

Meeting Notes Barrow Upon Soar Good Neighbour Scheme 7th Annual General Meeting 7pm 21st July 2026 - Conservative Club	
Current Officers of the Scheme:	Mike Bernstein – Chair, Nick Thomas – Treasurer Laura Gibson – Safeguarding Officer, Annette Richardson – Secretary
Current Steering Group Members:	Alison Bowley, Andy Northcote-smith
All Attendees:	Michael Bernstein, Nick Thomas, Laura Gibson, Alison Bowley, Andy Northcote-smith, Ginnie Willcocks, Rose Ball, Sue Preston, Alan Willcocks, Karen Selby, Sharon Gudger, Jeanette Hollis, Annette Richardson.
Apologies:	Joyce Whowell, Penny Margetts, Andy Boston, Angie Sharpe, Terri Davies, Michelle Leates, Helen Filkins, Vanita Patel, Sue Sykes, Judith Rodgers, Danny Webb.
Item	Description
1	Welcome and Apologies (Chair)
Mike welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. Apologies were noted as above.	
2	Agree minutes of the last AGM (All)
The minutes from the previous meeting on 8 th July 2025 were agreed by those that were present.	
3	Summary of the Year (Chair)
It's hard to believe it's been just over a year since I took on the role of chairman. When I look back at everything we've achieved together, I feel really proud — and a little amazed at how much a small village group can accomplish when people care this much. To restate the important numbers, we have 50 active members, 5 more than a year ago. We have welcomed 12 new members in the last year. We are so fortunate to have 24 active volunteers, a decrease of 2. BUT WE HAVE NEW MEMBERS FOR WHOM WE DO NOT HAVE A VOLUNTEER. This is obviously a problem, and I'll speak more on this later... The BGNS would not work without the planning that is performed by the Steering Group Committee, and I would like to specially thank our treasurer, Nick Thomas - who ably takes care of the finances, Laura Gibson - who calls on her professional expertise to especially help with Safeguarding issues. Alison Bowley, Annette, and Andy Smith help in all ways. Laura also introduced us to Sally Newby, who has kindly given her time and skill to perform our digital design, completely free of charge. I'm sure you'll agree that things are looking fresh and professional in this regard. Most recently Sally produced a leaflet that explains what we do, and invites people to volunteer. I invite you to take a few copies and help ensure it gets to people. One of the important changes this year has been welcoming Jeanette into our new <i>coordinator</i> role. Jeanette acts an important link between the SGC and you, our volunteers. She's been meeting with you one-on-one to hear what's working well and what could be done better, and she's also helped organise our social calendar VOLUNTEERING SHOULD BE ENJOYABLE, NOT JUST HARD WORK! All these efforts will help us. The driving part of the services we offer is well used, and I'd like to thank the Telco Team for managing this, and the people who drive the miles to get members to their appointments, help with the weekly shop, etc. This part of what the BGNS does is much appreciated and goes a long way to helping our members keep their independence.	

We also benefit greatly from volunteers who help with odd jobs for members. This may take the form of a bit of garden work or DIY in the home. Again, this help is greatly appreciated and I would like to thank the volunteers who help in this regard.

You will know that we benefit from the help of the PROMOTIONS TEAM. These arranged the members' Xmas tea event, and the volunteers' skittle night. Both were big successes. We can look forward to this talented team helping build our volunteer support work in the year ahead.

A special mention must go to Annette Richardson - our secretary - who works tirelessly for BGNS since the start. Honestly, Annette is the beating heart of the BGNS and we could hardly survive without her generosity and skill. She works tirelessly to make everything happen, and we cannot thank her enough.

When I started as chairman, I wanted to focus on two things: getting our house in order with our policies and guidance documents, and making sure our volunteers — the heart of everything we do — feel properly supported. So we've updated our key documents, and these are publicly available on the web site for download. Also, I've been writing regular catch-up articles to keep everyone in the loop with what's going on.

