

1. I telephoned an old organisation that I used to work for to see if they still ran computer lessons for beginners. Coincidentally, they were running a free course for people over the age of 60. I referred a couple of ladies I knew from the coffee morning on to the organisation. The course ran for 5 weeks and on talking to one of my ladies after the course ended, she said that it had given her the confidence to visit the library once a week to further her knowledge regarding computers. She had started to look into her family tree while she was on the course and she wanted to carry on using a computer to find out more about her ancestors. She is also now looking for a cheap computer that she can use at home.
2. One lady that was referred to me wanted to know if she could have an adaptation to her bath after having problems getting out of it, she was also interested in something to help keep her agile. After visiting her to find out more information I referred her on to Adult Social care who visited her within a week to carry out an assessment of her needs to see if a bath seat could be fitted to her bath. I also referred her to the falls prevention team as they run exercise classes that she could attend to help keep her agile and to maintain her mobility.
3. Visited after son saw advert in church magazine for Village Agent. Had seen church warden who was also familiar with service. Mrs X had been poorly and son was now returning home after stay. He wanted VA to visit to give reassurance to his mother as to what was available to her now and, if necessary, in the future. After a general chat, went through presenter to show examples of services we could offer – and examples of items we could give to her. Given ‘message in a bottle’, and friend who was also present, said she would help her to fill out details. Went through Fire Safety leaflet with Mrs X and she agreed a fire safety check would be advisable as she didn’t have smoke alarms. Given new sticker ‘Bogus caller aware’ as noticed her current one had faded. Pointed out other safety aspects of her home that were positive – sturdy slippers, flat rugs with no frayed edges, etc but in conversation about tripping over rugs, she said she had tripped on her stairs. Action – referral for Fire Safety Check, assessment for extra hand rails, spoke about falls prevention classes, but she said these were not appropriate currently, but she was pleased to know they may be available in future. After some persuasion from her friend I also made a referral to Telecare.
4. Whilst walking around village, resident complained on damaged road where surface had broken away around drain cover. Reported to Mid Essex Highways, and within days response that they would send out an engineer to check and damage now repaired.
5. Resident met at coffee morning, given information on local photography classes. Found out he had served in armed forces, although had since been widowed, his income had dropped and he did not interact with other people. SSAFA could be approached for one off grant towards new camera.

Encouraged to attend monthly coffee mornings, and suggested local groups. Is now a regular member of croquet team.

6. Enquiry came from introduction through Parish Councillor to check a partially sighted man to see if he had supplies and all needed in the icy weather. He was fine, but would welcome a visit after the icy weather. I visited, sorted increased Telecare – cheaper, too (!), looked up info re magnifiers and aids to assist him retain his independence and cooking (like little raised dots on his cooker dial). He says, “I know I can always ring you if I need anything”. Lovely chap, partially sighted, lives alone, might need access to more services in future to maintain his independence at home.
7. While visiting a couple who wanted smoke alarms fitted and referring them to the Fire Service, I got chatting about ‘cold calling’. The lady told me about a bed sales company who had been pestering them, after repeatedly refusing to make an appointment over the phone the company sales rep had turned up on their doorstep anyway. Unknowingly the couple had let the lady in who then spent nearly 4 hours pressure selling and wouldn’t leave. Eventually they signed up to something (with the intention to cancel the next day) just to get the lady out of their house! They then had an awful time cancelling the item and received continuous verbal abuse from the telephone staff. The couple are both elderly and the lady is disabled, they were both shaken by their experience and concerned about other vulnerable people. The lady was also concerned as the bed company knew all the details of her disability. I referred the details to Trading Standards who have started working on this straight away – the company are breaking several laws by operating in this way. I have assured the couple it is being looked into and they are now reassured that if the company calls again they can ward them off with the information that their Village Agent has been in touch with Trading Standards. The same couple are also happy that the Fire Service will be calling to fit a free smoke alarm!
8. I recently visited a lady who in the last 2 years has lost her husband and then suffered a stroke – leaving her without use of her left side. She also has cataracts on both eyes and is awaiting the operation. She doesn’t go out at all and her family all live some distance away. I visited her because she wanted a cleaner and someone to do her shopping – I immediately referred her to Age Concern. As we got chatting about what she used to like to do she mentioned that she misses reading. I asked her if she knew about the Home Library Service – her reply was that she couldn’t read because she couldn’t see well with her cataract but “she really missed reading a good romance” I then went on to tell her about ‘Spoken Word Books’ available on either CD or tape – her face lit up! I straight away referred her to the Home Library service who will ensure she can still ‘listen to a good book’ even if she can’t actually read it! Its a small thing but I really felt it was going to make a difference to her!

