

SUMMER 2018

# Buzz...



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# Good neighbours share good food

A Shropshire RCC project which supports people in the community has teamed up with a local food hub to help distribute surplus supermarket food.

Wem Good Neighbours is working with Wem Food Hub to provide fresh food to families on low incomes. The items, which include bread, fruit and vegetables, are collected by the hub from Lidl, Sainsbury's and Tesco.

Volunteers from Good Neighbours then deliver the food to families as a top-up for the pantry stock items they receive from their local food bank.

Good Neighbours is a Shropshire RCC scheme which sees volunteers come together to offer a helping hand to those in their community. In Shropshire there are currently ten Good

Neighbours schemes, which are typically known for supporting older people who may have become isolated.

Katie Carter, a volunteer for Wem Good Neighbours, hopes that the food hub project will change that perception. She said: "Good Neighbours is about communities coming together to help each other, regardless of their age or situation. In a large rural county like

Shropshire it can be very easy to become isolated, so we want young families in Wem to know that local support is available if they need it."

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer

or know someone who would benefit from a Good Neighbour, please contact us on 01743 360641 or email [info@shropshire-rcc.org.uk](mailto:info@shropshire-rcc.org.uk) to find out more.

“ Good Neighbours is about communities coming together to help each other ”

## Co-op members support Care and Share project

Local members of the Co-op have raised over £500 for our Care and Share group in Albrighton.

The money has been given through the Co-op Local Community Fund, which allows Co-op members to nominate a local cause they want to support.

When they buy selected Co-op branded products and services, 1% of the money they spend goes to that cause.

Care and Share brings together local people with dementia and their partners who care for them. It provides 'mutual support' - partners take turns to have a break while their loved ones are safe and happy in the company of the rest of the group.

The group in Albrighton has

been running since September 2016 and has hosted a variety of activities - from canal boat trips to a visit to RAF Cosford museum.

You can raise funds for Care and Share through Co-op until October 2018, so if you would like to support it please go to: <https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/15088>



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# Wheels2Work partners with credit union



Shropshire RCC has partnered with a local credit union to help people join our Wheels2Work scheme.

Wheels2Work offers vehicle loans to people who are struggling to get or secure work because of public transport issues.

We provide 50cc scooters, 110cc scooters and electric bikes for a few months, giving people the time to save for their own transport or make other arrangements so they can get to work.

People who are interested in joining Wheels2Work, but unable to pay the deposit and/or weekly fees, are now able to access a low-rate loan through Just Credit Union.

Just Credit Union is a not-for-profit community bank



owned by its members and managed for their mutual benefit. Membership is open to anyone who lives or works in Shropshire or Telford & Wrekin.

## Maria's Wheels2Work story

One of the many people who has benefitted from Wheels2Work is Maria Edwards.

Maria, 51, works as a nursery nurse at Unicorn Nursery in Maesbury, near Oswestry.

She heard about Wheels2Work through a friend and contacted us when she was offered her job at the nursery in February. We were then able to loan Maria an electric bike in time for her first day.

Maria said: "To get a bus to work would have taken almost two hours. And a taxi ride would have been £15 one-way."

Borrowing the bike has given Maria the chance to pay for driving lessons and save up for her own car. But being on the road – in whatever vehicle – can be a daunting

prospect and one that almost stopped Maria's Wheels2Work journey before it had started.

"I was as nervous as anything the first time I got on the bike. I almost gave it back but I thought 'no it's not going to beat me'. Then after a week or two, that was it, I have been riding on it ever since. And it's now given me the confidence to actually think 'yeah, I can drive!'"

Maria is putting her new-found assurance to good use – she has already passed her theory test and has the practical booked for September. And her message for anyone thinking of joining the scheme?

**"Go for it. It will change your life!"**

If you or someone you know might benefit from Wheels2Work, please visit [www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk](http://www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk) or call 01743 360641.

# Loan shark cash used to help Shropshire savers

Shropshire RCC is supporting an initiative which will allow money confiscated from convicted loan sharks to be used to support people trying to save.



Just Credit Union and the England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) have set up the scheme to raise awareness of the dangers faced by people who borrow from illegal money lenders.

