

GREAT IN FINBOROUGH TOGETHER (GiFT)
REPORT TO THE GREAT FINBOROUGH ANNUAL PARISH
MEETING:
18 MAY 2026

Great in Finborough Together is the village's good neighbour scheme. It was established in 2024 and launched on 1 March 2025. A small team of volunteers' co-ordinates the scheme to support anyone living in the parish of Great Finborough. Its purpose is to:

- Offer practical and emotional support to adults of all ages and to children in our village community, according to need and choice;
- Enable those who want to contribute to their local community to do so through volunteering, and to enjoy the personal rewards it brings;
- Help make our village an even happier, kinder, better-connected, more supportive and inclusive place to live.

Our ambition is for GiFT to become a lasting part of the strong community culture that the village already values and nurtures — with every villager aware that they can ask for help, and as many as possible able to offer it. We now have nearly 40 volunteers, most of whom have already given their time and support.

Since the last Annual Parish Meeting, 22 households, representing 31 individuals, have received help. Some have needed one-off advice or practical support; most have received regular assistance; and a few have needed more intensive help following a serious medical diagnosis, during periods of illness, or after bereavement. The support provided has included:

- Lifts to and from the GP surgery, hospital, bank, solicitor and supermarket
- Escorting people to A&E
- Checking-in visits, companionship and post-bereavement support
- Small gardening and DIY tasks
- Help with Attendance Allowance forms (three completed), and advice on Power of Attorney
- Liaison with GPs

- Looking after pets and poultry
- Advice on aids and equipment, and the loan of equipment
- Support for carers, especially those caring for someone with dementia
- Shopping
- Welcoming new residents to the village
- Support for people experiencing homelessness

Recognising that many people in the village live alone, and that some are socially isolated or lonely, GiFT organised a successful Christmas social event attended by 15 users of the scheme. We have also partnered with the charity Rural Coffee Caravan to run monthly sessions that bring people together for company, advice and information. One particularly successful session, held in Pettiward Hall on 5 March 2026, focused on getting one's affairs in order before death. Twenty-five villagers attended the *You're Good to Go* session, and others have since requested the information leaflets. We are now considering further themed sessions in response to local interest. A trip to the Theatre Royal in Bury St Edmunds also took place on 18 April 2026.

GiFT is grateful to District Councillor John Matthissen for a set-up grant of £600. By the end of the 2025/26 financial year, £257.52 had been spent, mainly on insurance, phone top-up and hall hire. No charge is made for any support provided and, to date, volunteers have rarely claimed the mileage available to them for giving lifts. Three people who have been helped by GiFT have made donations, which will contribute towards future costs. We have also received donations of aids and equipment, as well as a mobile phone for use by the team taking referrals.

Our particular thanks go to the steering team and to all the volunteers, whose time and commitment continue to strengthen what GiFT can offer, and to the Parish Council for its support.

Ann Basey-Fisher
On behalf of the Steering Team

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