



# VILLAGE AGENTS

*Providing older people in Gloucestershire's rural communities with easier access to services and information*

## PROGRESS REPORT

### QUARTER 3

## **VILLAGE AGENTS**

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Appendix 1

Full Village Agent parishes and contact details

## **1.0 VILLAGE AGENTS – AN OVERVIEW**

The Village Agent project is a pilot scheme funded by the Department for Work and Pensions (LinkAge Plus) until June 2008. The aim is to provide older people in Gloucestershire's rural communities with easier access to information and services

### **Who is involved?**

Gloucestershire County Council in partnership with GRCC. We also have an wide range of other partnership organisations involved in training and support, including the Police and Fire Service, Affordable Warmth Partnership, Care and Repair/Anchor Staying Put, Age Concern, Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust, District and Borough Councils; Community and Adult Care Directorate; libraries; local churches; parish councils; The Pension Service and many more.

### **What it does**

Village Agents will bridge the gap between the local community and those statutory and voluntary organisations able to offer help or support where required. Working in clusters of 3-5 rural communities Village Agents will act as a facilitator in the provision of high quality information, promote access to a wide range of services, carry out a series of practical checks and identify unmet need within their community. Through training and access to appropriate information resources, the Village Agents will develop their capacity to provide a service within their communities both in the short and longer-term.

Village Agents have been recruited locally, trained and supported to provide face to face information and support which enables individuals to make informed choices about their present and future needs. The service will be provided primarily to older people, but other disadvantaged and isolated people will also be able to receive Village Agent support.



In total, 30 Village Agents have been recruited in order to identify the impact their role can have both on individuals and on communities, and to test the hypothesis that rural communities prefer to access someone they know within their community for help and advice. Now CRB checked, they will be in a position to visit older people both in their own homes and by running regular surgeries in suitable locations, i.e. village halls, doctor's surgeries etc. Equipped with a laptop and

mobile phone, they will be able to access information and give immediate information to their client base. The project provides an essential local service to over 100 of the most rurally isolated parishes in Gloucestershire. Many of our partner organisations are unable to provide an outreach service on this scale and are already seeing the benefits of being involved in this project.

### **Cost per year/funding**

The project has received funding from Linkage Plus (part of the Department for Work and Pensions) for just under £1,000,000 for the duration of the project until June 2008. This funding is split between the County Council as lead partner and GRCC as project deliverer. Project Managers have been recruited by both GRCC and County Council to work on specific elements of this countywide initiative.

## 2.0 PHASES 2 AND 3 – FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT AND TEWKESBURY BOROUGH

- GRCC and GCC decided in October 2006 that in order to achieve the maximum potential, the second phase of recruitment should take place as soon as possible and therefore completed the recruitment of all 30 agents before December 2006 – 3 months ahead of schedule.

- The Forest of Dean selection day took place on 16<sup>th</sup> November in Mitcheldean with Tewkesbury taking place the following week. Before the end of December the newly recruited agents were given their induction packs and CRB check forms to fill in and submit ready to start in their roles. By Christmas all 30 Agents had been appointed.



- In the week beginning 8<sup>th</sup> January 2007 the Forest of Dean and Tewkesbury Village Agents underwent their initial training with speakers from the Police, Age Concern, Anchor Staying Put, Affordable Warmth, Fire and Rescue and the PCT. Training was also given from GRCC and Gloucestershire County Council over a whole day. This training, as with the Cotswold and Stroud Village Agents will be ongoing with monthly meetings held at Community House (GRCC).
- The Village Agents for the Forest of Dean and Tewkesbury have since January been busy with publicity in their areas, introducing themselves to communities and starting to make referrals.
- Evaluation is also a large part of the Village Agent project and the newly appointed Agents have each been tasked with submitting 32 customer service satisfaction questionnaires from older people from within their 'clusters', focus groups have also been organised for the end of March/April. This will then be amalgamated with the first phase evaluation completed by the Cotswold and Stroud Agents to show a countywide picture.

### 3.0 JANUARY TO MARCH 2007

- The majority of Agents have now publicised themselves through parish magazines and newsletters and in some cases village websites. Posters on village notice boards and leaflet drops have also been effective. This is an ongoing process with articles and information now a regular feature in parish publications.
- On 27<sup>th</sup> February an event was held for all 30 Village Agents to get together for the first time. The afternoon was held at Highnam Community Centre and was an opportunity for the newly appointed Forest of Dean and Tewksbury Village Agents to talk to the Cotswold and Stroud Agents who had been in post for over four months.
- A role play session where agents were put into groups of three to solve a 'village agent type' scenario helped the agents to share ideas and show how they approached certain situations. A T'ai Chi demonstration by Clive Birch followed; an activity that many Village Agents are interested in starting in their communities.