The proceeds of the crime money are to be used as an incentive to encourage people in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin to set up savings accounts. Qualifying individuals who join Just

Credit Union before the end of October, and who save a minimum of £10 over a 13 week period, will receive a savings boost of £25.

Tony Quigley, head of IMLT said: "We would always urge residents to check before they borrow and only use legitimate lenders such as Just Credit Union. Advice and support is available to anyone who has been affected. By calling 0300 555 2222 they can speak to a member of the team or visit [www.stoploansharks.uk](http://www.stoploansharks.uk) for more information."

For more information on the scheme and how to become a member of Just Credit Union, call 01743 252325 or visit <https://www.justcreditunion.org>.



## MP to speak at AGM

We are delighted to confirm that Susan Elan Jones, MP for Clywd South, has agreed to speak at Shropshire RCC's 2018 AGM.

Before first being elected to Parliament in 2010 Susan spent 15 years working for charities, and her interest in the sector has continued into her role as MP.

Susan is the Chair of The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Charities and Volunteering, which provides a forum for discussing the issues affecting the voluntary and community sector. She was also a member of the Small Charitable Donations Bill Committee, playing a key part in getting the Government to increase funding for small charities.

Our AGM will be taking place on Friday 16 November, 2.30 pm, at the Morris Hall in Shrewsbury. If you would like to attend, please email [info@shropshire-rcc.org.uk](mailto:info@shropshire-rcc.org.uk)

# Hodnet Hall hosts afternoon tea for hard-working volunteers



A group of volunteers was invited to Hodnet Hall Gardens in July as a thank you for their commitment to Shropshire RCC.

Around 30 volunteers attended the event, which was organised to recognise their hard work and dedication supporting people with sight and hearing loss around the county.

The occasion was hosted by Sir Algernon and Lady Jane Heber-Percy, who opened up their beautiful gardens for the volunteers to enjoy and provided a delicious afternoon tea.

Sir Algernon, Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire, is the Patron of Shropshire RCC and presented certificates and gifts to some of those who had reached volunteering milestones.

Steve Brown has volunteered for the Sight Loss Opportunities Group for five years and often transports people to various activities, including the annual Christmas meal.

Gwen Fox was thanked for her 20-year commitment to the Hearing Loss Support Service. After becoming more dependent on hearing aids and realising how life-changing they can be, she decided she wanted to help others in a similar position. Gwen covers local home visits, drop-in clinics and mentors new volunteers.

Retiring volunteers Shirley Vaughan (profiled on page 8) and Julian Hudson were thanked for their commitment to the service and will be sorely missed.

Visitors are welcome at Hodnet Hall Gardens, near Market Drayton, every Sunday and Bank Holiday Monday between April and September, as well as on a selection of additional days.

For more information, visit <http://www.hodnethallgardens.org>



# Hearing Loss Support says thank you to volunteer Shirley

We would like to say a big thank you to one of our long-standing volunteers, who has decided to stand down after eight years at Shropshire RCC.

Shirley Vaughan has supported numerous people through our Hearing Loss Support Service, which provides information, advice and practical guidance to hearing aid users.

Like most of our hearing loss support volunteers, Shirley is a hearing aid user herself. She adapted well to her hearing aids but recognised that others might not have the same experience, so decided to do what she could to help.

Shirley has decided to reduce her volunteering commitments so she can spend more time doing personal activities, and we want to wish her well for the future.



## **Volunteers needed:**

Our volunteers play a big role in helping us to deliver projects that support people across Shropshire. We are currently looking for volunteers for the following:

### **Sight Loss Opportunity Groups**

These groups allow people who have sight loss to keep active, stay confident, meet and make new friends and have some fun. Can you spare a couple of hours a month to help support this much-loved scheme?

## **Wheels2Work**

This project provides scooters and electric bikes on short-term loans to people who are struggling to get to work or find employment because of local transport issues. We are looking for people with scooter and/or electric bike maintenance experience to help carry out vehicle checks and give advice to clients.

