

Friendly phone calls — Guide to helping people feel more connected in the Hemingfords

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Before you start

Friendly phone calls provide people with a regular chat and catch up. Here are some handy hints and tips to help you create a warm and welcoming conversation.

- HemingfordHub will match up caller volunteers with the resident in question. It recommends chats last up to 20 minutes. This is long enough to create a warm conversation but not too long that it impinges on the volunteer's day.
- When making calls use your own phone but remove your phone number from the recipient's phone. This is how you can do it:
- On a landline, prefix the number you are calling with **141**
- On a mobile go to **Settings** and turn off **Show caller my ID**.

Confidentiality

As friendly phone callers you have access to personal and private information about your contact. Please protect their safety and privacy by:

- Only accessing the information you need for this role.
- Agreeing not to disclose any of this information to anyone else, (unless you are concerned about any safeguarding issues.)
- Deleting any private information from electronic devices, and destroying printed or written information once this information is no longer needed by you for this role.

Focus of the call

Advice from charities suggest that during the phone call you should focus on:

- Day-to-day events
- Family and friends
- Interests and hobbies etc.

You should eventually build up a friendly, trusting relationship over time.

You may feel comfortable sharing certain details of your life with your new phone buddy, but it is worth deciding beforehand what you will and won't share. This keeps you safe and also ensures that it is the resident who is kept in focus.

Delivering your friendly phone calls

It might be helpful to consider some of the following points when making your call:

- Ask open questions (eg how, what, where, when, who and why?)
- Be empathetic and a good listener
- Reflect back – summarise and reflect back any important points that have been made.

Our residents will warm to a caller who is compassionate, empathic, interested and kind. Be cheerful by all means, but don't feel obliged to 'look on the bright side' or to 'find the positives' in difficult situations. Listen and tune in to any little worries they may have that aren't normally big issues for you, but may be enormous problems for them.

Self care

We care about you, our volunteers, too! It is important you are tuned into your own emotional wellbeing. How much time and empathy do you have for friendly phone calls? Please let HemingfordHub know if you feel unable to volunteer at any point in time.

Making a friendly phone call

Starting the first call

- Introduce yourself and explain that you are a HemingfordHub volunteer living in either Grey or Abbots and have volunteered to call for a friendly chat on behalf of HemingfordHub.
- Arrange a mutually suitable day and time to call for a chat, if now isn't convenient.

We need to keep a record of the calls you make. Please send a brief email to heminfordhub@icloud.com telling us:

- Date of call, name of person called. Any concerns? Any requests for help they make.
- If the arranged call didn't happen and why.

Ending the call

End the conversation by saying how much you have enjoyed the chat and make an arrangement to ring again at a convenient time.

Remember you should not share the person's phone number with anyone but the Hub's volunteer manager and you should not be tempted to give them your number.

Some hints and tips on topics you could cover. This is essentially a friendly free-flowing conversation, and not a script or market research exercise....

(BUT please make a note of any information you pick up that the Hub needs to note or act upon.) You don't have to ask all these questions. You may already know many answers if you know this person. This is just a non-specific guide:

- Who else do you know in the village who's volunteering? (Prompt with some names)
- Do you have your prescriptions or newspapers delivered to you by our Hub volunteers?
- How do you do your shopping? Do you get it delivered and by who?
- Did you know that we also post letters?
- If you're concerned about that we may be able to help with?
- Are you in contact with friends and relatives? How and how often?
- Would you like to try talking face-to-face by video link with your loved ones? It's free.
- Do you know about HubClub? Would you be interested in coming along? We could try to organize a lift.
- Is there anything else you feel you'd like us to provide?

If you are worried about someone, the first part of call would be the HemingfordHub to discuss your concerns.

Hemingford Hub recommends that once the relationship is free-flowing, you could also ask:

- How are you feeling?
- How has your sleep been? Any changes?
- Are you enjoying your meals? Any changes?
- Are you still doing the things you normally do at home? (chores, hobbies, etc)
- Are you getting enough exercise? Maybe you would like to attend our once fortnightly, free, seated exercise classes.
- Who do you speak to during the day/week?
- Is there anything that's worrying you that you didn't used to worry about?

Make a date for another phone call, so long as you both have enjoyed the chat. If not, we can pair you up with someone else. Or you could suggest a suitable new person to chat to who shares hobbies and interests.