at 10am – 10.45am.



We have invited some volunteer befrienders to share the things they do with their matches for inspiration. It's also a chance for you to listen and share anything that's going well or any concerns/challenges.

Whether you are a new volunteer, you're awaiting a match, or you've been a volunteer for a long time, come along and connect with others doing the same role – and to ask questions if you have any.

Please let Sarah or Michaela know if you'd like to join us at gns@kcv.org.uk or call and leave a message on the Good Neighbours Service option on 01304 367898.

Training opportunities



We are always on the look out for courses and training that might help to support you in your volunteering role. Dementia Friends is an initiative run by the Alzheimer's Society aiming to bring greater understanding of what it is like to experience dementia and inspiring everyone to make a difference for people affected by the condition in their communities. If you would like to know more [click this link](#) .

If you would like to know more about becoming a dementia friend [follow this link](#) to free online training.

And finally.....

We hope you will find the document we sent out a few weeks ago, with suggestions for local groups and organisations, helpful as you support your befriender. It is being sent again with this newsletter in case you missed it. It includes places and groups you could visit together, alongside information about organisations such as Talking Therapies and Silverline that could be invaluable for older people who might be struggling with their mental health. If you know of any brilliant groups we have missed, please do let us know so we can continue to add them to this document to share with you all.

As you may know, the future of our vital GNS service is uncertain, we are currently looking at ways to keep the service running and we are hopeful we will find a way. We will, of course, keep you posted. We are truly grateful for everything you do as a volunteer befriender. Thank you so much for volunteering with us. Any questions or support, please contact gns@kcv.org.uk or charity manager emma.cooney@kcv.org.uk