



## Spring News

### The Link Visiting Scheme

Dear supporter,

We'd like to update you with some of the latest developments at the Link Visiting Scheme. It's been a super busy time since we were last in touch and we have a lot planned too!

#### Reablement - the way out of lockdown for our clients

It's been tough for all of us, but for those already lonely and socially isolated the last 12 months have been really challenging. We've continued our one-to-one friendship service with volunteers keeping in touch with their Link Friends mainly by telephone and socially distanced visits, but we know this isn't enough for older people who have been in lockdown for so long.

With the prospect of Link Friends being able to safely leave their homes, our priority for the next six months is 'reablement'. We'll be helping vulnerable older people to overcome some of the harmful effects of prolonged shielding with a support programme designed to improve mobility and confidence, address cognitive decline and have fun connecting with others! **Would you consider making a donation to support our reablement programme?**

**Please see more details at the end of this newsletter.**

1

#### Improving physical mobility and confidence

- Seated yoga classes to re-build flexibility and strength
- Partnering with local health services to help those with severe mobility impairment

2

#### Addressing cognitive decline

- Active Minds sessions to improve cognitive function
- Maintenance Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (MSCT) for dementia sufferers

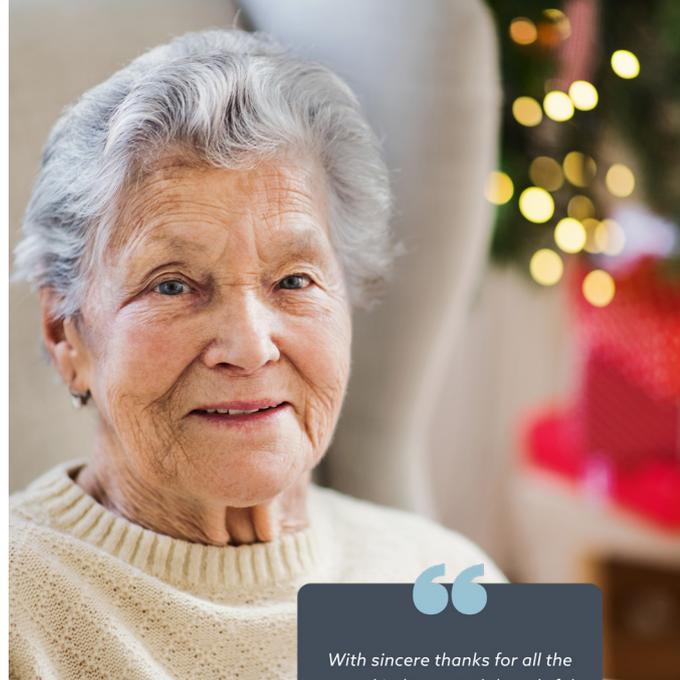
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#### Connecting with others

- Friendship Groups for social interaction
- Link to Nature as an ongoing past time for volunteers and Link Friends

## Christmas

We are so grateful to our donors who supported our Christmas programme. With financial support, we were able to deliver over 100 hot meals to those who would otherwise have been completely alone on Christmas Day. Those doorstep visits by volunteers, the provision of gift bags packed full of goodies and the ongoing telephone support meant clients didn't feel forgotten but instead, valued and cared for. We are grateful to our three incredible chefs who stepped in last minute. When our original chef tested positive for coronavirus, we put a call out on social media which was shared almost 200 times. Within 1 hour we had secured a replacement chef, a sous chef and a backup chef! We have an amazing community.



*With sincere thanks for all the care, kindness, and thoughtful gifts I have received recently. I am truly amazed by what you do.*

- LINK FRIEND, CHRISTMAS 2020

## Link To Nature programme is launched

In January we launched our new service - Link to Nature, an ongoing seasonal programme designed to re-awaken an interest in nature, enrich friendships by sharing a common interest, and enable our Link Friends to benefit from ongoing activities in-between visits. For the first three months of the year the theme is birds. Working with local volunteers, we've been able to provide our Link Friends with specially built bird feeders, ingredients to make birdseed cakes and a birdwatch book. From April to June we'll be focussing on growing flowers and vegetables. We've received huge interest from our Link Friends and we'll be scaling this programme up as quickly as we can.

## Friendship Groups are re-designed

Friendship Groups are small groups of Link clients and volunteers who meet regularly to form new friendships and broaden connections. Initially we put our plans for Friendship Groups on hold due to social distancing restrictions, but happily we were able to re-design them in an online format. We now have six groups set up with a further two

being set up comprising like-minded older people who would benefit from wider friendships. We have loaned some clients a WiFi-enabled tablet computer, others participants have their own technology or have chosen to join the virtual meet-ups via audio. Each session is managed by the Link Project Manager and assisted by a Link volunteer. Longer term, the aim is for groups to self-manage and as soon as we can, and where preferred, we'll look at reverting to a face-to-face format as originally intended.

## Link Online helps older people connect digitally

We're very aware of the inequalities suffered by older people who are not connected digitally to the outside world. And the pandemic has given us the opportunity to accelerate



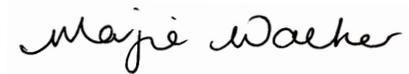


## Final comments

The Link has been serving the local community for over twenty years and we've never been in more demand than we are now. At the beginning of 2021 we supported 379 older people, that figure now stands at 510, an increase of 30% and we will always try to help those who need us most. If you know someone who you think could benefit from our services, don't hesitate to get in touch: [www.linkvisiting.org/using-our-services](http://www.linkvisiting.org/using-our-services)

Thank you again for supporting The Link Visiting Scheme in the past and for your consideration in supporting us now. With your help we will continue with our mission of making Wokingham Borough a friendly, kind and vibrant place to live for all.

We wish you well,



Marjie Walker

Director

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**Find out how you  
can support us**



## Stay connected!

We'd love to connect with you on social media. Be sure to follow our pages for regular updates on what we're getting up to.



@LinkVisitingScheme



@LinkVisitingScheme



@WokinghamLVS



The Link Visiting Scheme

## How you can help

Donations can be made via BACS transfer to:

Link Visiting Scheme

Co-op Bank

Account Number 65562677

Sort Code 08-92-99

(It would be helpful if you could please send notification of any payments to our administrator Claire Ford: admin@linkvisiting.org)

Donations can also be made online at [www.localgiving.org/linkvisiting](http://www.localgiving.org/linkvisiting)

## Could you support us with our reablement programme?

Here are some of the costs of helping older people overcome the harmful effects of lockdown:

### Active Minds Sessions

£3,000 = the cost to run two, monthly Active Minds groups for six months

£1,500 = the cost to run one, monthly Active Minds group for six months

£250 = the cost for one older person to attend an Active Minds group for six months

### Chair yoga

£2,000 = the cost to run two, monthly Chair Yoga groups for six months

£1,000 = the cost to run one, monthly Chair Yoga group for six months

£125 = the cost for one older person to attend Chair Yoga for 6 months

### Friendships and connections

£350 = to set up and manage a volunteer and older person friendship for a year

£500 = to provide an older person with a loan wifi-enabled tablet computer and the training and support needed to use it for six months