*\*\*A T'ai Chi class set up by one of the Village Agents in North Cerney now attracts over 20 members per week\*\**

- 22<sup>nd</sup> March saw the launch of the second and third phases (*Forest of Dean District and Tewksbury Borough*) of the project. A minibus toured through the two districts stopping in Brockweir for morning coffee, at Longford for lunch and ending the day in Stanton. The day was a big success with local people, Village Agents and service providers all in attendance to discuss the project and to enjoy the day.



Brockweir



Longford



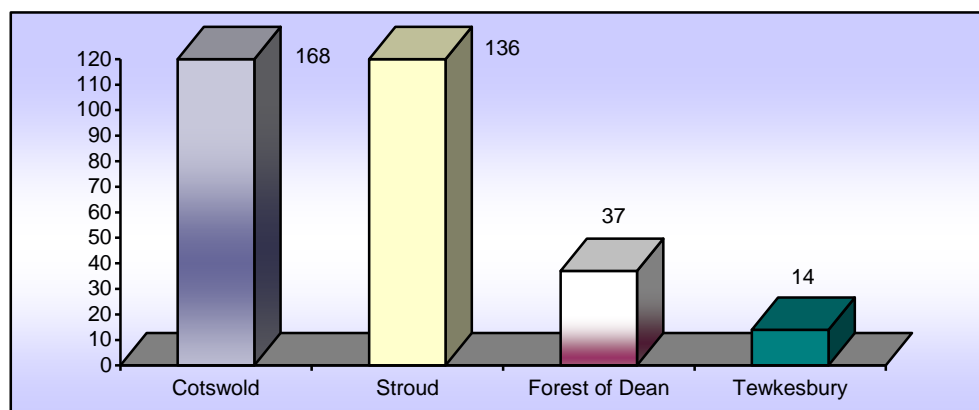
Stanton

## 4.0 MONITORING

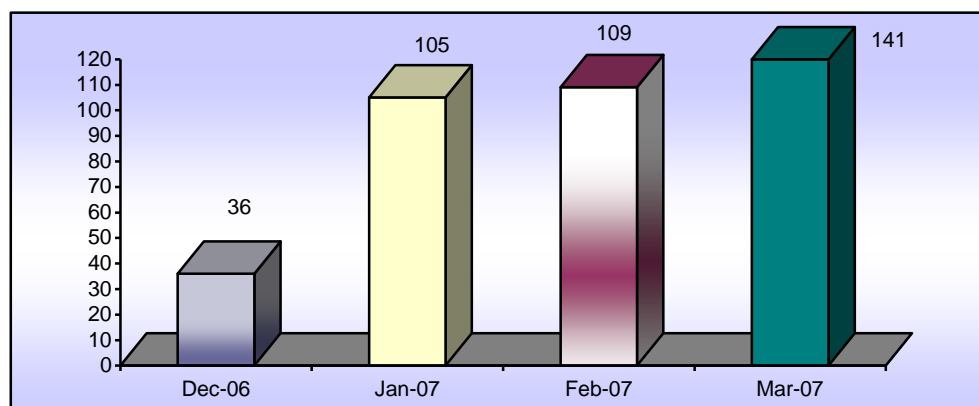
- After each visit a Village Agent makes, they are required to fill in a referral, 'gateway' form. The form collects demographic data, the nature of the problem and other information relevant to any follow up visit. The gateway form is then emailed to the required agency by the Village Agent for the query to be addressed.
- The chart below shows the number of referrals made to agencies in Gloucestershire from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007.
- A total of 355 referrals were made by 30 Agents.