9. I was contacted by a disabled lady after she received my leaflet with her prescription delivery. The lady lost her husband 2 years ago then suffered a heart attack and a stroke and can now only walk short distances indoors. She spent several years caring for her husband during which time she cut off all her friends. Her family live quite near but work long hours so rarely visit. After a really hard time she has decided she would like to get out and start meeting people, she would also like to learn to use a computer because when her granddaughter does visit she brings her laptop. I spoke with her about the Tabor Centre in Braintree where she could go all day for a very small fee (about £10-£15 including lunch, drinks all day and return transport), she was very excited when I mentioned that they run computer courses during the day too! I contacted the Tabor Centre by phone immediately on leaving the property and they called her the same day – by the time I got in from my appointments and checked the hub there was a note on there from the Tabor Centre to say the lady was booked in to visit and look around the centre! Also while visiting the property I noticed there was no TV in the lounge – it turned out this was because there is no heating in the lounge so in the winter she stays in the bedroom for the whole day as this is the only room with heat! As she lives in a housing association property I referred her to them straight away – they have arranged to visit with a view to installing proper heating throughout the property.
10. I was asked to call on Mrs X by a social worker to assess the current situation, as social care direct had received conflicting reports. On arrival Mrs X's friend and neighbour were there, and after chatting to them all it revealed that the main problem was to remember what day it was and what was going to happen that day, (Monday hair dresser comes, Tuesday lunch club, Wednesday a different lunch club etc.). The other problem was confusion over medication, her son-in-law visited daily to put medication out for the day, but felt this was unsatisfactory. After research into Telecare equipment I have recommended Mrs X has a Mem-x, a pendant memory jogger that can be pre-recorded in a known voice, set to give messages at a set time/day. I have also recommended a Medication Dispenser, which can be pre-filled and an alarm will alert the user to take the medication and only release the due dosage.
11. Miss X lives alone and has MS. She is having problems with getting to the door before her caller leaves. As it takes time to get up and about. She would like a door intercom system to be able to talk to people at the door from her chair, and if required let them in without getting up. Telecare can supply a wireless door phone with remote lock release, free on loan. While chatting Miss T said she also had problems getting to the opticians as she can't get in the shop on her mobility scooter, and can't carry her walking frame on the scooter, so after research on the internet I gave her a list of home call visiting optician services. As I have no experience of these services I gave her a choice of companies to call, all who provide a free to NHS customer service. This led me to begin to investigate the possibility of a walker adaptation that

will fit it on to her scooter, which I am now in the process of investigating further.