If you are interested in helping with these or any of our other projects, please call 01743 360641 or email [info@shropshire-rcc.org.uk](mailto:info@shropshire-rcc.org.uk)

# How some of our volunteers help

## Hearing Loss Support

*The hearing loss volunteers provide insight and peer support through their own experiences to help those with communication challenges to lead more complete and enriched lives. The volunteers offer individual experiential expertise as many have hearing loss and many wear hearing aids themselves. This is invaluable to the people they visit. They offer not only one to one support for new patients who are adjusting to trying hearing aids for the first time, they offer*

*continued support to existing hearing aid wearers.*

*A key role for the volunteers is they are in a unique position to be able to signpost patients to many other support organisations and this forges links between support organisations. Since its inception back in April 1991 the volunteers have enhanced many thousands of people's, and their families' lives.*

Darren McHale, Audiology Service Lead  
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital

## Oil Buying

We have over 30 volunteer coordinators who help us deliver our community oil buying scheme. Oil buying coordinators' responsibilities include promoting the scheme in their area and collecting and submitting monthly orders. But they do more than that.

Clive Leworthy, Membership Development Officer, said: "Coordinators talk regularly with their local members, making sure any of our more vulnerable customers are well looked after. This was especially important during last winter, which as everyone knows was particularly bad.

"Oil demand was extremely high, conditions were challenging and so having the coordinators on the ground was a massive help. We really appreciate all their efforts across the year helping to make the oil buying scheme so successful."

One of our coordinators, Roy Broad, has been looking after members' oil orders in Myddle and Baschurch, North Shropshire, since 2012.

He said: "I guess it was being a Gamesmaker



for London Olympics in 2012 that really got me into volunteering and taught me just how rewarding being a volunteer could be.

"Being an oil buying coordinator is not time consuming but has given me the opportunity to help my neighbours sort out their oil supply problems and for us all to get a better price through the group buying scheme."

## #ItStartsWithYou campaign launches in Shropshire

Our colleagues at Healthwatch Shropshire (HWS) have launched a campaign to encourage people across the county to share their experiences to help make health and care better for their communities.

Healthwatch is an independent national champion for people who use health and social care services. Over the last five years, thousands of people have contacted HWS and used their voice to make a difference to the care of others. As a result, positive changes that benefit the people using them have been seen across hospital, General Practice, dental and care home services.

Jane Randall-Smith, Chief Officer, said: "By sharing your story you can help doctors,

dentists, hospitals and care homes understand what's working well and what could be better. It might just feel like your story, but if it matters to you, it matters to us, and it really can make a difference."

People can let Healthwatch Shropshire know what they think about local health and care services by phone 01743 237884, by post "freepost HEALTHWATCH SHROPSHIRE", by email [enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchshropshire.co.uk) or online at [www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk).



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## Good Neighbour Insurance Specialists

Our policy can provide cover for any group with up to 250 volunteers. The insurance applies to the range of activities that groups will undertake such as a voluntary transport service (to hospitals, appointments and the like), befriending, shopping and light tasks of DIY or gardening.

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# Applications open for community building funding

A fund offering small grants to community buildings in Shropshire is now open for new applications. The Millichope Foundation provides up to £500 for village halls and community centres to buy equipment or make emergency repairs that will help the building meet the needs of their local community.

Shropshire RCC administers the fund, and Chief Executive Julia Baron is keen to spread the word that this money is available. She said: "We know at the moment there are fewer opportunities for community building funding, which is why it's so important for people to see if they are eligible for a grant from the Millichope Foundation.

"The money is there to help with projects that can refresh and update items in the building, making the space more appealing for the community and helping to ensure it continues to be regularly used."

Recently-approved applications include costs towards the installation of an eco-self-composting toilet, a bar refurbishment and new lighting.

To find out more and apply, please visit [www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk](http://www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk) or call 01743 360641.

*Do you have a project that you need funding for that doesn't meet the criteria? If so give us a call. There are other funding sources available which we could help you to identify.*

Our e-bulletin shares the latest news and advice for community buildings in Shropshire. To sign up, email [graham.betts@shropshire-rcc.org.uk](mailto:graham.betts@shropshire-rcc.org.uk)

## Community hall chairman honoured

Retired police officer Allan Caswell has been awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) for services to the community in Bayston Hill.

