



# St Albans Good Neighbour Scheme

## ANNUAL REPORT

2022 - 2023

### Message from our Chair *Patrick*

I write this, my first Chair's Report, reflecting on an inspiring, motivational and rewarding year. I'd like to start by thanking everyone for making me feel welcome and supporting me in my new role. Jane, our previous Chair, has been incredibly supportive whilst continuing with several projects she instigated whilst in office. I have seen so much positivity over the last year and feel we are delivering an excellent service to our local community. The biggest thing I always take from my role as a volunteer is how grateful the clients are for the help we give them and in turn how good that makes me feel.

As a charity, we have had an extremely busy year. The amount of driving jobs has increased by over 29%, which has put extra demands on our driving team, a challenge they have risen to. As a result of the extra jobs our Duty Officers have had increasingly busy days, with anything up to 14 jobs to be booked. Each job may involve a number of calls to get a driver.

Our Shopping service is ticking along nicely. We are currently helping 14 clients with their shopping and in July and August there were over 60 shopping jobs carried out by our shopping team.

Our Practical Help team is also dealing with a constant flow of jobs such as gardening, DIY, painting and organising trades to assist with problems and alleviate issues our clients are facing.

One service we offer that has been particularly busy this year, with ever increasing demands, is Befriending. We now have 20 befriending pairs compared to 12 this time last year. This is a great example of how we are responding to the demands of our local community.

On many occasions our volunteers go above and beyond and I'd like to share just two of the many stories I hear. The first one is of a Practical Help volunteer going to a client's house to sort out a washing machine, but he could not resolve the problem himself, so called a plumber. While waiting for the plumber to arrive, the volunteer didn't want to waste time, so fixed the client's broken vacuum cleaner for them. The second example of a volunteer going above and beyond is the 28 journeys (over a 2 month period) that she made taking a client to visit her dying husband in a care home. These are just two of many stories where our selfless volunteers put themselves out to help our clients.



St Albans Good Neighbour Scheme

Charity No: 1074638

Company No: 03675149

Registered Office: 47 Woodland Drive, St Albans, England, AL4 0EL

## Message from our Chair *Patrick*

Over the last year we have put a lot of effort into recruitment, taking on 27 volunteers. Gaining new volunteers is essential to the Scheme because we lose volunteers every year, meaning we have only had a small net gain over the last year. Additionally, new volunteers equal new ideas and this helps us to move forward with fresh thoughts and ideas. Our recruitment campaign has included posters on various notice boards, articles in local media and social media and we have also advertised our volunteering roles successfully with agencies such as Communities 1st and GoVolHerts. So a big thank you to all those who have been involved with the recruitment campaign, especially to Nicky our Volunteer Coordinator who has had to work incredibly hard to process our new recruits. The good news is we now have a Deputy Volunteer Coordinator, Ellen T, to help.

Other ways we have tried to find new volunteers is by attending local events where we can showcase our charity and the work we do. We attended the Community Showcase in the Cathedral that featured many St Albans charities, with 23 volunteers manning our stand throughout the day. As well as informing the public about the fantastic work we do we attracted 4 new recruits. More recently, we attended a Park Street residents meeting and spoke about our work and had a stand at the Highfield Park Trust Apple Day. This popular community event attracted lots of visitors and we hope to have gained a further 4 volunteers. Going forward, we plan to attend more events to publicise our work, to increase our exposure and hopefully to attract more volunteers.

Recently we were incredibly proud to receive the accreditation of the 6 Point Promise from Communities 1st which is awarded to charities in our county who can evidence good volunteer management. We are now the most recent addition to an elite cohort of organisations who exemplify excellent volunteer management in Hertfordshire. The areas that the Scheme was judged on were the planning of volunteer involvement; recruitment process; induction; support and safety; training and personal development and involving, rewarding and recognising volunteers.

One area that has received a boost this year is IT. I'm not really sure how Andre managed to achieve everything he did on his own, but he has now been joined by Bill, Keith and Jeremy. Some fantastic work has taken place on our volunteer records with new spreadsheets having been produced for our Befriending, Shopping (see Dana's comments later) and Practical Help section leaders. Also we must not forget we have our own Scheme Intranet site which is accessible to all volunteers. It is a valuable resource for information from how to claim your expenses to the most recent parking changes at Watford Hospital. There is also the IT help button to request help with any IT problems. This is an amazing feature, getting a quick response from our team. I should know as I'm always using it!