Given the nature of the community we serve we also need to cope with the inevitable member losses through death. From my experience and from talking to other volunteers I fully understand that this is always difficult. Are we part of the family? How do we deal with the loss of someone we've become close to as a result of regular visits? Indeed, I believe that some members find it easier to speak to us than family on some topics. So, to help us volunteers, we also put in place a new grievance procedure. We will describe this in more detail when we next meet, but suffice it to say that this is a layered approach that starts with time and availability of one of ours, Sue Sykes. Sue's role is the cornerstone of the support structure we offer.

b speech

4	Financial Report (Treasurer)					
Expenditure for the past 12 months was as expected including bank charges starting at the beginning of 2026 and the cost of DBS certification rising. Insurance costs and Mobile phone charges have remained the same. Costs were received for stationary and new Promotional Leaflets. General Donations have increased, and Income from driving has also increased, with fuel mileage returned to drivers also showing an increase as a result. Spending on events reduced slightly. Some miscellaneous costs were incurred for the support posts for drivers to use to help those less mobile getting in and out of cars. Overall, the accounts remain healthy with no new funding requests needed for general activities. Anyone is welcome to have a look at the accounts at any time.						
5	Re-election of Officers:					
All posts for Officers and Members of the Steering Group were up for re-election. All current Officers and Members agreed to continue in role for another 12 months.						
5.1	Re-election of Officers - Post of Chair					
It was proposed that Mike Bernstein should be re-elected for the post of Chair.						
Proposed by:		Annette Richardson				
For:		All	Against:	None	Abstain:	None
5.2	Re-election of Officers - Remaining Posts of Officers of the Scheme					
It was proposed that all existing Posts for Officers of the Scheme, Nick Thomas for Treasurer, Laura Gibson for Safeguarding Officer and Annette Richardson for Secretary should be re-elected en-bloc.						
Proposed by:		Mike Bernstein				
For:		All	Against:	None	Abstain:	None

5.3	Re-election of Officers - Remaining members of Steering Group					
It was proposed that the remaining members of the Steering Group, Alison Bowley and Andy Northcote-smith should be re-elected. All Volunteers are welcome to attend the Steering Group meetings at any time. Please let someone from the Group aware so that you will be placed on the distribution list for future meetings.						
Proposed by:		Annette Richardson				
For:		All	Against:	None	Abstain:	None
6	The next 12 months: (Chair)					
So, what of the year ahead? As I mentioned earlier, there are many things that “just work” very well, and I know that the volunteers involved are looking for continuous improvement. Fantastic!						
When you consider that our member group number is growing and volunteer group is shrinking, the priority is clear: recruitment and retention of volunteers. That is my ultimate focus for the year ahead. It a task that we all can contribute to. Please, talk about the BGNS. Invite and encourage people to consider volunteers.						
How can we best support our precious volunteers so that they know that their time is valued and they do not burn out? What can we do to make sure that being a volunteer both worthwhile and fun? What can we do to improve “attraction and retention”?						
Broadly speaking, we plan to do this (a) through communication and (b) working to make a community of volunteers. After all, we all have one very important belief in common: we want to, and will commit our time to helping the less fortunate in our village. This is very special, and I know it’s appreciated because I constantly hear so from members. So, we will create times to get together. Jeanette has started monthly coffee drop ins, and we will continue the summer walks and pub stops in the summer. We are in the process of planning a BBQ at Judith Rogers’ property: details will follow.						
We are planning an evening where you are invited to attend to raise your understanding of CPR and AED device use. This is an awareness evening. At the same time, we will also introduce the Bereavement Policy. Actually, the event is a reboot of what we planned earlier in the year - so I won’t say too much about it now.						
None of this happens without you — our volunteers. Whether you're befriending someone for a cup of tea and a chat, driving someone to an appointment, or mowing a lawn or fixing a fence, you are making a real difference to people's lives in this village. And we're always looking for more people to join us, so if you know someone who might be interested, please ask them to call us on the Telco line.						
So, I’d like you all please to join me in thanking you so much for all the work you do. I know that many of you have said that you get back as much, or more than what you put in — but it’s still something very special that you do. Giving your time for others less fortunate is not something that many can or want to do, so this makes your work even more special and appreciated.						
Thank you all who help, and make Barrow a special place!						
7	Volunteer Feedback:					
No feedback was received before the meeting.						
8	Questions & Answers:					
No Questions were received before the meeting.						
Sharon has offered to ask for funding support from the “Barrow Churches Together” fund.						