*(N.B. by the end of March 2007 first phase village agents (Cotswold and Stroud) had been in post for 5 months and therefore fully established within their communities, Tewkesbury and Forest of Dean agents had been fully operational for 2 months).*

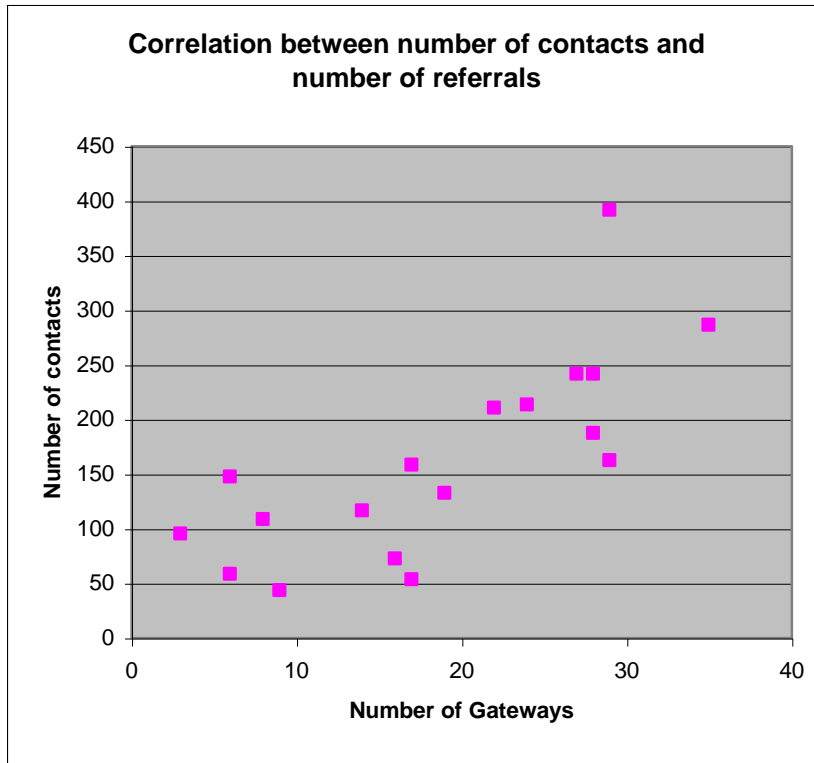
Number of referrals 01/01/07 – 31/03/07



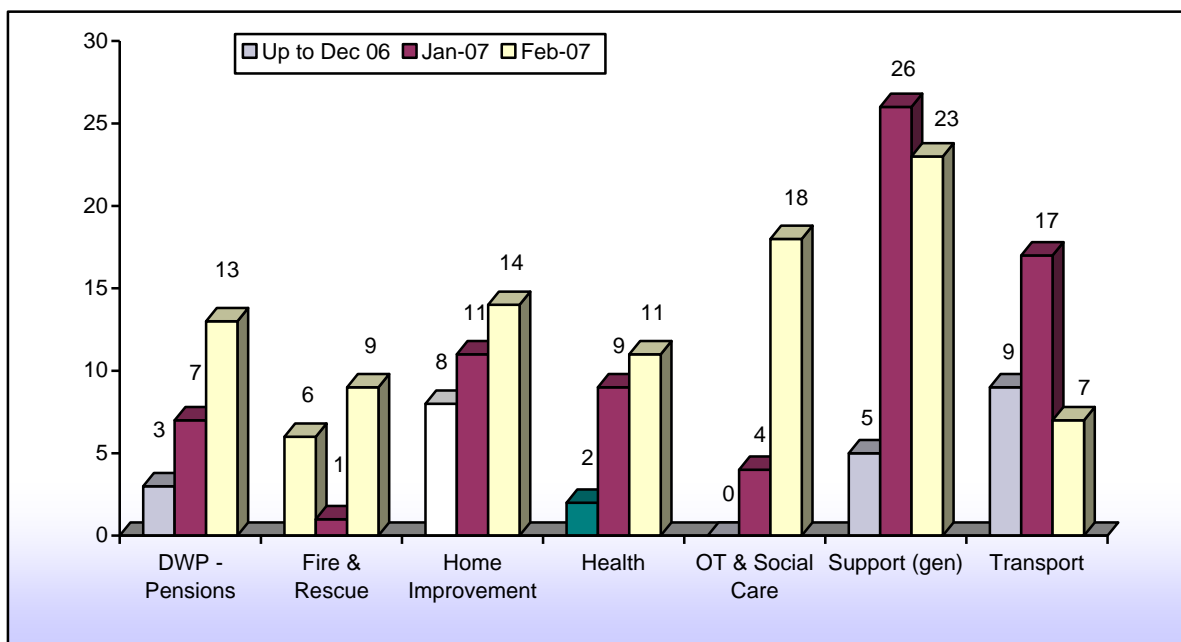
Total number of referrals by month – March 2007



Between the period January to March the 30 Village Agents made contact with 4,421 people including members of the communities, service providers, existing groups (luncheon clubs, WI's, church groups, parish councils). The chart below shows the correlation between the number of contacts made per village agent and the number of gateway (referral) forms submitted, the more contacts made, the more referrals were made.



