



Gail's Gossip

The Sun is shining! Yippee!!!

Let's hope we have made it through the winter and we have warmth and sunshine welcoming us into spring. Have you seen the daffodils and crocuses beginning to shoot through? So beautiful, may I encourage you to take a walk in the Sunshine and soak up some vitamin D.

I love an afternoon tea, hence why we do so many of them at Befriended. We were treated by our family in Scotland to the best afternoon tea ever, in the Library off the Royal Mile in Edinburgh. We were surrounded by books that recorded every debate in parliament going back years!. It made very interesting reading, including one article from 1953 that spoke about the issue of loneliness for the elderly. Befriended is committed to bring an end to loneliness and isolation amongst older people through friendship, connections, bereavement support and of course afternoon teas!.

This newsletter includes two stories written for us about the impact of befriended. Enjoy your read and we look forward to seeing you at our activities.

From all of us at Befriended

God bless you. Gail x

0300 7727703

office@befriended.org



Alison Bennett with Gail and over 100 guests at March Befriended Tea Party

Alison Bennett our local MP tells her story

A great afternoon was had by all at the March afternoon Tea Party at Gateway Baptist Church.

Alison Bennett spoke about her childhood and upbringing, her journey into politics and what life has been like as a new Member of Parliament.

Alison says *"The tea party I attended was a testament to the dedication of Befriended volunteers and the profound impact that community support and volunteering can have. Befriended's efforts not only alleviate loneliness but also build bridges across generations."*

A packed room of happy people enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea and the atmosphere was full of warmth and fellowship - a beautiful reminder of what we can achieve when we come together with compassion and care".

Jean a first time guest said "AN UNBELIEVABLE AFTERNOON, I was so nervous at coming on my own but I was met at the door by a very smiley girl called Gail, she introduced me to Derek a lovely gentleman who introduced me to everyone on the table, they were all so kind and friendly. It was more than I could have imagined, the best afternoon tea I have ever had followed by Celtic music which is my favourite. I thought I was in heaven!, it was absolutely fantastic! I will never miss another tea party, everybody needs to know about the Befriended tea parties, I wish I could press replay and enjoy it all over again!"

Don't forget

to tell us your birthday so our Befriended Angel can send you a card

We will bring an end to loneliness and isolation one by one and together

THE DIFFERENCE

FINDING JOY IN GIVING - SALLY ALLISON

My journey with Befriended began from a deeply personal place.

After the loss of both my parents, I found myself struggling with an overwhelming sense of grief. Their absence left a void that was hard to fill, but it also planted a seed in my heart—a desire to connect with and support others who were navigating similar challenges. This led me to the Befriended Compassionate Conversations training course in August last year.

The course was more than just training, it was a space of healing and reflection, a space to learn, listen, and connect on a profound level. It not only equipped me with skills to communicate compassionately but also gave me the confidence to step into the world of Befriended. As I learned to communicate with empathy and understanding, I began to process my own grief in a new way. It became clear to me that my loss could be a catalyst for something meaningful. Instead of letting it hold me back, I could use my experiences to help others through their own struggles



Since completing the course, my involvement with Befriended has grown in ways I never anticipated. Facilitating bereavement courses has been particularly significant. Sitting with others in their grief and providing a safe space for them to share has been deeply moving. I've seen how powerful it is to simply listen, to be present, and to remind people they are not alone. In many ways, these sessions have helped me as much as they've helped others. Beyond the courses, I've also embraced the joy of supporting Befriended's tea parties and bus trips. Watching faces light up with laughter and conversation, witnessing bonds being formed, and knowing I've played a small part in creating these moments is incredibly heartwarming. These moments of lightness, filled with laughter, conversation and connection, are a reminder that even those in the midst of loss, there is room for joy and community.

An unexpected but heartwarming aspect of this journey has been the growing sense of recognition within the community. Whether it's a friendly hello at an event or a shared smile on the bus, these connections remind me that I'm part of a community built on care and understanding. People now know me as someone they can turn to, whether for a chat, a laugh, or a shared moment of understanding. These connections have made me feel a true sense of belonging and purpose.