12. The parish council alerted me that a local farmer had died. Training from the Rural Crisis Network had prepared me that farmers were unlikely to voice any concerns over personal issues, yet there was a high level of depression in the farming community at certain times of the year. The death had occurred at a time when crops were at a critical stage. I visited the farmer's son who shared with me some of his concerns, the first one being that he had "no idea of catering for the wake" and asked me to make recommendations. I spoke to the local publican to ask whether they would be prepared to cater if asked and provided a leaflet from a sandwich and snack company that was recommended. I also was aware the local WI would help with refreshments, and put forward these three alternatives. We spoke about suitable venues, and I gave him the name of the Village Hall and church hall bookings clerks. After talking through some other practical arrangements, I was able to broach more sensitive issues and talked through the advice in a DWP leaflet on 'What to do after a death', and gave an Age UK leaflet on bereavement. The Village Agent explained, "Although the period of bereavement and mourning is always sensitive, I felt privileged to be in a position to offer both condolences and practical advice, plus the wherewithal to make formal referrals to project partners should the need arise".
13. Mr X, aged 55, contacted me following an article in Parish Mag. He suffered a brain aneurism 10 years ago and has been left unable to walk very far and suffers short term memory loss and has now given up driving. He wanted to give up smoking before a major operation, but was finding it difficult especially due to memory loss! I referred him to the NHS Health Trainers (rather than Stop Smoking Team) as I felt he could benefit from general health advice before his operation as well as help to stop smoking. In the mean time we have devised a simple chart where he can note down every time he has a cigarette meaning he can keep track of how many he has in a day and this has helped him cut down from 40 a day to around 30. Health trainers have now contacted him and suggested he starts a 12 week course. Whilst talking to him it also became apparent that transport and access to services was also an issue for him and so I have signed him up to Community Transport. He also mentioned a couple of repairs that he was waiting on for his home. I have contacted the landlord all repairs were carried out within a fortnight.
14. Mrs X, aged 87. Her daughter saw me at a fete where I had a stand. Her mother lived alone and needed some help. I visited Mrs X at home with her daughter and son-in-law present. Mrs X suffered memory loss and had mobility problems. She already received relevant benefits and her daughter had applied for a care assessment back in February. Mrs X also needed help moving around her home and her daughter was worried about nuisance callers preying on her mother, especially as she left her door unlocked for her meals-on-wheels team. I referred Mrs X to Adult Social Care for an OT

Assessment for grab rails etc. I pursued the Care Assessment on her behalf. Trading Standards delivered a “No Cold Calling” sticker and I took round a “Message in a Bottle” for her. I also contacted the SSAFA (Mrs X used to be in the RAF) to enquire about befriending services or clubs she may be able to join. Though she already has a pendant alarm, I suggested adding a panic alarm addition by the front door and a reminder device for taking her tablets and eating meals which she didn’t always remember to do. We are also looking into a key safe so her door can be locked during the day. This is an ongoing case and I feel there is much more that can be done to help Mrs X over the coming months.

15. Mr X contacted me following an ad in the Parish Magazine. He had trouble with birds flying down his chimney. On one occasion this had been into a room where he stores his nebuliser equipment and an infestation of bluebottles resulted. This was very distressing to him as he was no longer fit enough to free the birds himself and had had to call out the RSPCA on one occasion. A chimney guard would prevent this. Although in a rented property, the landlord was unable to help due to costs involved of putting up scaffolding. I am now working with the Borough Council to find another solution. However, whilst visiting Mr X, I noticed that his house appeared to have had no modernisation or adaptations. I asked tentatively if he managed the stairs OK and if he could use the old cast iron bath. It turned out that he had recently fallen on the stairs and he rings his neighbour before and after a bath so she knows he has got out OK and he keeps the cordless phone nearby in case he slips. Needless to say he doesn’t bath very often! I explained that there were adaptations that could be done easily to make his life a lot easier. Even though he “doesn’t want to make a fuss” I have persuaded him to have an OT assessment to see how they can help. He did admit afterwards that he was very worried about falling, especially in the bathroom. He already has a pendant alarm system that could be added to, but simple changes such as a decent banister and grab rails or a shower in the bathroom would make everyday life much easier for him. All this because of a pigeon!
16. I visited Mrs X following an attempted burglary at her home. She is an 84 years old widow, very shaken about what had happened, and thinking about moving to sheltered accommodation. She had lived in her home for over 40 years. After a cup of tea and a chat, and a look around the house, I could see that she had improved the security of the property with new door and window locks, and door chains. I complemented her on her actions and reassured her as best I could. I also gave her information about the housing schemes in the area. During our conversations, Mrs X said that her fuel bills had been particularly high in the winter and that she had had to spend some of her savings. I did a quick assessment of her income and believed that she might be entitled to some form of income support. Mrs X gave me permission to ring the benefits helpline and within 30 minutes they had agreed that she was

entitled to £10 per week pension credit. Mrs X was very pleased and also made the decision to stay in her own home which she clearly loved.