Village Agents have dealt with a variety of issues as are shown in the chart overleaf. The most common issue is home improvement, including Care and Repair/Anchor Staying Put repairs (installation of grab rails, home safety checks etc) Lifeline and gardening. Finance and Pensions advice, transport and health have also been major issues raised so far.



\* Home improvement – gardening, home security, lifeline, minor adaptations, installation of grab rails

Type of Contact	up to Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
Adult Placement scheme			1	1
Age Concern service			4	4
British Legion			1	1
CAB - Financial	2			2
Carers	2		1	3
Community building			1	1
Community Warden			2	2
Council		5	3	8
Direct payments	1	1		2
Domestic Violence			1	1
Domestic help			1	1
DWP - Pensions/Pension credit	2	3	2	7
DWP - assessment	1	4	11	16
Energy - home heating/insulation		6	3	9
Energy - fuel bills	2	2	3	7
Financial	2	2	7	11
Fire and safety - smoke alarms	6	1	9	16
Funding/grants	4	1	1	6
GRCC - community Halls	1		1	2
Health - general			2	2
Health - chiropody			1	1
Health - dentists		2		2
Health - falls	1		1	2

Health - medication		2	1	3
Health - appointments		3	3	6
Healthy lifestyle	1	2	3	6
Helpdesk - non referral support	1		5	6
Helpdesk - meals		1	1	2
Helpdesk - OT		4	11	15
Helpdesk - social care referral			7	7
HIA - gardening	1	7	5	13
HIA - home security	3	1	1	5
HIA - Lifeline	1			1
HIA - major work	2	1	1	4
HIA - minor work			7	7
HIA - minor adaptations	1	2		3
Home Safety Check			1	1
Housing - planning	1			1
Housing Association - security/repairs	1	1		2
Housing benefit			2	2
Housing - general support	1	5	4	10
Housing - private rented support		1	1	2
Libraries - clubs	1		1	2
Libraries - sight impaired help	2			2
Lifelong learning	1	2	1	4
Mental Health	1	1		2
Message in a bottle			2	2
Other	1		1	2
Police - cold callers	1			1
Police - Community policing		1	1	2
Police - domestic violence		1		1
Police - home security	3		1	4
Police - victim support		1		1
Sensory impairment	1	1	1	3
Social activities		1	3	4
Support - family/neighbour concerns		1	1	2
Support - general	5	25	22	52
Transport	9	17	7	33
Volunteering	2	1	1	4
Wills			1	1
	<b>64</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>318</b>

Below and overleaf are examples of feedback that the Village Agents have been receiving from the clients and how effective the system has been:



**1) Sent: Tue 06/02/2007 16:46**

**To: Village Agent**

**Subject: Stair rail**

*You are an amazing lady. Stair rail excellent. I'm running up and down like a goat on speed. How have I managed without it since 1970?*

*Can't thank you enough, will contact you again at the next stage of decrepitude.*

*Yours,*

-----  
**2) Sent:** 31 January 2007 09:54  
**To:** Gordon, Richard  
**Subject:** RE: Gateway form

*I want to thank you very much for your amazingly rapid response to the gateway form submitted by myself on behalf of Hilda Smith. Hilda stopped me to thank me for her smoke alarms which were fitted the day after I sent you her form - this makes the job all the more worthwhile - thanks again!*  
Sallyanne Batchelor - Village Agent

**Sent:** Thu 25/01/2007 10:05  
**To:** Sallyanne Batchelor  
**Subject:** RE: Gateway form

*We have two people in Newent tomorrow who are prepared to visit Hilda between 11 and 12. I appreciate it is unannounced but they are in the area. Hilda can call me on 01452 753251 if she wishes to arrange another date or just to confirm for tomorrow.*  
*Hope this helps,*

-----Original Message-----

**Sent:** 24 January 2007 19:36  
**To:** Home.safety@glosfire.gov.uk  
**Cc:** Gloucester.lsgloucestershire@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