I was really pleased to see such a fantastic turnout at our recent coffee meeting in October. It's great to put faces to names, have a chat and come together to make decisions affecting our Scheme. The introduction of the volunteer lanyard came about as a result of discussions at our May coffee meeting. I do hope to meet as many of you as possible at future meetings.

Finally I'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of you, our volunteers, who do so much to contribute to the smooth running of our fantastic Scheme and to make life easier for our many clients.





# Mission, Vision and Values

## Mission

To be a dependable good neighbour to any St Albans resident in need, providing support quickly and informally

## Vision

To reach into our community, seeking out people in need, regardless of background or personal circumstances, to connect them with Good Neighbours, so we can support as many residents as possible in leading fulfilling, independent lives

## Values

As a trusted community charity, we provide 'organised kindness' with

- **Respect** - valuing diversity, equality, inclusion, fairness and consideration, and respecting our natural environment
- **Integrity** - maintaining strong moral principles and high standards of welfare, including health and safety, always in line with our procedures and policies
- **Teamwork** - recognising and valuing the vital contribution of our volunteers and encouraging a culture of working together with support.





# Volunteer Coordinator's Report *Nicky*

Our current number of active volunteers is 135. In the last year, we recruited 27 new volunteers and archived 46. The source of new volunteers was as follows:

Referral by volunteers	8	Google	5
Flyers & articles	5	Communities 1st	1
Own use as a client	1	Family	1
Cathedral Volunteer Day	1	Other	5



We have continued with updating our computer records which have resulted in us archiving a number of volunteers whose records we held but were no longer actively volunteering with the Scheme. The majority stopped volunteering when their circumstances (work or otherwise) changed post-Covid, a couple of volunteers were archived as they moved away from the area and one passed away.

We have had an ongoing recruitment drive since last year and as can be seen by the statistics above. The Apple Day and the Cathedral Volunteer Showcase generated some interest and raised the profile of the Scheme and our brand. Similarly Communities 1st and GoVolHerts have continued to direct volunteers towards the Scheme. The most successful method of recruiting new volunteers was by referral from current volunteers. So if you know of anyone else about to retire that would like to do something useful with their time, please refer them to us! And a big thank you to all those of you who have referred new volunteers to us.

It is clear that the number of new referrals that can be generated from our volunteer base is difficult to sustain, so it is worth noting that other good sources of new volunteers are from flyers in surgeries and pharmacies plus articles in local magazines such as Marshalswick News.

It is important to stress that volunteers do benefit from volunteering itself as well as our social calendar of Coffee Mornings and Tea Parties and AGM.

Last year I mentioned that we were trialling a new method of ID checking with selfies. Regrettably, this proved too difficult to implement and created challenges for new volunteers trying to submit the selfies to the satisfaction of Care Check. So we still continue with the three forms of ID as before but the personal meeting with the new volunteers does give an opportunity to find out more about them and help to match their skills to the different roles.

Some really good news from my perspective is that at the recent Coffee Morning Ellen T stepped forward to act as my Deputy and I am in the process of introducing her to the new referencing system that we are trialling with the help of Andre B (thanks Andre!)

## Safeguarding *Lauren*

We take our Safeguarding responsibilities very seriously here at the Scheme, with fully documented policies and procedures, and training for all volunteers. On joining the Scheme, new volunteers are given access to our Safeguarding Policy, which sets out in clear and simple language how a volunteer can recognise and report a Safeguarding concern. They are also given the link to our specially tailored training video, providing a step by step guide to the Safeguarding process.

At our coffee morning on the 7th October, we delivered a safeguarding training presentation to all of the 38 volunteers that were present. We have in addition sent the presentation to all volunteers not in attendance, resulting in a further 59 volunteers completing the training. We are currently chasing up with those volunteers who have not completed the training. We currently have 12 volunteers who have had no safeguarding training whatsoever, but it is my aim next year to have all our volunteers safeguard trained. At every board meeting we have a standing item on the agenda for Safeguarding issues.