- Sharon also mentioned potential advertising on a new screen that BUSCA will hopefully soon be installing at the library.
- Alan asked for clarity about the issues seen for recruitment of new volunteers: It was stated that Facebook posts often do not attract any positive response for volunteers to join but instead seem to attract new requests for support. Also, in the recent past, potential members have either not turned up for planned introductory meetings, or after seeming very keen initially, they have then failed to respond to messages once the DBS process has been started, so causing the scheme some wasted costs when they subsequently realise that perhaps they do not currently have spare time to volunteer.

9	Closing Statement:
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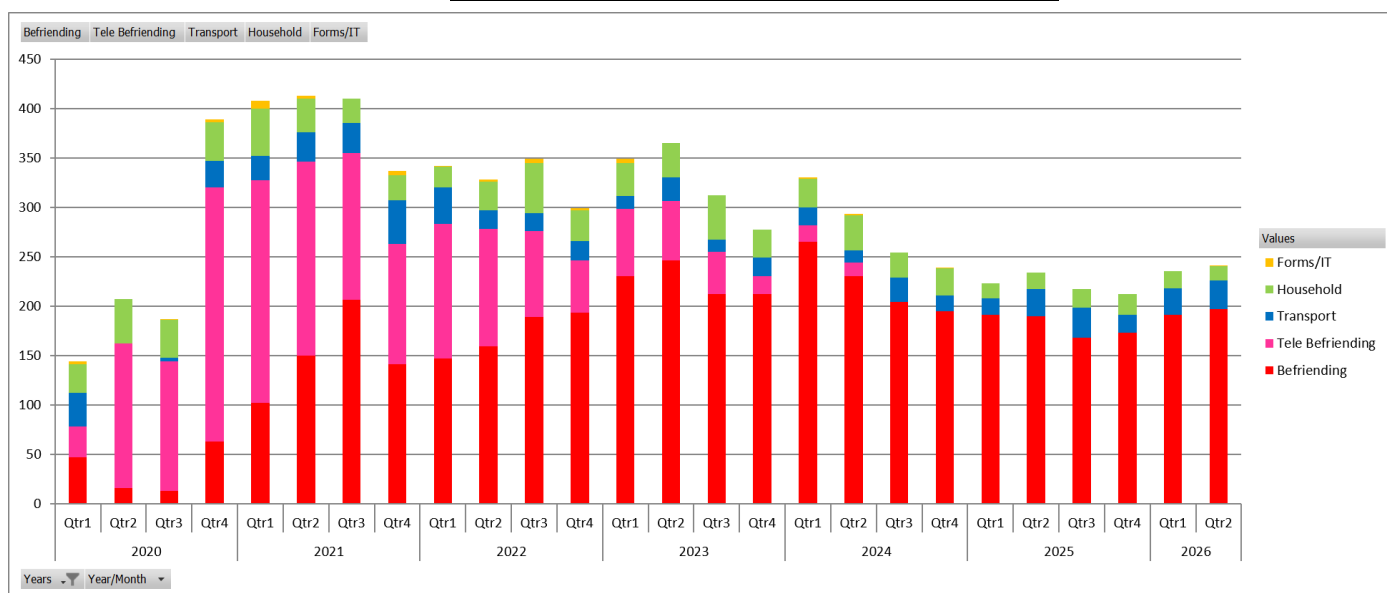
The Chair thanked everyone attending for their time and contribution in the scheme's 7th AGM. He reiterated that Barrow Good Neighbour Scheme cannot exist without the wonderful volunteers we have in the village.

