

The Good Neighbour Project Policy

Policy Statement

The Good Neighbour project is a community-led initiative designed to foster social cohesion, support vulnerable individuals, and strengthen the bonds of care and responsibility among residents. Rooted in the principle that strong communities are built on mutual assistance and trust, the Good Neighbour project policy operates as a policy framework enabling volunteers to assist those in need, regardless of age, ability, or background. The policy sets out the vision, objectives, operational guidelines, safeguarding measures, and strategies for measuring the effectiveness of local Good Neighbour Schemes.

Vision and Objectives

The primary vision of the Good Neighbour policy is to cultivate resilient neighbourhoods where everyone feels safe, supported, and included. The objectives can be summarised as follows:

- **Promote Social Inclusion:** Reduce isolation and loneliness among vulnerable groups, including the elderly, disabled, and those with limited mobility.
- **Encourage Active Participation:** Empower and enable citizens to take an active role in supporting their neighbours and community.
- **Enhance Well-being:** Improve the quality of life for both volunteers and beneficiaries through regular social interaction and practical help.
- **Foster Community Cohesion:** Build trust, empathy, and understanding across diverse groups of residents.
- **Respond to Local Needs:** Ensure schemes are adaptable to the unique needs, resources, and demographic profile of each neighbourhood.

Scope of Offer

The Good Neighbour project typically offers a range of practical and social support services, delivered by DBS cleared volunteers. The scope of services may include, but is not limited to:

- Shopping and prescription collection for housebound residents
- Transport to medical appointments or community activities
- Friendly visits or telephone calls to reduce loneliness
- Support with household IT- phones/PCs/TVs etc



- Light household tasks
- Pet care during short absences or illness
- Form-filling or assistance with minor paperwork
- Information and signposting to other support services

Such services are not intended to replace statutory care or specialist interventions but to enhance existing support and address gaps where formal provision is unavailable.

All requests are first approved by the Project Coordinator.

The Process:

1. An individual contacts the Project Coordinator to request/offer volunteering support.
2. The Project Coordinator records registration details using the project template form.
3. The Project Coordinator will decide if the project can help with the request.
4. If the request cannot be met through the project, the Project Coordinator will signpost the individual to alternative helplines/agencies.
5. If the request can be met through the project, the Project Coordinator will 'pair' the individual (client) up with a suitable DBS checked volunteer.
6. The Project Coordinator will provide Volunteer Guidance notes for new volunteers.
7. The Project Coordinator will liaise between the volunteer and client to confirm the details of the volunteering activity.
8. The volunteer will record the volunteering activity using the project template form, confirming the type and duration, and send to the Project Coordinator.

Volunteer Transport

Any volunteer who uses their **own** transport will be required to show evidence of *business use* on their motor insurance policy before claiming volunteer expenses in relation to the participation in the Good Neighbour project.

Volunteers should not accept financial contributions from clients, however any offers of charitable donations can be signposted to Morland PCC.



Handling Client Money

If a volunteer helps with errands that include financial transactions, these must be recorded using the pastoral visit form with copies of receipts attached.

Governance and Structure

The Good Neighbour project has a clear governance structure to ensure accountability, safety, and long-term sustainability. Key features include:

- Morland PCC is the sponsoring organisation. A coordinating group, consisting of Rural Dean, Good Neighbour Coordinator and Deanery Administrator oversee the project and report directly to the PCC and any project funders, for example, Westmorland & Furness Local Authority. Local volunteers and representatives oversee project operations, set priorities, and ensure compliance with safeguarding and data protection requirements.
- Volunteer Recruitment and Guidelines: Recruitment processes are inclusive, with background checks (e.g., DBS), references, and induction training covering safety, confidentiality, and boundaries.
- Safeguarding: Policies and procedures protect both volunteers and beneficiaries, with clear guidance on reporting concerns and dealing with emergencies.
- Insurance and Data Protection: Appropriate insurance cover is in place and adherence to data protection legislation is in place.
- Partnership Working: Collaboration with local authorities, health services, faith groups, and charities aims to maximise reach and impact.

Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities

Volunteers are the lifeblood of the Good Neighbour project. The policy outlines clear expectations for volunteers and beneficiaries:

- Act with empathy, integrity, and respect for all individuals
- Offer practical help within agreed boundaries and competencies
- Report concerns or safeguarding issues to the project coordinator
- Maintain confidentiality and privacy at all times
- Participate in ongoing training and supervision, as appropriate

Beneficiaries are encouraged to respect the time and boundaries of volunteers and provide feedback to improve the project.



Safeguarding and Risk Management

Central to the Good Neighbour Scheme policy is the commitment to safeguarding. This includes:

- Carrying out risk assessments for all activities involving children or vulnerable adults.
- Maintaining clear records of all requests, activities, and incidents
- Providing volunteers with guidance on lone working, personal safety, and responding to disclosures
- Having a designated safeguarding lead to handle serious concerns

Accessibility, Diversity, and Inclusion

The Good Neighbour Project is accessible to all residents **of the ecclesiastical parish of Morland** (which includes Cliburn, Newby, Kings Meaburn, Little Strickland), regardless of background, ethnicity, gender, religion, or ability. The policy encourages:

- Inclusive publicity and outreach, using multiple languages or accessible formats where needed
- Respect for cultural, religious, and lifestyle differences
- Zero tolerance for discrimination, harassment, or bullying
- Reasonable adjustments to ensure participation by people with disabilities

Promotion, Evaluation, and Improvement

Raising awareness and promoting the project is crucial to maximise reach. The policy advocates:

- Engaging with local media, social media, and community groups
- Attending community events to recruit new volunteers and beneficiaries
- Collecting regular feedback from participants to measure satisfaction and identify areas for improvement
- Publishing annual impact reports to demonstrate value to funders and stakeholders

Challenges and Opportunities

While the Good Neighbour project offers significant benefits, challenges exist:

- Volunteer burnout or turnover can impact continuity



- Managing expectations between volunteers, beneficiaries, and families
- Ensuring safeguarding remains robust as the project grows
- Securing long-term funding in changing economic conditions
- Adapting to new needs, such as those arising during public health emergencies

However, the opportunities are equally powerful. These include:

- Increase community resilience in times of crisis
- Reduce pressure on statutory health and social care services
- Foster intergenerational understanding and cooperation
- Enable the sharing of skills, knowledge, and cultural traditions