Reflecting on my journey, I realise how much Befriended has given me. What began as a way to process my own grief has transformed into a rewarding path of giving back. Supporting others through their struggles and sharing in their joys has brought me a deep sense of fulfillment. I'm grateful for the opportunities Befriended has given me to grow, contribute and to make a difference. It's not just about helping others; it's also about finding joy and purpose in the process. As I look ahead to the future, I'm excited, filled with gratitude and excitement for what's to come this year in this ever-growing journey of compassion and connection.



office@befriended.org



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www.befriended.org

BEFRIENDED MAKES

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY - JILL GARLAND

Life, Loss, and the Support of Befriended

As 2024 came to a close, the year's final heartbreak came on November 30th when our beloved Golden Cocker Spaniel, Coco, passed away in my arms. Coco had been a cherished companion, and I had sworn she would be our last pet. But thanks to Befriended, a new chapter was about to unfold.

An Unexpected Companion

At Befriended Christmas lunch—an event filled with warmth, laughter, and friendship, a Befriended volunteer Ruth, asked if we would we consider fostering an 11-year-old Westie for two months? Maisie, needed a home, without hesitation, we said yes, she was full of energy, personality, and a diva-like attitude, BUT, just one week later, disaster struck.

Chris took Maisie for a rainy-day walk, and she came back drenched, I sat on my stool to dry her off and In a flash, she bolted, and I fell—landing hard on my left hip. I knew immediately that I was seriously injured.

Chris, despite his severe tremors, did his best. He covered me with a duvet, and we waited three agonizing hours for an ambulance. But as I lay there in pain, my greatest fear wasn't for myself—it was for him.

A Lifeline in a Crisis

For years, I had been Chris' primary caregiver, who would care for him? We have no family nearby, and our wonderful friends and neighbours have their own responsibilities. Chris' condition makes him vulnerable, and without me, his anxiety would be overwhelming.

Amidst my panic, I turned to the one group I knew I could rely on: Befriended. I called Gail, explaining what had happened and that we wouldn't make it to the tea party. In that moment, my world felt like it was crumbling—but Gail and the Befriended team took control.

By the time I was in surgery the next day, they had found a care home for Chris, Befriended had ensured he was safe, looked after, and I was reassured. I dread to think what could have happened had he been alone that night, but Befriended stepped in when we needed them the most. Without Befriended, I don't know what we would have done.

A Community That Cares

The following five and a half weeks in the hospital were some of the toughest of my life. What truly humbled me was the overwhelming support from the Befriended family. The messages, birthday wishes, and even a singing video lifted my spirits beyond words. The sense of community, warmth, and unwavering support, has impacted our lives in ways I could never have imagined.

Gratitude Beyond Words

Befriended is not just an organisation—it is a family. Their love, dedication, and support has been life-changing. From the bottom of my heart—THANK YOU, BEFRIENDED. LONG MAY YOU CONTINUE TO BRING HELP, HOPE, AND FRIENDSHIP TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST.



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BEFRIENDED NEWS

Cafe Neuro launch 12th May

We are working hard in the background preparing the team and the programme for our Cafe Neuro starting in May. We have a great team of people, all who are passionate at supporting carers and the cared for. Cafe Neuro will be a safe, happy and welcoming place full of friendship, support and encouragement. We will offer peer support, advice, information, signposting and of course tea and cake. If you have time to spare on a Monday morning and would like to join the team for providing hospitality please do drop me an email or give me a call - Gail

Thank you

We thank God for the life of Frances and all that she meant to us at Befriended. Thank you to all the family and friends of Frances who so generously gave to Befriended in memory of Frances through `much loved. <https://francesbarbarasmith.muchloved.com>



befriended
Coming Soon
Cafe Neuro
A warm and welcoming space offering support, signposting and a listening ear for those caring for and living with major neurocognitive disorders
Mondays at The Salvation Army Hall in Burgess Hill
For more information contact office@befriended.org
www.befriended.org. 0300 772 7703

Funding and giving

We are so grateful to our funders and donors. We recently were awarded a grant of £5,000 for the next 3 years towards some of our core costs. This makes an enormous difference. Thank you to all of you who donate each week to our activities and have filled in a gift aid form if you are a tax payer. We can claim 25p of every £1 you give. Befriended could not do what it does and would not exist if it were not for the financial provision from very kind and generous people.

Please do let us know if you would like to sponsor our
Newsletters@£3000 a year or £500 per newsletter bimonthly
Compassionate Conversation Course £500 a course
Bus Trips £1000 a trip subsidy
Our Website £1000 a year

All we do in Befriended is funded by your donations and grants. Please help us to make more of a difference!

If you are able we would really value your partnership in setting up a regular payment each month which enables us to plan and budget. You can set up a regular payment of £5, £10, £20, £50 or £100.

Or you can give a one-off gift.

To. **Befriended Acc Number 67281668.**

Sort code 08 92 99

Please do let us know if you are a taxpayer and we can then claim gift aid on your giving.