17. X recently lost his driving licence due to medical reasons and was feeling very reluctant about doing his weekly shop by bus as he didn't know where to catch the bus, where it stopped, how often it was etc. He also didn't know how to find this information out. I spent some time going through the local bus timetable with him and as it was quite confusing I photocopied and highlighted the parts that would be relevant to him. X has since informed me that he has now made several successful trips to the supermarket in Maldon and is feeling a lot more confident about travelling on public transport and he doesn't feel so much of a burden to his daughter who used to get his shopping for him.
18. X and Y are a married couple who are both partially sighted. X' sight is particularly bad and she is almost totally blind and also has severe mobility issues. Y has been concerned that X may have a fall whilst he is out walking the dogs and that she wouldn't be able to raise an alarm. I have visited them and have ordered a pendant alarm and base unit which they are so excited and pleased about – they didn't realise that they would be eligible for this type of equipment. Y is very pleased about the peace of mind it is going to offer him and says that this will no enable him to leave X for longer periods of time whilst he walks the dogs and carries out daily errands.
19. Urgent request from member of cookery workshop at Village Hall in one of my smaller villages to get cooker to work as booking clerk was unavailable and there was no manual. Went to village hall, fiddled with knobs to get oven working. Searched internet for manual, printed copy to leave at village hall, made up laminated notice with basic instructions and erected for future hall users. Took opportunity to talk to a group hiring the hall while oven was warming. Subsequent enquires and referrals as a result of being "right place, right time". Reported to bookings clerk, who said hirers often had problems getting oven to work (maybe it was because Village Hall Management committee put up big signs telling hirers to switch off oven at mains for safety reasons before they left the building? However in doing this the whole programming system for the oven is cancelled!
20. Mrs x, a carer for her disabled husband, who has complex needs. Mrs x works full time, so arranged to visit at a time convenient to her – 8pm. Initial concern husband would not be able to react if smoke alarms went off – complex solution sorted by Carecall Direct.
21. In the process of initial conversation I heard husband was often physically incapacitated, but loves to watch football. He would also like to meet other wheelchair users. Found out Essex Coalition Disabled People could

recommend a contact who was considering setting up a wheelchair football club. If necessary social car transport could be arranged via Viking.

22. Mr X a severely disabled 66 year old gentleman has not worked for over 20 years. Just over a year ago he qualified for 2 occupational pensions from a previous employer. The inland revenue have deducted tax using tax codes that were in existence when he last worked as a consequence he has paid in the region of £50 per month too much tax. Mr X made repeated phone calls to HMRC but was constantly held in a queue and never managed to speak to an individual. I registered myself as an authorised agent to deal with clients' tax affairs and managed to get through on a priority telephone line. After a conversation lasting around half an hour the revenue agreed that Mr X should receive a refund and pay far less tax in future. Mr X was very happy with the outcome and complimentary of the village agent service.
23. Mrs X a 76 year older lady who lives alone is recovering from a hip replacement operation. She recently fell and suffered a hip dislocation. Although she is now recovering she is very nervous about falling again and not being able to summon assistance. I have arranged for carecall to install a pendant alarm system. Mrs X is happy with this arrangement and will feel more secure in her own home.
24. Mr X, 55 years, suffers from Rheumatoid Arthritis which and forced him to give up his job and move back in with his aged parents, who help him with all aspects of everyday living. The Village Agent helped him obtain the Disability Living Allowance and Carers recognition for his parents. As the client e-mailed:
- I was reading your latest missive in the Parish News when it occurred to me that I'm not too sure whether I let you know that my application for DLA was successful. I received the first payment in January back dated to I think early December 2009 and have been paid monthly since. It's not a 'life changing sum' but it helps. As somebody told me once 'you pay into the club long enough'. Thanks again.*
25. Mr & Mrs X are both disabled and met the Village Agent at the local older persons club. Mr X is oxygen dependant and unable to go out without his portable supply and Mrs X has poor sight suffering with Macular degeneration. The couple thought that as they owned their own property they would not be able to get any help. The Village Agent felt that the couple may be able to receive Attendance Allowance and Carer benefits and contacted the Benefits team for a referral to the Pensions Agency. The Village Agent has since arranged disposal of asbestos sheets from their garden for them, with Essex County Council.