As Safeguarding Lead, I attend external training courses for Levels 1 and 2 Adult Safeguarding, and update my knowledge regularly. I'm immensely grateful for the support I get from everyone at the Scheme and thank all the volunteers for responding with such diligence and care to any signs of neglect or abuse.





# Duty Officer Report *Paul*

## Duty Officer Numbers

At the end of the Scheme year in 2023 we have 35 operational Duty Officers (this excludes one temporarily unavailable), which is equal to our target. The progression over the last three years is shown in the table.

	<u>Dec 2020</u>	<u>Oct 2021</u>	<u>Oct 2022</u>	<u>Oct 2023</u>	<u>3 Year Total</u>
Operational DOs	26	38	33	35	
<b>Changes</b>					
Newly Trained DOs		15	5	6	26
Attrition		(3)	(10)	(4)	(17)
Total Change		12	(5)	2	9

For context, 2021-2022 was an unusual period. We recruited a high number of new DOs in 2021, partly those with more time to spare during the period of Covid restrictions. Some of these did not last, as their circumstances changed, and we had high attrition in the following year. It is reassuring to see that attrition is back down in 2023, whilst we have slightly exceeded the level of new DOs that we trained and started in 2022. Both these factors contributed to hitting the target.

Maintaining this level remains a key challenge for me and all of us and is only achieved with a lot of effort from the committee, Nicky in particular, and other volunteers supporting various recruitment initiatives. It also helps with retention if we can show our existing DOs that they are valued and appreciated, which I think generally we manage to do.

## Duty Officer Mix

- 17 of the 35 DOs (ie about half) on our present list have been recruited since January 2021
- 7 of the 35 (20%) are men
- Age: average is 62, our youngest is 30, our oldest is 86. We have six over 75, all functioning excellently!



## Activity Levels

Activity levels continue to rise, with average driving bookings made per day in September 2023 at 5.6 (average weekday: 7.1), the highest level recorded since we began using Optimise.

	<u>2021CY</u>	<u>2022CY</u>	<u>2023CY</u>	<u>September 2023</u>
Average Bookings/Day	2.5	3.5	4.3	5.6

There were months in 2021 where the peak number of jobs booked on a weekday was 7. In September 2023, that was an average day. Almost every weekday is a busy day now, and I assume this must be stretching our driver base too. Overall I believe that our DO group is coping, but we are certainly also stretched.

## Ongoing Roles and Responsibilities

Last year I picked up the rota planning role from Anne and I said that I would handle it for a couple of quarters and then decide whether I felt I could handle it on an ongoing basis, particularly as I am now travelling more than when I became Section Leader. I actually found it manageable in 2023 and am fine to carry on with it for now.

As for the role of Section Leader, I am happy to continue that too, with the great support of Ali as deputy, but if the Committee were to feel that I am not able to contribute enough as a result of these longer periods travelling (all being well, I would expect the next few years to be similar to 2023 in that regard) then I would not be offended if it were felt that a change was needed. I appreciate the cooperation from all the other Section Leaders and the support of the Trustees and look forward to us continuing to work together in the coming year.

*Your offer is rejected—we are thrilled to keep you Paul!*



# Transport Report *Michelle*

First of all, I would like to start by thanking every single one of our drivers for every job that they have done over the last year. We know how very grateful all of our clients are for us giving up our precious time to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves. You may be interested to know that this year we have completed 1376 jobs from October 2022 to September 2023 compared to last year 1041 jobs in the same period. That is quite a joint achievement!

I started as Transport Deputy to Patrick from March 2022 to November 2022, and then I took over as Section Leader in November 2022 when Patrick moved up to Chairperson. I have really enjoyed the challenges of this position, and have been learning lots and developing my skills. I would like to thank Patrick for all the support he has given me during this transition period. More widely, I would generally like to thank the wider Scheme members for the help they've given me, as I've found my feet in this new role, in particular, the IT team, who have been very patient with me as I've been developing my technological skills!

Also, finding myself in this new position, I have spent some time focusing on relationship building with other members of our Scheme, such as the Duty Officers, and spent an enjoyable day shadowing Jane C, hoping to learn more about their role, so that we can work more effectively together in the future. I am also planning to meet with Section Leader Paul and have further discussions on how we can help each other in our roles.

