

# Helping Hands

## Newsletter Spring 2016

Edited by Stephen Hardy

### Welcome



Since our last Newsletter we are very pleased to welcome John Stokoe as one of our new volunteers, especially as he is now one of our much needed drivers. Thank you, John.

### Please note

Because of the amazing database created by Rosemary Clark, we can readily identify the jobs we have been able to do. However, we realise that not every completed task is being recorded on the system. Sometimes a volunteer forgets to tell the Phone Holder the job is done. Please remember to inform the Phone Holder about each job you do. Volunteers on a rota need only tell the Phone Holder if there are any changes, ie not after every rota job.



### How have we helped?



In 2015 the total number of calls received on the

Helping Hands phone was 305 and the total number of tasks was 610! We now have a number of regular rotas so villagers don't need to book these through the Phone Holder. Thank you, Anne Wells for organising our various rotas.

This compared with 2014, our first full year, we received 178 calls and 365 jobs were completed, so the number of times we help has gone up by 67%!

In 2015, nearly half the jobs were for transport – 293 out of 610. This is why we always need more volunteers to offer driving.

The next highest type of request was for befriending at 64, followed by shopping requests, including prescriptions at 52. Gardening is next at 38.

2016 has started off at the same rate as 2015. All your efforts are appreciated by the Committee and of course by the various people in the community who have been helped by Helping Hands.

## Funding



Initially we were very successful in attracting grants to set up from a number of organisations, but now we are established it is more difficult to attract funding. Our Treasurer, John Lomas, is concerned that we won't be able to cover our costs by the end of the year. One of the expenses we have is insurance and this has gone up massively. We need public liability insurance to protect volunteers. It has gone up from £180 to £328.50 even though we chased other providers to try to get a better quote. Currently we are protected by the Royal Sun Alliance, a respected insurer, but we will try again to get a more competitive quote when the insurance comes up for renewal in November.

If you have any connections with organisations who may be willing to make a grant, please contact us. We can definitely prove we're a worthwhile cause!

## Look out for signs that Spring has sprung!

Helping Hands volunteers helped the Robertsbridge Cubs plant 200 bulbs, kindly donated by Rother Valley Railway on the bank opposite The



Ostrich. This helped the cubs with their community involvement work and we hope will brighten up, for a month at least one of the key routes through the village.

## Pat on the back

Helping Hands received a huge Christmas card from Robertsbridge's Age UK with a lovely thank you message appreciating the help we give them, so a special thank you to those volunteers on the Monday rota.



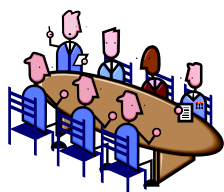
## A gentle reminder



Our phone holders are a bit stretched at the moment, particularly finding drivers to cover the increased number of requests for lifts. It would be really helpful to them if you could respond to the phone holder's email or phone message request for assistance with a yes or no. We know its easy to forget to respond each time but it if you could give them an answer it will enable them to quickly look further on the database.

Thanks to you all for the great work you are doing - we know you are being called upon more frequently as Helping Hands reaches more folk. You are certainly appreciated by all who use our service.

## Parish Assembly - 18 April



A date to put in your diary: the Parish Council will hold their Annual Assembly in the Village Hall at 7 pm on 18 April. There will be stalls from various local organisations including Helping Hands.

To tempt you to come along, the WI will provide delicious food, and wine is provided – all free!

## Ideas for you to think about

The Committee think that Helping Hands could play a vital role should there be a wide scale emergency in the village. In fact, we did help when water supplies were cut off. Our plan is to map the village and have a Helping Hands volunteer allocated to each area, so in the event of an emergency, vulnerable residents can be helped.



Let Sue or Anne know if you have any ideas about this plan.

Second, another idea the Committee has been discussing is the production of a Welcome Pack to deliver to all new residents in the village. It is done very successfully

elsewhere. Again if you have any ideas, let Sue or Anne know.

## More Drivers Wanted

As we said earlier, the biggest call on our services is for driving, so if you know of anyone else who could swell the ranks of our drivers, please let Stephen Hardy know (881309 or via [stephen@stephenhardy.org.uk](mailto:stephen@stephenhardy.org.uk)). Many thanks in anticipation.



## As ever, more help needed



If you do know anyone who would like to join our band of volunteers, do encourage them to get in touch with Anne (880832) [annecwells@gmail.com](mailto:annecwells@gmail.com) or Sue (881309) [cllr.susanprochak@gmail.com](mailto:cllr.susanprochak@gmail.com). The more, the better, for everyone.

## Finally an invitation for you

On 26 February at 7.30 we are having a volunteer get together at Darvell; refreshments provided. You will be able to share experiences and offer any ideas to improve what we do.



**THANK YOU, EVERYONE!**