Thank you so much, we are so so grateful. Everyone giving a little goes a long way!

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Join us on

Facebook [Befriended.org](https://www.facebook.com/befriended.org)
Instagram [Befriended_org](https://www.instagram.com/befriended_org)
Whatsapp community
<https://www.befriended.org>

Befriended Values

Love, Friendship, Joy,
Hope, Faith, Valued,
Care, Support

Befriended Monthly Diary

March 2025

1	St Davids Day	16	Afternoon Tea Party Court Bushes, Hurstpierpoint 3-5pm
2	Afternoon Tea Party Gateway Baptist Church Burgess Hill 3-5.15pm	17	St Patricks Day
3	Befriended Trustees meeting 7.30pm	18	Community Choir Methodist Church Burgess Hill 10-12 Community Choir Village Centre Hurstpierpoint 2-3.30pm
4	Community Choir Methodist Church Burgess Hill 10-12 Community Choir Village Centre Hurstpierpoint 2-3.30pm	19	Befriended Balance Methodist Church Burgess Hill 2-4pm
5	Befriended Balance Methodist Church Burgess Hill 2-4pm	20	Compassionate Conversations 10.30am Burgess Hill Compassionate Conversations 7pm Hurstpierpoint
6	Bereavement Cafe 10-11am Court Bushes, Hurstpierpoint 12-2pm St Andrews Church, Cant's Lane, Burgess Hill	21	Company Meal - The Hassocks Pub Hassocks 12.30pm Pre book via the office please
7		22	
8		23	
9		24	
10		25	Community Choir Methodist Church Burgess Hill 10-12 Community Choir Village Centre Hurstpierpoint 2-3.30pm
11	Community Choir Methodist Church Burgess Hill 10-12 Chaplaincy Heath Court 2.30 - 4	26	Befriended Balance Methodist Church Burgess Hill 2-3.30pm
12	Befriended Balance Methodist Church Burgess Hill 2-3.30pm	27	Compassionate Conversations 10.30am Burgess Hill Chaplaincy Haywards Heath 2-4pm Compassionate Conversations 7pm Hurstpierpoint
13	Compassionate Conversations 10.30am Burgess Hill Compassionate Conversations 7pm Hurstpierpoint	28	
14		29	
15	Befriended Trustees Strategy morning	30	Mothers Day

Join the Whatsapp groups to get your regular updates



Befriended Monthly Diary

April 2025

1	Community Choir Methodist Church Burgess Hill 10-12 Community Choir Village Centre Hurstpierpoint 2-3.30pm	16	
2	Befriended Balance Methodist Church Burgess Hill 2-4pm	17	Compassionate Conversations 10.30am, Hurstpierpoint
3	Bereavement Cafe 12-2pm St Andrews Church, Cant's Lane, Burgess Hill	18	Good Friday Company Meal - The Woolpack Burgess Hill 12.30pm Pre book via the office please
4		19	Easter Saturday
5		20	Easter Sunday Afternoon Tea Party Court Bushes, Hurstpierpoint 3-5pm
6	Gail at St Andrews 9 & 11 am services Afternoon Tea Party Gateway Baptist Church Burgess Hill 3-5.15pm	21	Easter Monday
7		22	
8	Community Choir Methodist Church Burgess Hill 10-12	23	
9	Befriended Balance Methodist Church Burgess Hill 2-4pm	24	Compassionate Conversations 10.30am, Hurstpierpoint Chaplaincy Haywards Heath 2-4pm
10	Compassionate Conversations 10.30am, Hurstpierpoint St Andrews Tea party team meeting 7pm	25	
11		26	
12		27	
13		28	
14		29	Community Choir Methodist Church Burgess Hill 10-12 Community Choir Village Centre Hurstpierpoint 2-4pm
15		30	Befriended Balance Methodist Church Burgess Hill 2-4pm
	Date to be confirmed April Walk at Wakehurst		9th August Befriended Vintage Day Scaynes Hill
	11 June Matilda at Worth School		12-14 August Holiday at Home

Join the Whatsapp groups to get your regular updates



BEFRIENDED ACTIVITIES

Befriended Community Choir – Sing for Joy!

Join us every Tuesday morning at the Methodist Church in Burgess Hill at 10 AM for our Befriended Community Choir, where we come together to sing well-known songs and hymns in a warm and welcoming atmosphere. It's more than just singing—it's a place of friendship, fun, and joy as we lift our voices in harmony. Whether you're a seasoned singer or just love to join in, our wonderful choirmaster, Ira, keeps us all in tune and makes sure everyone feels included. Come along, make new friends, and start your day with music and laughter! Everyone is welcome 🎵😊



Befriended Community Choir – Sing for Joy in Hurstpierpoint!