I have continued the previous year's focus on developing our communication with drivers, in the form of quarterly newsletters, work on the Intranet site, and the Parking Information letter. With support from the driving volunteers, I have been able to keep the Intranet site and the Parking Information letter up to date, with information about developments, such as the expansion of the ULEZ zone and the completion of works at Watford Hospital.

In line with this focus on communication, I have recently worked on producing a Transport Welcome Information letter to provide new volunteer drivers with additional information they need to get started. I have also been checking a report weekly which picks up expired driving licences, which has enabled me to alert drivers to this.

Furthermore, the regular coffee meetings have provided a great opportunity to build relations, share experiences, and discuss important changes such as the suggestion to have volunteers wear a lanyard, which makes us easily identifiable to clients when we first approach them. We always welcome suggestions for how we can further develop and improve the service we provide to our clients.

In an effort to assist our Duty Officers' daily task of finding drivers for jobs, I have this year been asking drivers to keep me informed of any scheduled holidays, so we can keep your records updated and hopefully save Duty Officers from unnecessary phone calls.

Another focus for this year has been working with you all to get our second Volunteer Driving Declaration (VDD) form completed. The purpose of this form is for the Scheme to have a record of the car registration and the driving licence number of all our volunteer drivers to fulfil our duty of care. By completing this form, drivers are confirming that they are following the Scheme's driving guidelines, ensuring that their car is insured, taxed and has a current MOT certificate. We are currently running at 72 drivers, and are waiting for two more replies from two drivers once they commence driving again, to complete this task. Thanks for all your support with getting this job done.





# Shopping Report *Dana*

Although the year has been relatively quiet on the shopping front there has been much activity behind the scenes, gathering information and producing an excellent tool to manage the data. The new referral process and spreadsheets will make managing the section very straightforward, not only for myself but also for my successor. In fact, with all the relevant information in one place anyone can see at a glance who currently does what and who is available to take on anything new. My thanks go to Bill W for his vision and patience in making this happen.

From this data it is possible to effortlessly produce monthly and annual statistics. So, for those who like a few facts and figures...

- 20 volunteers are prepared to do Regular Shopping
- 14 volunteers have active regular shopping partnerships
- 16 clients are currently being shopped for regularly
- 20 new referrals were received in the year, half made on behalf of the client. Of the 20 referrals 3 clients did not want the service, 4 had needs that we were unable to fulfil and 6 of the referrals were either duplicates or for one-off shops. 7 were matched with a shopper.

## Other statistics

Oldest Client	Age 96
Youngest Client	Age 36
Average Age of Clients	Age 75
Longest time as a Regular Shopping Client	Over 4 years
% of male/female clients	100% female

Regular Shopping is an activity that only requires the commitment of approximately 1.5 hours fortnightly and, in fact, is often done at the same time as the volunteer's own weekly shop. In general, clients want more or less the same items in each shop so when shopping for a person regularly it soon becomes quick and easy to navigate the aisles and get the job done. This makes Regular Shopping the ideal job for volunteers who want to help but have limited time to offer to the Scheme.



# Befriending Report *Nigel*

## Numbers

### Clients

- 18 Paired
- 4 Clients approved and awaiting pairing
- 12 To be interviewed/investigated for suitability for befriending
- 25 Clients who decided against or deemed unsuited to befriending
- 4 Clients approved for befriending who will let us know when ready (unlikely)

### Befrienders

- 2 New Befriender volunteers to be approved by us
- 2 New Befriender volunteers awaiting pairing
- 6 Befrienders willing to pair having ended previous pairing (of which 3 have to have client within walking distance of home)
- 1 Befrienders who have been approved by us but will contact when ready to pair
- 18 Paired with clients

## Overview

It has been a busy year; the number of paired clients and volunteers up to August had doubled to 20 since the last annual report. One client has subsequently relinquished her befriender because she now has sufficient networks and events to support her: another asked for befriending to be put on hold until she felt able to have regular visits again. At times during the year we have had to have a temporary freeze because of a volunteer shortage but this was lifted in mid-September. We anticipate that our current number of available or to be approved volunteers (10) can just cover the number of clients (16) awaiting pairing or our decision. Unfortunately, it is not possible to pair some individuals due to the level of support that they require (see below). Three of our volunteers do not have a car but it has been agreed at the strategy meeting in August that an experimental use of Scheme drivers be offered to take befrienders to clients or that volunteers be allowed to claim taxi expenses. This has yet to be tried.

