



Hello everyone,

## Getting to Appointments

Sometimes, it can be quite a challenge to decide on a topic for my letter, but not this month. Why? Because the last 3 months proved to be the busiest ever period for our volunteer transport service. On average, we managed to help a dozen or more local people each month get to their appointments at the hospital, the doctor, the dentist, the physio, the optician, etc. And I have to confess that there were times last month when I did wonder whether we would be able to find that one more driver at short notice. But we managed - and continue to do so. This is all due to our wonderful volunteer drivers. They give all the care and support in getting you there, during your appointment, and in returning home that you could wish for – no matter how long it takes.

If you are elderly and/or frail in any way\* and need to attend a medically related appointment but don't drive or have an alternate way of getting there, this is how the service works:

1. Phone 01728 862003 with your request giving as much notice as possible.
2. We will find a driver who will contact you a day or so before to make themselves known to you, and organize the details of pick-up time, etc. Where possible we try to arrange for a volunteer whom you already know. If you might require a wheelchair please let us know.
3. They will take you on the day, stay while you attend your appointment, and bring you home afterwards.
4. The cost to you contributes to the volunteer's mileage expenses (currently 40p per mile). You do not pay the driver. The Debenham Project will send you an invoice subsequently.
5. Should you have a complaint or any concerns please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

However, we can only provide this service if we have sufficient drivers. In an ideal world we do not want to ask any of our volunteers to do more than a couple of trips per month - we all have our own lives and commitments – and so far we have been able to achieve this. However, we all pretty occupied and it may take 2 or 3 or even 4 phone calls to find a driver who is available and who hasn't already agreed to take someone else close to the requested date. So if anyone would like to join our team it would be great – and we pay the standard mileage allowance so you won't be out of pocket. Please give me a call.

\*This service is only for medically related appointments. If you need transport for other reasons eg. visiting or shopping, Connecting Communities (01449 614271) provide a volunteer-based transport service operating out of Stowmarket.

With all my best wishes

Lynden Jackson

[www.the-debenham-project.org.uk](http://www.the-debenham-project.org.uk) ; 01728 862003