*I am attaching a Gateway Form for your attention. Any queries please contact me.*  
*Many thanks,*

-----  
**3) Subject:** Village Agents

*Can I tell you a story?*

*A village agent puts an advert in the Ampney Crucis village paper. She is contacted for a visit. She visits and sends a request for LS to visit and check on benefit entitlement, she also contacted the Housing Association and gets their heating sorted. LS visit and AA is awarded at lower rate for husband and higher rate for wife. They will also get HB and CTB. They will also be able to have his Careline connected at no cost (he couldn't previously afford to pay for it). They will be better off by £41.65 + £62.25 + potential £90.96 PC + HB & CTB. Winners all round*

*P.S. he did not come up on a scan as he had previously claimed PC for himself and was not entitled*

### The Adult Help Desk

The Adult Help Desk based at Shire Hall has been used as a source of advice and referrals by the Village Agents in their first few months of employment and will continue to be a vital point of contact throughout the life of the scheme.

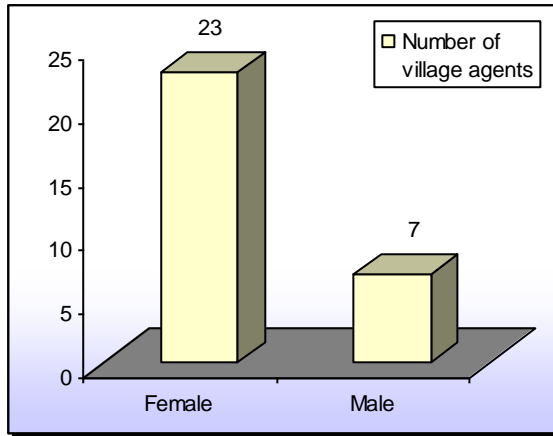
Calls made by village agents are logged and the nature of the enquiry noted. Village agents may ring the help desk in reference to a particular issue or simply for background information.

The Adult Help Desk number is printed on publicity materials distributed by Village Agents in the event that a member of the public cannot contact a Village Agent or they do not feel comfortable calling a mobile phone number. In this eventuality the Customer Service Officer will pass on the query to the relevant Village Agent in order that a home visit can be arranged.

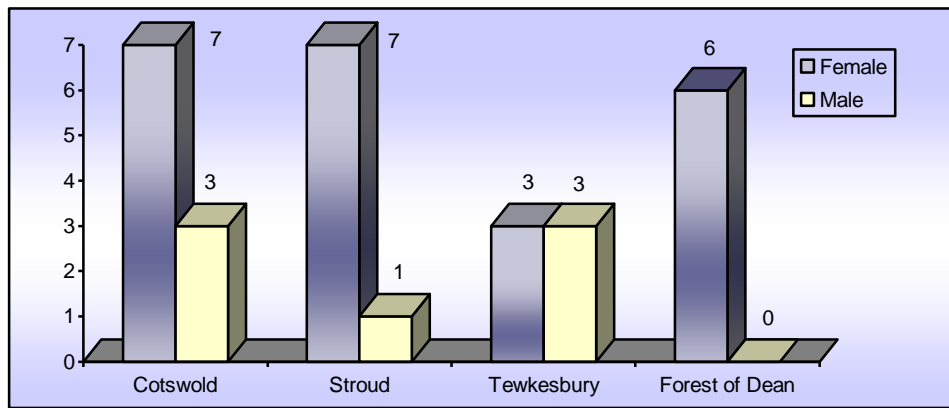
## 5.0 VILLAGE AGENTS – THE DEMOGRAPHIC PICTURE

### Village agent profiles

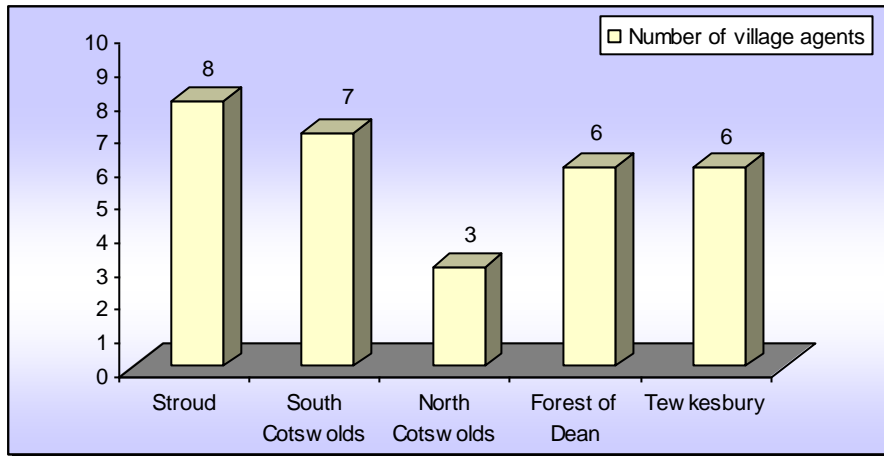
The village agents come from a variety of backgrounds and range in age from 40 to 70. Approximately three quarters are female and a quarter male.