The number of clients experiencing physical, mental and Alzheimers' conditions and being referred by their concerned children or by social prescribers and Mental Health Services is greater by far than the number of individuals ringing us of their own volition. Some of the condition experienced by our Clients mean the traditional idea of a befriending chat and cup of tea is more difficult to set up – the ability to set up meetings, chat and invite volunteers in, can be a difficult first step for our clients but hopefully can be overcome as they gain confidence.





## Befriending Report *Nigel*

We are increasingly being referred clients by social prescribers and these come with attendant mental and physical health problems which can make pairing a little more complicated; for example if the person referred is deaf or depressed and not answering the phone or getting out of bed it's difficult to contact them. It has been agreed since the August Strategy Meeting that Duty Officers should ask social prescribers and other institutional referrers of clients, to ring me directly to ensure that the cases referred are ones we could possibly take on; this will also ensure that social prescribers become more aware of what we are able to offer.

Many of the current pairings are making a real difference to the quality of life of our client – one person is having their dog walked and is being taken out a lot having been confined to their room for months; another is being helped to adjust to the shock of having suddenly lost her sight; another with the first stages of dementia is being helped to organise himself; another lonely from having given up work, is enjoying being taken out for walks; another is benefiting from visits on a Sunday when she feels especially lonely; and another's spirits are being lifted from depression by visits from a befriender;.

We are enormously grateful to our volunteers, many of whom have to deal with more complex conditions facing their clients and do so with patience, sympathy and care.



# Practical Help Report *Tessa*

Over the past year the Practical Help Section has benefitted enormously from the development of a wonderful computerised data resource by Bill from the IT team. The new system became fully operational for the start of the Scheme's new operational year on 1st October 2023 but during its development the 2022 to 2023 requests were entered into the system. Moving from our old pen and paper process via the marvels of current technology to an "all bells and whistles" resource has been a steep learning curve but the result is amazing. Instead of leafing through notebooks to discover the number of referrals received over the year, and how many were in which category I can now present the information which is automatically collected day by day and referral by referral.

Not only that but the system also tells us that 73 clients made the 121 referrals which proves we have quite a number of clients for whom we are the "go to" option when help is needed. They feel safe asking us to do a job for them and are happy to give us a donation. In fact many say that they would much prefer to give us what they would pay to a "professional" rather than risk being scammed by an unscrupulous trader.

The system also records our volunteers' details, including the types of jobs they feel able to help with. As part of the updating of our record systems, over the last year we contacted all those on our practical help volunteers' list to establish whether everyone wished to continue with the Scheme. Sadly some felt that this was the time to stand down and they received our grateful thanks for the time they had given to us in the past. Thankfully, due to a recruitment drive by the Scheme this year, we now have a number of very useful new volunteers all of whom have already done a number of practical help jobs and have enjoyed doing so. Many thanks go to them.

The Practical Help Team currently consists of 24 volunteers and between them they have a variety of skills enabling us to successfully complete the 78 referrals. Unsurprisingly Mark, my deputy, is still the volunteer with the most jobs to his name! Without the time and effort given to the Scheme by our wonderful band of volunteers we would not be able to provide the wide variety of help to our clients so huge thanks go to all of them.



## Jobs over the year (to 30th September 23)

Jobs by status	
Completed	78
In progress	2
Cancelled by client	19
Duplicate	6
Inappropriate referral	4
Refused	12
Not yet assessed	0
<b>TOTAL of above</b>	<b>121</b>
Job Category (completed jobs)	
Gardening	27
DIY	25
Technology	6
Plumbing	4
Electrical	6
Decorating	0
Move large items	0
Assembly	1
Misc	9
<b>TOTAL of above</b>	<b>78</b>





## IT Support *Andre*

The IT Support Team has increased its size again this year and so has the range of skills. We are now a team of 4 ensuring the Scheme can run smoothly. Welcome to Jeremy H who has recently joined the team, we look forward to working with him and see the Scheme reap the benefits of his IT experience.

