



Annual report 2015 - 2016

Thanks to all our hard working volunteers we continue to provide services across the 200 square miles of the Blackdown Hills, covered by the Blackdown Practice. Access to services is one of the biggest problems for our rural patch, especially with the reduction in bus services, so volunteer transport is essential for many people but critical for the frail, elderly and disabled people in the area. Working closely with other voluntary organisations across Devon, they are all finding their work increasing in line with an aging population.

Our statistics show that we have 568 people registered for our service, out of which 433 are over 65. Our volunteers did 3135 journeys and travelled 52,668 miles and took 5,547 hours.

New to BSG

A carer's group has been running at the Blackdown Healthy living centre. The group supports carer's and gives them an opportunity to meet and chat about common issues.

We have been asked to take this group under our wing and help support it into the future.

Computer sign up

Following the installation of our new software in October last year, we are now able to offer volunteers online access to their bookings. Several volunteers are now using the new e mail system for bookings and it is working well.

New Volunteers

We welcome the five new volunteers who have joined us this year.

Thanks to all our volunteers for their time, care and effort. We receive a huge amount of praise on their behalf from our clients.

Volunteer's Cream Tea

The event went very well, with 58 people attending, both friends and volunteers.

Hemyock Lunch Club

Huge thanks go to Barbara for organising and shopping for the lunch and preparing it with her able team of volunteers in the kitchen. The hostesses keep the members happy

Rosemary Lane Lunch Club & Tea club

Our thanks go to David & the team at the Chapel for their delicious lunches and to Margaret, Susan and all the volunteers from both Chapel and BSG teams. The lunches continue to be well supported. Thanks to you all for your hard work.

Culmstock Lunch Club

Heather has managed to keep a small band of regulars at the Culm Valley Inn in Culmstock. Our thanks go to Heather and her team and all the staff at the pub for providing us with lovely lunches at a much-reduced rate.

All of the lunches are wonderful and the members really enjoy their day out.

Dunkeswell Coffee morning

We continue to hold coffee mornings on the 3rd Wednesday each month supported by a regular group of clients. Thanks to the loyal volunteers and Brenda for her very popular raffle.

Foot care

We run two clinics. Sue runs a six weekly clinic in the Blackdown Healthy Living Centre. Charlotte looks after the members at Cameo Club as well as visiting clients at home. Our thanks go to them both.

Volunteer visiting and advocacy

Thanks to our small team of regular visitors who make a difference in the life of their clients and carers. This requires a regular commitment, which I know gives much needed company and respite. Also, the team who help to fill in the forms.

Mentoring

Thanks to Paddy and Lynn who provide one to one support for our clients.

Disabled access vehicle

Continues to be used on a regular basis both with a volunteer and self-driven, allowing local families the chance to take their loved ones out; a service much appreciated by them.

Funding

The future of the group will only be secure if the statutory authorities continue to support us. Our contract for this year with Devon Social Services, both Mid and East, has been confirmed and with no cut.

Our health funding for this financial year was renegotiated but sadly as yet no outcome for this year.

Mid Devon District council have cut our funding completely for this financial year so will no longer be funding us.

Somerset Social Services funded our services again this year, with a cut of 25% but this is year on year funding, this year with a further cut of 25%, with no guarantee for the future.

We do have a strong team of fundraisers and continue to have wonderful support from the people of the Blackdown Hills.

We have a monthly stall at Churchinford market supported by a small band of volunteers. We are grateful for the donations of bric a brac received and the stall helps towards our annual fundraising.

Our thanks go to David who organised the concert in St Mary's with the Avon & Somerset police Choir, it was a delightful evening and raised much needed funds.

This last year we had funding from Devon County Council Social Services, Mid Devon District Council, Somerset Social Services, Clinical Commissioning Group and Somerset Community Foundation awarded us a grant for our work in the Churchstanton area.

The local Parish Councils in the Blackdown Hills continue to support the work of the group and our grateful thanks go to:

Clayhidon, Culmstock , Dunkeswell , Hemyock & Otterford

We have also received a generous donation from the Clayhidon Charity.

Friends

We gain new friends every year and enjoy meeting up with our old friends who support us by renewing their subscriptions. This entitles them to a copy of our regular newsletter 'The Bugle', an invitation to our annual cream tea and annual general meeting. Many friends' comment that they then feel they 'belong' and are happy as it supports our work.

My thanks go to the booking clerks, Ros & Sandra, the Chairman, Sarah Folland and the Treasurer, David Gollin, for their support, Ros in her role as Secretary and to all the trustees for their continued support.

Lastly I would like to thank all the staff and GP partners at the Blackdown Practice for their support. The cost of running the charity would be greatly increased without this support.