



## **Autumn News**

### The Link Visiting Scheme

Dear supporter and friend of The Link Visiting Scheme,

Thank you for contributing to our busy year at Link Visiting, either financially or through volunteering. Our charity is dependent on your support and we are grateful to each one of you for making Link Visiting one of the most impactful charities in Wokingham Borough! We hope you enjoy reading about the difference you've helped us make. This summer we've celebrated the double vaccinations and we've been encouraging older people out of their homes after being safe inside for so long. It's been wonderful to see old friends again after so long. I'm sure you've found that too.

### **Reconnection sessions signal a new start**

We've helped over 80 people who were struggling with confidence and mobility to come along to small group sessions to discuss local group activities and develop a personalised plan. It's been humbling to hear people's stories of lockdown and how grateful they were to finally come out. We now have lots of additional people who would love to attend our regular weekly and monthly activities so here's to a brighter winter ahead for many, though not without challenges.

### **Active Minds to help memory loss**

Many of our Link Friends have expressed worries about their memory since life became quieter over the last 18 months or so. So, we are beginning a new venture with our Active Minds group. This will be an eight week session for small groups to enjoy some time together, make new friends and also do some simple cognition exercises. We hope to run these sessions throughout the year with an ambition to grow and expand if we can.



## Friendship month gave an opportunity to try something new

Partnership and collaboration are key to our success in confronting the serious issue of loneliness and isolation in our community and we are proud to be part of the **Friendship Alliance** – a group of four local organisations. Together with Age UK Berkshire, Involve and Wokingham Volunteer Centre, we ran a month of friendship activities and events to encourage older people to try something new. We promoted many groups and organisations with the aim of celebrating friendship and doing all we can to help older people feel connected.



## Link to Nature wins an award

All year we have been working with Wokingham in Bloom and Wokingham Horticultural Society to encourage our volunteers and Link Friends to enjoy all things related to nature. Together they have been able to enjoy the peaceful activity of planting and tending pollinator plants, edibles and beautiful flowers and enjoying garden wildlife. We were thrilled to win an 'Excellent' in the Thames and Chilterns in Bloom Awards (part of the RHS Britain in Bloom campaign). The photo opposite shows one of our sunflower 'winners' with their outstanding flower!



## Friendship and joy this Christmas

Christmas is a time of celebration, with family and friends, delicious food, party outfits and sparkling lights but for so many, loss and grief is even more keenly felt and family breakdown is more painful than ever. So Christmas is a very important time of year for us.

Anyone on their own on Christmas Day will be able to enjoy a delicious hot meal, hand delivered by a festive volunteer who will stay for a visit. We will provide extra phone support throughout the period, give out gifts and do all we can to ensure no one feels alone or forgotten. For more information, visit: [linkvisiting.org/christmas](http://linkvisiting.org/christmas).



## Can you support us?

This year we have made over 500 connections with a volunteer and older person where real friendships have formed and developed! We continually work to ensure anyone who is feeling lonely in our borough has the support they need to feel valued and connected. Could you support us to continue the great work we are doing?

### Your donation could help transform lives:

- › £3500 to deliver our full Christmas programme including a beautiful calendar for all 500 Link Friends, ensuring no one feels forgotten.
- › £1000 towards our winter newsletter project, writing to older people and involving local school children too.
- › £500 towards the running of our Active Minds sessions
- › £200 to run a special Christmas singalong session full of festive cheer
- › £50 to provide refreshments for some of our local Friendship Groups

Donations can be made by bank transfer to:

**Link Visiting Scheme | Co-op Bank | Account Number: 65562677 | Sort Code 08-92-99**

Could you make a regular monthly donation either via standing order or via our giving platform Kind Link? This reliable income helps us to plan and design our service: [linkvisiting.org/donations](https://linkvisiting.org/donations)

Could you fundraise for us? We were thrilled this summer when one of our supporters walked 100km in 24hrs to raise money for us. What could you do?

## Our thanks

We want to shout out about all the support we receive and we are keen to showcase our supporters on social media and via our website. We will check first to see if you would like this kind of publicity.

Stay safe and above all, enjoy your friendships! They are the true joy of life.

Kind regards,



Marjie Walker

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## 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



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The Link Visiting Scheme