26. X, a registered blind 85 year old, who served in Royal AirForce, spoke to the Village Agent during the Community Housing walkabout. They discovered that he was struggling to finish cutting a 10ft high hedge at the rear of his home. The Village Agent referred him as a priority tenant for discretionary gardening. The Village Agent followed this up the following week to ensure he had been able to complete the Community Housing paper work.
27. My Village's local older persons club liked to go out to events and shows together but had to rely on 2 people with cars to ferry members, or hire a coach which made the trips expensive. The club was aware of Dial A Ride but the 2 car owners were too old to drive the bus, However, when the Village Agent was visiting a housebound club member, her son who drives vehicles for the Fire Brigade offered to take the test and drive the Dial A Ride bus to the functions for the club. So far they have had Strawberry Teas at Hylands House, taken a trip to a Summer Show in Clacton and visited the theatre in Hornchurch.
28. 17 female members of a village's older persons group have been referred to Essex Fire and Rescue service for Home Safety and Smoke Alarm checks. The group members were very impressed with the Firemen's visits and relayed various stories back to the Village Agent and subsequent club meeting!
29. Mrs X is 90 years old; she has lived happily with her husband for many years with her daughter living close by. Her husband has recently suffered a stroke and is being cared for in St Peter's Hospital. There are added complications with bowel problems and a severe chest infection and it is looking increasingly likely that he will need to consider full time care rather than be able to return home to his wife. As their Village Agent I was contacted by this couple's daughter, as she is struggling to make big decisions in relation to her parent's care and quality of life. She is an only child and it soon became clear that the pressures on her are immense; whilst busy in her own life she is also checking on her mother (now home alone) daily along with hospital visits to her father. Several referrals have now been made. Insufficient smoke alarms were present in the two storey house so a home visit from Essex Fire and Rescue Service has been requested. The Befriending Service from Age UK has been contacted for Mrs X who will be facing a long period alone with very little contact when her daughter is out of the country visiting family. A social care assessment has been instigated as Mrs X is not in good health herself, suffering from Polymyalgia Rheumatica which leaves her in constant pain with aching in her muscles and restricted mobility. As with all medical conditions this is exacerbated by trauma and stress and her daughter has noticed her mother's decline since her father's admission into hospital. I have asked The Relatives and Residents Association to contact the daughter to give her support and advice whilst trying to make a decision about possible care homes. As an only child she is finding the decision overwhelming. SSAFA have also now contacted her to provide support should she need financial

assistance or advice in the coming months. Lastly I noticed that Mrs X was not wearing her Telecare Pendant whilst going about her daily activities, she told me that she felt hot and uncomfortable whilst wearing it around her neck and she felt concerned that it might 'catch on something'. I explained the other option of a wrist strap style which she wishes to swap to and this has now been ordered through Essex Equipment Services. Her daughter was visibly relieved to know that her mother would now be able to immediately call for help should she have a fall or get into difficulties.

30. I was contacted by Mr X's daughter in June. Her father resides in a three bedroom house rented from a housing association. He lives alone and realises that this property is now much too big for him alone now he is widowed and his children have left home. The large back garden is also proving to be a little too much for him to handle. He is very keen to secure a one bedroom flat in a new social housing development in the village. He contacted Greenfields, to be told that his application needed to be completed 'on line' and would then be registered and considered. Mr X does not have internet access and has never used a computer before. His daughter advised me that she is extremely busy with her full-time job in London and could not afford the time needed to complete the online registration. I was able to spend time securing his interest in the flat by using my lap top in his home environment over a friendly cup of tea. Mr X has since been informed that his request will be viewed favourably as there are numerous families waiting for a larger family home with a garden should he re-locate.
31. Mr X has been diagnosed with bowel cancer. He lives alone and informs me that he has been sleeping downstairs on the settee in the lounge for some months now as he struggles with his medical condition, further complicated by a heart complaint. He is relying on friends and close neighbours to assist with day to day living tasks, including shopping and preparing meals. I have referred for an urgent social care assessment as Mr X now needs help with his personal care. Although well supported by those people close to him I pointed out that he lives alone and he accepted a 'message in a bottle' gratefully, knowing that it made complete sense to fill out his medication and personal details for information to be used by the Emergency Services should they ever need to attend. Mr X was also given information on SSAFA, should he feel in need of their help and assistance in the coming months, he had served in the Medical Corps in his time in the Army.
32. Mrs X is 43 years old and suffers with MS. She was diagnosed 7 years ago but in recent months her condition has really deteriorated. She walks with a frame inside her home and gets around outside with the use of a wheelchair. She lives with her husband and son in a Housing Association property. It is on a hill and has 6 stairs leading up to the front door which has banister rails. At the back of the property there are four steps outside leading from the back door down to the garden which have crumbled and no rails, so access is impossible. The living room is quite large but unfortunately she is unable to