The **date of the next AGM** will take place sometime in **July 2027**. Date tbc nearer the time.

Barrow upon Soar Good Neighbour Scheme
Income and Expenditure Report for the period
1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026

	1 Jul 25 to 30 Jun 26	1 Jul 24 to 30 Jun 25
Income		
Grants	£	£
Barrow upon Soar Parish Council	0	0
Donations (Group)		
Trinity Church	0	0
Donations (Individual)	659	580
Driving	280	224
	<u>939</u>	<u>804</u>
Less Expenditure		
Insurance	131	131
Stationery	65	0
Mobile phone	60	60
Bank charges	18	0
DBS checks	77	14
Publicity	38	0
Events	602	691
Miscellaneous	61	0
Mileage	82	62
	<u>1134</u>	<u>958</u>
Surplus of income over expenditure	-195	-154
Funds brought forward from previous year	<u>1994</u>	<u>2148</u>
Total funds	<u>1799</u>	<u>1994</u>
Represented by:		
Bank Account	<u>1799</u>	<u>1994</u>

Tasks completed to 30th June 2026



	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Qtr1	Qtr2	Grand Total
Befriending	139	599	688	900	894	722	388	191	197	4330
Tele Befriending	565	692	395	189	31	0	0			1872
Transport	65	129	94	68	71	92	56	27	29	575
Household	151	132	132	142	117	72	31	17	14	777
Forms/IT	7	16	9	4	3	0	1	0	1	40
	927	1568	1318	1303	1116	886	476	235	241	7594

* Tasks from December 2019 are incorporated into 2020 totals

In Year 7 (July 2025 – June 2026)

Members numbers:

- We have **50 Active** members (**5 more** than last AGM)
 - 25** members receiving **regular** support – home Team visits, phone calls, or shopping
 - 25** members receiving support **occasional** support such as gardening, transport
 - We had **14 new** members join since the last AGM, **4** of which have since left
- 56** members have left since the scheme started, or do not receive any support including
 - 49** members have left, including **8** members have left since the last AGM
 - 7** members do not receive any support – **2 waiting for a suitable volunteer**, **3** have made alternative support arrangements but wish to stay in the scheme for now.

Volunteer numbers:

- We have **24 active** volunteers (**decrease of 2** since last AGM)
 - 3 new** volunteers joining since the last AGM
- 6** volunteers are having a **break** before hopefully carrying on supporting members
- 4** volunteers have **left** since last AGM – **22** have left in total.

Events:

- **Volunteers BBQ/AGM 8th July 2025** – 14 volunteers and 4 guests. Thanks to all that attended our first BBQ event and to those that also came to the AGM.
- **Volunteers Skittles – 25th Nov 2025** – 17 volunteers and 6 guests enjoyed a great evening. Thanks to Ginnie for organising the teams.
- **Members Afternoon Tea – 2nd Dec 2025** – 27 members and guests sitting down, plus 5 with take away parcels. 5 volunteer drivers, and 6 volunteer ‘waiters’ helping on the day. HOPS Choir again enjoyed by all.
- **Quilted Throws donated** – we were very privileged to have received 15 wonderful handmade quilted throws which we were able to distribute to our members.
- **Evening Walks** – Nick organised a walk in July, but due to reduced numbers the event was put on hold.

Thanks to all the volunteers that helped to support these events.

Looking forward 2026/27:

- **Volunteers Awareness Event** - Date tbc, to include information on first aid and grief management
- **Volunteers BBQ** – Date tbc (September)
- **Volunteers Skittles** – date tbc (November)
- **Members Christmas Afternoon Tea** – date tbc (December)
- **Daytime and Evening Walks** – will resume if numbers are there.
- **Coffee & Chat** – 1st Thursday of the month, 2pm at Freckles