As the charts show, 77% of the Village Agents across the county are female. In the Cotswolds and Stroud a large proportion are female whilst in Forest of Dean all clusters have female Village Agents. Tewkesbury Borough has an equal ratio male to female agents.

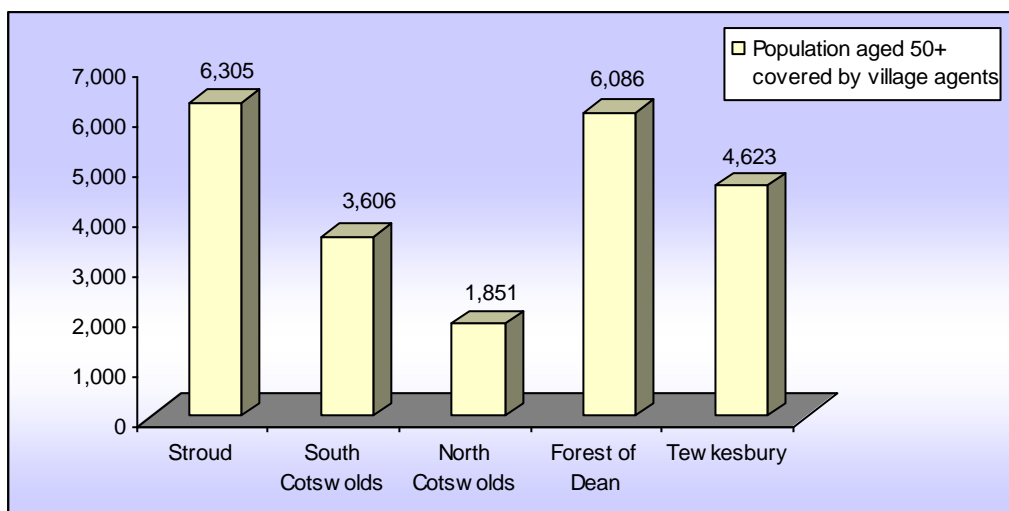
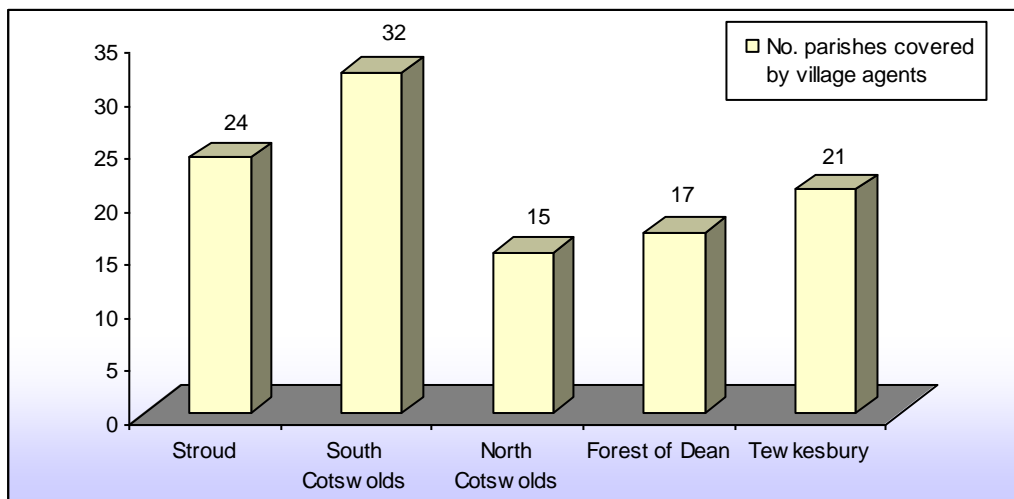


### Spread of Village Agents by District



109 of Gloucestershire's 258 rural parishes are covered by one of the thirty village agents (42%). These parishes contain a total of 21,477 people aged 50+ (source: Gloucestershire County Council mid-2005 estimates, published November 2006).

