

# Volunteer Profile:

## *Annette*



### **- How long have you been volunteering with the Good Neighbour Scheme?**

From the very beginning!. Joyce, our Chair, and I came up with the idea and we gradually got a few other key people involved, Nick, our Treasurer, Laura, our Safeguarding Officer, and Ginnie our Befriending Officer. It took about 12 months to get some financial backing and talk to the other social groups in the village, before engaging with residents to confirm if it was something that was needed and would be supported.

### **- What is your primary volunteering role within the Scheme (i.e. providing transport, befriending, other)?**

I'm involved primarily with lots of the administration that goes on behind the scenes, so talking to potential new members and volunteers, getting to know them a little better, either over a cup of coffee, phone calls and more recently, lots of walks around the village. I've also been the Telephone Co-ordinator for most of the last 16 months we've been running, which involves taking calls from our members to arrange new tasks such as transport to medical appointments, or collection of prescriptions etc. Also confirming with volunteers that home visits, walks and befriending calls are all happening as planned and our members are all feeling OK. I also visit 2 of our members regularly and collect shopping on a weekly basis for one of our ladies.

### **- What made you decide to get into volunteering?**

I was lucky enough to retire early and knew I needed something to fill the time and give me some structure to the week. I've previously been involved with various organisations ranging from the Cinnamon Trust, where I walked dogs, to the Wildlife Trust, helping with woodland management, and the Ramblers where I helped maintain footpaths. When I moved to Barrow 7 years ago I started to look for more local based volunteering opportunities, so I started with the Community Library and really enjoyed some of the more social aspects to it. Joyce also volunteered there, and that's how we got started with Good Neighbours. I also started other voluntary groups in the village that are more outdoor based but also provide lots of social interaction which we all now know is so important.

### **- What advice would you give to anyone who is interested in volunteering?**

Find something that interests you and give it a go! There are lots of different groups to choose from and most don't need any special qualifications to begin. Know how much of your time you can offer and how far you are prepared to travel etc, You will generally get far more back from volunteering than you give - plus you meet lots of new people with similar interests who very soon, become new friends.