

What is a Community Friends Scheme?



A Community Friends Scheme will link those residents who are in particular need with volunteers willing to help. Although it tends to be the elderly who make most use of the help available, it can benefit all in the community—those recovering from illness or accidents or people experiencing particular problems.



Volunteers are encouraged to offer their services only for the time they can spare and for activities that they would feel happy and confident to carry out, which can include:

- **Transport:** to give people occasional lifts for which a recommended charge of 45 pence per mile is made to compensate the driver for fuel, wear and tear.
- **Practical** help such as shopping, collecting pensions and prescriptions. Occasional cooking is also in demand.
- **Household repairs** such as changing a light bulb, fixing a dripping tap, or hanging a picture where such volunteer skills are available.
- **Gardening** can include a one-off tidy up for a villager who is physically unable to manage it themselves.
- **Befriending** on a regular or occasional basis is an extremely welcome and worthwhile practice which can benefit not only the elderly and newly bereaved but also people new to the village.
- **Letter writing** and **form filling** can be a problem for people in many sectors of the community and help will be much appreciated.

The Rother Community Friends Project Officer can provide help:

- To assessing the level of need for the scheme
- Help raise a team of volunteers
- Help to set up a steering group to initially run the scheme
- Provide the set-up funding needed to pay for a mobile phone, insurance, CRB checks and other expenses
- Provide a Toolkit of advice, guidelines and templates