The 73-year-old, who is the chairman of Shropshire RCC-member Bayston Hill Memorial Hall, said it was a "great honour".

"I was very surprised. It's nice to be recognised."

Mr Caswell served as a police constable for 30 years, joining the force in 1966. He worked in Denbighshire, Wales, for five years before joining West Mercia Police and spending time working in Telford and Shrewsbury.



*Allan Caswell (R) with Sir Algernon Heber-Percy*

Mr Caswell was involved in setting up a youth club as a committee member of Bayston Hill Memorial Hall when he was 16.

He has been chairman of the committee since 2001 and helped to revamp the venue after raising funds and applying for grants. The improvements he has overseen include a new kitchen, better flooring, heating, lighting and the extension of two new committee rooms.

Mr Caswell said: "When I took over it was in a rather sorry state. We transformed it. We have nearly 40 regular groups who now use it." Over a period of a decade Mr Caswell has raised £324,000 for the hall.

## THE QUEEN'S AWARD FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the MBE for volunteer groups was created by Her Majesty to mark the Golden Jubilee in 2002 to recognise exceptional contributions made to local communities by groups of volunteers.



**Do you know an exceptional volunteer group positively impacting the lives of others in your local community?**

**Learn more about the award and how you can nominate here:  
<https://qavs.direct.gov.uk/>**



**@QueensAwardVS**

Call 0207 271 6206 for more information

## Buy oil this summer

## to save for winter



When you hear the word 'summer', what images does it conjure up? Sitting in the sunshine? Walking along a sandy beach? How about buying oil?!

OK, we understand that oil buying isn't at the top of people's priorities when the weather is so glorious, but now really is time to secure the best deals and fill up your tank for a great price.

And what's more, if you are part of the Shropshire RCC oil buying scheme you will have access to even better prices. We run the largest fuel buying scheme in Shropshire, with almost 800 members, which gives us the bargaining power to negotiate prices that individuals wouldn't get.

### How does it work?

- Once a month we collate our members' orders
- We contact the oil companies to negotiate the best price
- We tell you the price and expected day of delivery
- You pay the supplier direct for the oil they deliver

### How much can I save?

Savings achieved are typically between 4 and 5 pence per litre but can be more. Most members find they can save their joining fee on their first order.

To find out more, please call 01743 360641 or visit [www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk](http://www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk)

## Save your stamps



Did you know that you can recycle your stamps and help us raise much-needed funds? All you need to do is:

- Cut or tear off the stamps from your post (everyday 1st and 2nd class and both British and foreign are OK)
- Make sure no more than 1cm of the envelope is left around the stamp
- Make sure the perforations are undamaged
- Send to: Shropshire RCC Stamp Appeal, 10 Chestnut Avenue, North Walsham, Norfolk, NR28 9XH

# About us

Shropshire Rural Communities Charity (RCC) is committed to making life better for everyone living in Shropshire.

We help people improve their prospects with access to work and volunteering opportunities, and give a helping hand to those in need through small grants. We support people to stay active and

connected to their community and to maintain their health and independence so they live life to the full.

We work with local meeting places and groups to build thriving communities and we partner with organisations and policy makers to make sure the people of Shropshire have a fair voice.

## How you can help

### Hire our vintage crockery



We have a beautiful collection of vintage crockery which we hire out to raise money for our projects. Our collection caters for up to 100 people and includes:

- Tea cups, saucers and tea plates
- Teapots, milk jugs and sugar bowls
- Cake plates and tiered cake stands
- Cutlery and cake slices
- Embroidered linens

*To find out more about hiring our crockery or smoothie bike, please contact 01743 360641*

### Hire our smoothie bike



Our smoothie bike is a stationary cycle that harnesses the cyclist's pedaling energy to power a blender that is attached to the bike. Fruit is put into the blender jug and a delicious, healthy drink is produced by the cyclist.

The smoothie bike is always a hit at school and village fairs and a fantastic way to fundraise at your event.



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# SAVE THE DATE!

West Midlands Community - Led Housing Event



Wednesday  
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10am – 4pm

#ACRENetworkCLH

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FREE to attend



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