### Coverage by Parish and Population



## **APPENDIX 1: Parishes included in the Village Agent Scheme to date March 2007**

### **COTSWOLD VILLAGE AGENTS**

COBERLEY, COWLEY, BRIMPSFIELD, ELKSTONE

**Mike Bone**

Email: [Michael@villageagent.grcc.org.uk](mailto:Michael@villageagent.grcc.org.uk)

Telephone: 07810630122

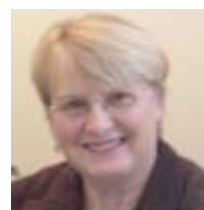


DAGLINGWORTH, BAUNTON, BAGENDON, DUNTISBOURNE

**Pauline Thompson**

Email: [Pauline@villageagent.grcc.org.uk](mailto:Pauline@villageagent.grcc.org.uk)

Telephone: 07776245754



CHEDWORTH, YANWORTH, COLN ST DENNIS, HAMPNETT

**Cynthia Laird**

Email: [Cynthia@villageagent.grcc.org.uk](mailto:Cynthia@villageagent.grcc.org.uk)

Telephone: 07776245780



QUENINGTON, HATHEROP, ALDSWORTH, WINDRUSH

**Sue Black**

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PRESTON, AMPNEY CRUCIS, AMPNEY ST MARY

**Jenny Cunningham**

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Telephone: 07785763339



DIDMARTON, WESTONBIRT WITH LASBOROUGH,  
BOXWELL WITH LEIGHTERTON, KINGSCOTE &  
OZLEWORTH

**Sandra Childress**

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Telephone: 07810630156



DOWDESWELL, WITHINGTON, COMPTON ABDALE

**Nick Bailey**

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Telephone: 07776245740



TEMPLE GUITING, GUITING POWER, CUTSDEAN,  
CONDICOTE, SWELL, NAUNTON, NOTGROVE, COLD ASTON  
ADLESTROP, EVENLODE, ODDINGTON, MAUGERSBURY

**George Hill**

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Telephone: 07798827678 or 07795286486



WILLERSLEY, SAINTBURY, WESTON SUBEDGE  
MICKLETON

**Ann Cox**

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## **STROUD VILLAGE AGENTS**

FROCESTER, NYMPHSFIELD &  
HORSLEY

**Sue Colquhoun**

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ELMORE, LONGNEY, MORETON  
VALENCE & FRETHERNE

**Christine Lingard**

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HAMFALLOW & SLIMBRIDGE

**Penny Smurthwaite**

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NORTH NIBLEY & STINCHCOMBE

**Richard Belliss**

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BROCKTHORPE & WHADDON,  
HARESFIELD, HARESCOMBE &  
PITCHCOMBE

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WHITESHILL & RUSCOMBE &  
RANDWICK

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KINGSWOOD, ALDERLEY &  
HILLERSLEY & TRESHAM

**Marion Brown**

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## **Tewksbury Village Agents**

LONGFORD, SANDHURST, NORTON

### **Trevor Miles**

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MAISEMORE, HASFIELD, TIRLEY &  
CHACELEY, ASHLEWORTH

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DOWN HATHERLEY, STAVERTON &  
BODDINGTON

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LEIGH, ELMSTONE HARDWICKE,  
UCKINGTON & STOKE ORCHARD

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OXENTON, TEDDINGTON & ALDERTON

### **Claire Manigrasso**

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STANWAY, STANTON, BUCKLAND &  
SNOWSHILL

### **Brian Simmonds**

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## Forest of Dean Village Agents

KEMPLEY, OXENHALL, GORSLEY &  
KILCOT, CLIFFORDS MESNE, DYMOCK

### Sallyanne Batchelor

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HEWELSFIELD, BROCKWEIR, ST  
BRIAVELS, TIDDENHAM

### Eileen Latham

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LITTLEDEAN & BLAISDON

### Helen Roberts

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CHURCHAM, TAYNTON, TIBBERTON

### Hilary Lyon

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RUDFORD, UPLEADON, PAUNTLEY

### Liz Davis

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LYDBROOK, CLEARWELL,  
STAUNTON COLEFORD

### Jan Baynham

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