

Small Villages Community Warden Scheme Report West Wratting Parish Council Meeting 13.01.25

Overview of scheme

A new community warden (CW), Sheree Geoghegan, has been recently appointed to the Small Villages scheme. She works 20 hours per week, supporting elderly within the Small Villages area to live independently and safely in their homes. Within these contracted hours, the CW also has time for the administration of the scheme e.g. writing of case studies, data collection, assessments and reviews.

In practice, the CW does the following (although this list is not exhaustive):

- Helps service users (SUs) with tasks such as making drinks, watering plants, feeding pets, small amounts of shopping, collecting prescriptions
- Liaises with other organisations, such as Age UK services, Social Services, Community groups, nurses, GPs, Social Prescribers etc.
- Offers information and advice on local community groups and activities
- Helps read post
- Makes phone calls on behalf of the SU
- Signposts to other public sector organisations (e.g. local authorities, NHS)
- Supports the SU to access other services including helping with applications for additional finance/benefits
- Provides friendship over the telephone
- Reduces isolation and loneliness through face-to-face befriending

Service Delivery

Sheree is currently supporting 12 SUs (3 males/ 9 females) in the Small Villages of which currently, there are no SUs in West Wratting. However, this is always subject to change and there have been SUs from your Parish historically. Her target capacity is 16 SUs (80% of contracted hours) and Sheree will be working alongside the Team Leader in the New Year to advertise the scheme. They will promote the service in your Parish by distribution of leaflets, posters and talking to older people's groups.

Outcomes delivered

The warden service is adaptable to the needs of the SU. Upon taking on the service, the warden completes a new SU assessment form and discusses and agrees the desired outcomes with the SU:

- Reduce feelings of isolation
- Improve social inclusion
- Improve safety at home
- Provide practical support
- Improve health and mental wellbeing

'We are not strangers, but part of their lives and their lifeline' is a quote from the Rose Regeneration report, as shared by a warden.

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The Rose Regeneration project (of which the Small Villages scheme has been a part) concluded that schemes are delivering on the following outcomes of the Sustainable Development Goals set by the Government.

- Good Health and Wellbeing (goal 3)
- Reducing inequalities (goal 10)
- Partnership working (goal 17)

The Case Study in Appendix A illustrates clearly how desired outcomes are being met by the scheme.

Rose Regeneration Findings and Recommendations

The Small Villages warden scheme is supported by South Cambs District Council. In early January 2024, the SCDC commissioned the Rose Regeneration Consultancy team to undertake a full review of the warden schemes offered in their district, of which 12 are run by Age UK CAP. Off the back of their report, the SCDC:

- Committed to a 10-year funding proposal of warden schemes (to be reviewed on a 3-year cycle) on a sliding scale of investment.
- Agreed funding for 2025-2026 would be matched to the current year's funding commitment. The amount afforded in 2025/2026 per service user per annum is set at £368.60.
- Set an expectation that all schemes supported by SCDC must attend a quarterly networking session, submit regular scheme data and provide a rolling 3-year business/ financial plan to address sustainability.

Social Return on Investment and Benefit Cost Ratio

The Rose Regeneration project, most importantly, identifies that investing in the warden scheme delivers a Social Return on Investment of £4.92 to every £1.00; the HM Treasury guidance identifies a 2:1 ratio as acceptable and over 2 is good. Therefore, schemes are generating a GOOD level of social value.

The Rose Regeneration project also promotes the Value for Money of the schemes. The Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) considers additionality (the extent to which something happens as a result of an intervention that would not have occurred in the absence of intervention). The BCR of the warden scheme has been assessed at £3.36: £1.00. The government's value for money assessment rates BCR equal to/more than 2 and less than 4 high!

Pricing of Schemes

The Rose Regeneration report reinforces the necessity to increase fees and actively promote the warden schemes. To guarantee the sustainability of the warden service, the fees will need to be increased and are currently under review. The new pricing structure will be communicated with all SUs and

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interested parties once finalised. Age UK CAP currently charges £10 per week for a single SU and £12 for a couple.

Regardless of the anticipated price increases, there is crucially a need for support from the Parish Councils to ensure the sustainability of the service. The Rose Regeneration report fully validates the value of the warden schemes from a financial and social perspective.

Financial Overview

As at 31.03.25, there is a projected carry forward of £2,702. These numbers are forecast and subject to change.

South Cambs (Small Warden) Service					
(extracted from management accounts as at 30.11.24)					
	Actual YTD	Budget YTD	Variance	Budget Full year	Full year forecast
N/C Name	30.11.24	30.11.24		2024/25	2024/25
Grant - District Councils	£16,340	£10,841	£5,499	£16,261	£16,340
Grant - Parish Councils	£2,250	£1,800	£450	£2,700	£2,250
Grant - Other	£4,450	£2,667	£1,783	£4,000	£4,450
Charges - Warden Fees	£4,054	£5,333	-£1,279	£8,000	£6,500
TOTAL INCOME	£27,094	£20,641	£6,453	£30,961	£29,540
Salaries + Oncosts	£8,574	£11,206	-£2,632	£16,810	£14,500
Disclosure & Barring Service	£46	£0	£46	£0	£50
Recruitment Costs	£70	£27	£43	£40	£70
Training & Conferences	£0	£33	-£33	£50	£50
Travel	£1,443	£1,667	-£224	£2,500	£2,400
Mobiles	£154	£121	£33	£182	£210
Meeting Costs	£12	£67	-£55	£100	£100
Bank Charges & Interest	£67	£67	£0	£100	£100
Events General	£0	£100	-£100	£150	£150
Marketing	£0	£133	-£133	£200	£200
Sundry Expenses	£1	£0	£1	£0	£0
Support Services	£6,006	£6,006	£0	£9,008	£9,008
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£16,373	£19,427	-£3,054	£29,140	£26,838
Surplus/-Deficit	£10,721	£1,214	£9,507	£1,821	£2,702
Balance c/f (£0 if -ve)	£10,721			£1,821	£2,702

