

EYNESHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD CARE SCHEME

NEWSLETTER APRIL 2015

HALF YEAR REPORT

During the last six months you have driven 193 journeys to clinical appointments and the Day Centre, travelling 2788 miles. Donations of £1399.05 have been received. £1488.60 was paid out to drivers and £69 for phone calls and office expenses. This six month period we were six times unable to provide transport.

HISTORY

Eynsham Neighbourhood Car Scheme started about 1969 when Eynsham Baptist Church members did a survey of the need of the village which resulted in the scheme being set up for various needs. According to Anne Adnams they had a clever card index for volunteer skills which involved a knitting needle poking through the card, say, the 'SHOPPING' hole and lifting up all the 'shopping' drivers ... clever or what!

Over the years all the other aspects dropped off but the 'car' scheme continued. I accidentally added the 'e' a few years back which has made it the 'care' scheme now.

MORE HISTORY

It was my wife's fault. "You could do that" she said ... so I volunteered us both ... Having taken over the co-ordinator's role from Freda Deeley and being handed the pencil, some paper, a diary and some characters she called 'the drivers' ... I took on the role.

I had no chance of changing the drivers' style. If their preferred route to Witney was via South Leigh, or if they insisted their weary client should have a coffee at a Garden Centre ... so be it. After all, they may have had to put up with some 'odd' behaviour including rudeness. The latter I quite enjoyed addressing by ... 'Perhaps you would prefer to call a taxi?' ... My drivers won't take you because of your manner! ... (Client) I only want my rights ... (Me) "You have no rights"! ... or, How dare you, I'm a volunteer! ... Shades of Richard (Meldrew) Wilson.

The occasions of clients' being 'black balled' were few ... One, resulting from the client's son in law having gone shopping and not being at the hospital for the pick up. But for the intervention of the driver's wife, the threat of physical force could have become a reality ... Driver v Client (with zimmer). And of course there is always the risk/reality of illness in the car ... and clients disappearing ...

But the appreciating (aged from well over 90 down to 5 years ... not quite sure how I accepted the young lad as 'aged or infirm' but I did) clients made it all worth while.

I had to ask the drivers to accept whatever monies the client put in the donation envelope. It was my job to manage that aspect. Indeed I occasionally, in impecunious cases, have given back the donation and a few times rang the client to say 'Do you realise you put £40 into the envelope' ... Reply "Ooh yes, we've got to keep you going!" And the clients' brilliant voices and accents when requesting transport ... unknowingly telling me so much more about themselves and their fears and difficulties. On the other hand I have been called unchristian, uncaring and probably a lot of other things after the call had ended ... and that was just the drivers!! (This is only half true.)

Wooden carved notice seen at Brackley Hospital:

'I was sick you visited me' (Mathew 25 v36)
Of you, dear drivers, it can be truly said, 'I was sick, you carried me'

Best wishes to you all.

David Co-ordinator -- Jenny Treasurer -- Janet Chairperson