Bill's mastery of spreadsheets has enabled him to significantly tidy up the Volunteers Data spreadsheet and in the process standardise volunteer roles and qualifications in Optimise. This in turn has made it possible to improve reporting of client and volunteer data. Bill used the Befriending spreadsheet as a template for Practical Help and Shopping to make it easier for the respective section leaders to manage their referrals and their volunteers, and easier for Duty Officers as they can now see the status of a previous referral as well. These "Master Spreadsheets" have enabled the production of a number of comprehensive monthly reports helping respective Section Leaders to spend less time preparing reports.

This last year has seen the start of the development of apps which will provide a much easier interface to spreadsheets which can be difficult to view or edit on smartphones. This is partly due to a change of licensing (we're basically getting the App Development platform for free now whereas before we had to pay for it) as well as a strong desire to render the job the Good Neighbour volunteers do as stress-free as possible. The first one to be launched has been the Duty Officer Rota which has been enthusiastically endorsed by the DO Section Leader and will be rolled out imminently to all Duty Officers and others who will find it useful. The newly developed Volunteer Recruitment process also has its own app. We welcome suggestions from any volunteer for new apps which would make their volunteering work easier.

Future plans include further development of reports and greater automation. We have started the process of investigating how client, volunteer and journey data can be accessed in real time (or at a minimum to automate the process of downloading these from Optimise, currently a manual job) so as to free up more volunteer time - the real purpose of IT.



# Treasurer's Report *Trevor*

## **Treasurer's Report for Y/E 30 September 2023**

Following two years of Pandemic and Lockdown our Clients are more willing to venture out and this is reflected in our transport requests which have increased from 1,067 to 1,442 a 35% increase.

### **Income**

Despite increased Bookings Donations have decreased from £12,300 to £11,600 this year.

### **Expenditure**

This has reduced from £12,300 to £10,000 this year main items as follows:-

*Mileage £6,200 versus £7,400 last year (volunteers not claiming full allowance)*

*Meetings £300 versus £1,800 last year (previous year included 40th Anniversary lunch)*

*Gifts £210 versus £770 last year*

*Insurance £280 versus £750 (Reduction in Annual Premium)*

*IT £1,010 versus £700 (increase in Optimise vouchers)*

### **Surplus**

£1,643 this year versus £56 last year

### **Balance**

Funds carried forward amount to £39,700

The Schemes administration costs have been kept low due to the fact we do not have any premises or employees and unusually we are all volunteers.

The accounts have again been independently examined by Peter Harrison FCA. I am pleased to confirm that Peter has indicated he is happy to continue for next year.



# St Albans Good Neighbour Scheme

Registered Charity No. 1074638

[A Company (No. 3675149) limited by guarantee and not having a share capital]

## Income & Expenditure Account for the year ended 30 September 2023

<u>30/9/22</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>30/9/23</u>	<u>%</u>
£0	0%	HCF Grant	£0	0%
£250	2%	Legacy	£750	8%
<u>£12,075</u>	<u>98%</u>	Donations	<u>£10,870</u>	<u>109%</u>
<u>£12,325</u>	<u>100%</u>		<u>£11,620</u>	<u>116%</u>
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>				
£7,406	60%	Mileage	£6,216	62%
£189	2%	Phone	£152	2%
£753	6%	Insurance	£277	3%
£137	1%	Stationery	£981	10%
£134	1%	Stamps	£126	1%
£1,795	15%	Meetings	£292	3%
£702	6%	IT	£1,010	10%
£240	2%	DBS	£558	6%
£768	6%	Gifts / Cards	£214	2%
£36	0%	Training	£0	0%
£78	1%	Subs	£63	1%
£11	0%	Sundries	£88	1%
<u>£20</u>	<u>0%</u>	HCF/QAVS	<u>£0</u>	<u>0%</u>
<u>£12,269</u>	<u>100%</u>		<u>£9,977</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>£ 56</u>	<u>0%</u>	<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>	<u>£ 1,643</u>	<u>16%</u>

<u>30/9/22</u>	<b><u>Balance Sheet as at</u></b>	<u>30/9/23</u>
£38,039	Balance b/f	£38,095
£56	Surplus / (Deficit)	£ 1,643
<u>£38,095</u>		<u>£39,738</u>
<u>£38,095</u>	<b>Cash at Bank</b>	<u>£39,738</u>



Trevor Fake

Treasurer

14 Nov 2023





**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES  
OF THE ST ALBANS GOOD NEIGHBOUR SCHEME ("THE SCHEME")**

**Charity number 1074638**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Scheme for the year ended 30th September 2023, which are attached.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity trustees of The Scheme, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

You consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Act and that an independent examination is needed.