In 2025/26, the Small Villages scheme returns to a 'normal' level of funding from SCDC of £6,555. The contribution in 2024/25 was £16,340 given as a lifeline to keep the scheme open. The provisional budget for 2025/26 shows a predicted deficit budget of approximately £6,000.

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Request for Parish Council Support

The support of the Parish Council is considered vital, even when implementing an increase in the SU fees, to ensure the sustainability of the scheme.

The provisional projected costs for running the scheme in 2025/26 are £31,594. The budgeted operational costs have incorporated the recent changes in Employer National Insurance Contributions and also, the lowering of the National Insurance threshold to £5,000.

In 2024/25, the West Wratting Parish Council kindly committed £200 to the running of the warden scheme.

Based on full capacity of 16 SUs, it costs approximately £1,974 per annum to support a SU. Of this cost, £825 is offset by warden fees and £369 is committed through the SCDC funding.

There is, therefore, a funding shortfall of £780 per SU which Age UK CAP needs to find through local support and fundraising. There is a community grant in place of £4,000 for 2025/26 (equivalent to £250 per SU) which draws down the funding shortfall per SU to £530. We would ask the Parish Council to consider funding the scheme up to £530 (we are optimistic that through a renewed advertising drive we will attract SUs from your Parish). This would help facilitate a break-even position for the scheme. As stated, there is a projected deficit budget of £6,000 for 2025/26, not taking into account any positive carry forward from this financial year. Any contribution from the Parish Council up to the amount of £530 would be very much appreciated and help ensure the sustainability of the warden service.

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Appendix A: Case Study

About the person	
<p>Mr Roberts is a 74-year-old man who lives alone in council rented property. He had always lived with his parents and until they died and was quite reliant on them. He requires support to navigate his daily life but manages very well with encouragement and help. He is a hoarder, but this is generally under control.</p> <p>He goes to a day centre weekly and attends a monthly lunch club locally. He is quite self-sufficient. He seems to have very few friends. He appears quite lonely and likes to chat on the phone and will sometimes phone many times a day. As well as an Age UK Warden, he has a befriender Paul and a weekly cleaner. Recently he agreed to have a carer to help supervise a weekly shower. He is very kind and thoughtful and always keen to hear others news. He does have family by way of cousins but rarely sees anyone. It is notable that he rarely receives cards for his birthday or Christmas and those he does get he leaves up on his shelf all year.</p>	<p>Age, district, live alone, general well-being, support network etc</p>
What was the situation	
<p>It was Mr Robert's birthday coming up in the July. Whenever his birthday was mentioned, it was shrugged off as an ordinary day and "best not dwell on it as it means nothing." To hear this was quite upsetting. It would have been easy just to get a card and a little cake, but I felt his birthday needed a proper acknowledgment and to be celebrated.</p> <p>His birthday was on 4th July, A Thursday, and I realised this is the day he would be at Newmarket Day Centre.</p>	
What did Age UK CAP do to make a difference?	
<p>Without Mr Roberts knowing, I phoned Newmarket Day Centre to inform them that he would be attending as usual on the Thursday but that it was his birthday, and wondered if he could have something laid out to mark the day – perhaps a cake and a card. They were so grateful to have been told as they remarked that Mr Roberts was a quiet, unassuming man who would never make a fuss or share this information and that they wouldn't have known as being a day guest, they hold no records of birth dates. They told me that they would get a cake, banners, cards and would make his day special.</p>	<p>What action did we take to support and help – in bullet points</p>
<p>Mr Roberts told me the morning after that he had such a surprise when he arrived at the day centre. Everyone sang "happy birthday", and he had cake and a big fuss. There were banners and a card signed by everyone there. He told me he can't remember the last time that had</p>	<p>Describe the impact and any service specific outcomes – how did it change things, e.g.,</p>

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<p>happened. He was overwhelmed and delighted. It was a special day that he told me he would always remember. He has spoken about it a lot since!</p>	<p>safety, socially, independence, confidence etc</p>
<p>Quote from service user</p>	
<p>"I really felt special, it was such a surprise"</p>	<p>What difference and/or impact did our support give. Ask open ended questions to determine how.</p>
<p>Our learning</p>	
<p>Sometimes something simple and small can have a big and lasting impact on someone. it is important to put yourself in the position of someone less fortunate and work out how to make them feel loved or special. As wardens we don't need to just concentrate on the practical side of our role but consider the emotional side. What can we do to make someone feel worthy and special? This is so important for self-worth, self-esteem and for positive mental wellbeing.</p>	<p>Our learning outcomes and future actions we could take to improve and/or develop our services</p>
<p>Completed by - staff name</p>	<p>Lucy Cameron</p>
<p>Completion date</p>	<p>17/9/24</p>