use her wheelchair inside the house as the doorframes are too narrow to accommodate it. The staircase leading upstairs is very steep and with her mobility now very restricted, she is finding it increasingly impossible to manage the stairs, even though it has a double banister. Their bathroom is upstairs. It is conventional with bath, basin and toilet but she is unable to use the bath herself, as she can't get in and out without her husband's help. I have made referral to Greenfields, to highlight the need of this family who should be considered for a flat / bungalow designed for disabled needs on the ground floor. However, in the meantime to repair the exterior stairs at the back of the property and put adaptations into the bathroom so that she is able to have a bath. Recently, she had a fall and couldn't alert anyone, so have referred to CareCall for a pendant alarm which she and her husband are delighted with and have advised to discuss a stair lift with them. Also, I have referred Mrs X for a benefits check as this hasn't been done in the last 2 years.

33. Mr X is 89 years old and has been married to the lovely Mrs X for 60 years and live in the house they bought to bring up their family. They both have health problems but considering this, they are remarkable for their age. Mr X enjoys his garden which is his pride and joy growing an assortment of vegetables. However, they both have difficulty negotiating the stairs and using the bath. I referred them to Hanover Home Improvements to put up a banister rail and grab rail in the bathroom. Mrs X has a leg ulcer and requires help with light domestic chores. Referral made to Age Concern for home support help.
34. Mr & Mrs X attended the Carers Exhibition and enquired about the Village Agent scheme. I visited them in their home to discuss the service; Mrs X has Pulmonary Heart Disease, Severe Asthma and Osteoporosis and therefore has mobility problems, her husband was concerned that if he went out and his wife was taken ill she would not be able to get help, it was decided that a Call Care panic button would solve the problem. Due to the mobility and breathing problem it took Mrs X up to forty minutes to get up the stairs and sometimes she had to sleep on the sofa, along with the Care Call it was possible for Telecare to provide a stair lift which meant that she was not trapped down stairs.
35. After attending a Parish Council meeting I was asked by a Councillor if we could help. Ms X had a wood burning stove installed under the "Warm Front" scheme and he considered that it was not correctly installed and was not safe to use, also there had been a large amount of damage caused to the property which had not been rectified. When Ms X had confronted the installer at the time of the work being carried out he verbally abused her and she was too scared to pursue the matter. I went to see Ms X with the Parish Councillor and discussed the matter; she was worried that the installer would have to come back if it was considered that the installation was faulty. I contacted both "Warm front" and Trading Standards who both went and checked the work and agreed that it was faulty. Trading Standards checked the company who

had carried out the work and found there had been a previous complaint concerning them. The faulty installation was rectified and Trading Standards are pursuing the matter of the installation company.

36. Ms X contacted me after I had been to a coffee morning to see if we knew of anybody who would do some small repair items in her home; clearing the gutters, changing tap washers, fitting a hand rail, as she was not able to do them I contacted Hanover who carried out the work.
37. I was asked if there were any grants that could be obtained to assist in funeral expenses. Mrs X's husband had died and had not paid any National Insurance so she was not able to obtain the Benefit to help with the funeral costs. After discussion with various people I discovered, with the help of the Rector that there was a Charity dating back to 14<sup>th</sup> century to help the 'needy poor' of their parish and that she would be able to apply. She did and a grant was obtained.