I report in respect of my examination of The Scheme's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Basis of independent examiner's statement**

My examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Scheme and a comparison of the accounts presented with the records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Peter Owen Harrison FCA

Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

9 Marshal's Drive, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 4RB.

14 November 2023



# Reserves Policy

## Background

The Charity Commission for England and Wales describes reserves as that part of a charity's unrestricted funds that is freely available to spend on any of the charity's purposes. The starting point for calculating the amount of reserves held is the amount of unrestricted funds held by the charity. However, some or all of the unrestricted funds of a charity may not be readily available for spending. This is because spending those funds may adversely impact on the charity's ability to deliver its aims. The items that should be excluded from reserves are:

- tangible fixed assets used to carry out the charity's activities, such as land and buildings
- programme-related investments held solely to further the charity's purposes
- designated funds set aside to meet essential future spending, such as funding a project that could not be met from future income
- commitments that have not been provided for as a liability in the accounts

## Purposes for holding Reserves

The Trustees of the St Albans Good Neighbour Scheme (the "Scheme") take the view that sufficient reserves should be maintained to cover the following purposes, in order to ensure the continued operation of the Scheme in accordance with its charitable objects:

- repair and replacement of equipment necessary to carry out the Scheme's objects. (These items are written off at purchase and therefore considered as zero value assets.)
- increased volunteer demand for reimbursement of expenses
- payment of contractors or professionals for unanticipated, yet essential, operational duties and professional services that cannot be performed by available volunteers
- the premium required for essential insurance (including public liability insurance) in the absence of sufficient income
- unforeseen expenditure
- unexpected reductions in sources of income, for example, client donations or grants not renewed
- unanticipated financial commitments, if any

## Level of Reserves

The Scheme's Trustees have resolved to maintain reserves at a level equivalent to the Scheme's average annual expenditure over the preceding three years. They have made this decision on the basis that they consider this is an appropriate level to meet any unforeseen expenditure or reduction in income, whilst not restricting availability of funds to meet clear charitable need within the objects of the Scheme.



# Structure, management and governance

The Directors of the Company are also Charity Trustees for the purposes of Charity Law and are also known as members of the Management Committee.

**Management Committee** (known as Members/Directors/Trustees) from October 2022 to September 2023:

Patrick Brooks, Chair

Andre Bottin

Jane Burstow

Trevor Fake

Jonathan Kerridge-Phipps

Sue McElroy

Lucie Tate

Company Secretary: Dana Cox



## Post Holders

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Sarah M (until December 2022), then Lauren B

Volunteer Coordinator: Nicky S

Duty Officer Section Leader: Paul M

Deputy DO Section Leader: Ali B

DO Rota Coordinator: Paul M

Befriending Section Leader: Nigel R

Deputy Befriending Section Leader: Serena D

Practical Help Section Leader: Tessa P

Deputy Practical Help Section Leader: Mark H

Shopping Section Leader: Dana C

Transport Section Leader: Michelle P

Helpline Administrator: Jacqui R (until November 2022), then Anne H

IT Advisor: Andre B

IT Support Team: Keith A; Bill W; Jeremy H (from June 2023)

DBS Rechecks: Kate B (until February 2023), then Lauren B

## Independent Advisors

Accounts Examiner: Peter Harrison

Legal Advisor: Niall McAlister

All members of the Management Committee give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the Charity. Any expenses reclaimed are included in the Accounts.





# Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the Annual Report.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature	<i>Patrick Brooks</i>
Name	<b>Patrick Brooks</b>
Position	<b>Chair</b>
Date	<b>25/11/23</b>



St Albans Good Neighbour Scheme