Come and join us every Tuesday afternoon at 2 PM at the village centre in Hurstpierpoint for our Befriended Community Choir! We sing well-known songs and hymns in a friendly and uplifting atmosphere, where friendship, fun, and music bring us all together. Whether you love to sing or just enjoy the company, our fantastic choirmaster, Ira, keeps us all in tune and makes every session a joy. Tell your friends and come along for an afternoon of singing, laughter, and community spirit! 🎵😊



Join Us for Afternoon Tea!

Everyone is welcome to our Afternoon Teas, where friendship, laughter, and a delicious spread await! Come and enjoy great afternoon tea, fun quizzes, birthday celebrations, and even some lively entertainment. It's a wonderful opportunity to relax, chat, and make friendships with other people living in Burgess Hill in a warm and friendly atmosphere. Whether you're a regular or new to Befriended, we'd love to welcome you—bring a friend or your family and make an afternoon of it! 🍰🍵🎉

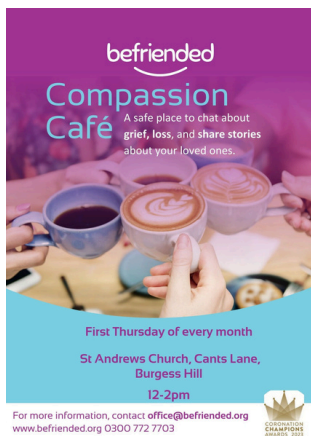


Afternoon Tea at Court Buses, Hurstpierpoint!

Join us for a delightful Afternoon Tea at Court Buses off Willow Way, Hurstpierpoint, where everyone is welcome to enjoy delicious treats, fun quizzes, birthday celebrations, and wonderful entertainment. It's a fantastic opportunity to meet others from the village, make new friends, and share a lovely afternoon in great company. Whether you're new to Befriended or a familiar face, come along, relax, and enjoy a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Bring a friend and make it a special afternoon! 🍰🍵🎵



BEFRIENDED ACTIVITIES



befriended
Compassion Café
A safe place to chat about grief, loss, and share stories about your loved ones.

First Thursday of every month
St Andrews Church, Cants Lane, Burgess Hill
12-2pm

For more information, contact office@befriended.org
www.befriended.org 0300 772 7703

ORGANISATION CHARITABLE STATUS 1031

Bereavement Café – A Safe Space for Support and Friendship

Our Bereavement Café is a warm and welcoming place where anyone can drop in for a cuppa and a chat. If you have experienced loss or bereavement, you'll find comfort in meeting others who understand and can share their experiences. It's a safe and friendly space where you will be supported and encouraged, whether you feel like talking or simply listening. You don't have to face grief alone—come along, connect with others, and find strength in community. ❤️☕



Company
When eating out becomes a joy again

If you are on your own and would like to join a friendly group of people for a meal and a chat come and join us at our monthly social

For more information contact office@befriended.org
www.befriended.org 0300 772 7703

Date: 21 March, 18 April 2025
Venue: The Hassocks, The Woolpack
Time: 12.30pm

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Company Meals – Sharing Meals, Sharing Support

As part of our bereavement support, our Company Meals offer a chance to enjoy good food, good company, and good conversation with others who understand the experience of loss. We meet on the third Friday of every month at a different venue, creating a warm and welcoming space where you can connect with friends over a meal. Whether you're looking for friendship, support, or simply a nice lunch out, you'll find kindness and understanding around the table. Booking in advance is essential via the office—come and join us! 🍴❤️



Compassionate Conversations
Looking at loss in life

Facilitated conversations discussing Past and Present Grief and Gratitude Bereaved and Believe office@befriended.org **befriended**

Compassionate Conversations
Looking at loss in life

When	Thursdays 13, 20 and 27 March
Where	25 Greenlands Close, Burgess Hill RH15 0AR
What time	10 am - 12 noon

0300 772 7703 www.befriended.org **befriended**
We look forward to journeying with you

Compassionate Conversations – A Three-Week Bereavement Course

Compassionate Conversations is a three-week bereavement support course for anyone who has experienced loss and or bereavement. It is held in a safe, warm, and homely environment, this small-group course (maximum of eight participants) provides space for reflection, support, and meaningful discussions. We explore subjects of past and present, grief and gratitude, bereaved and believe, helping you navigate your journey with the support and encouragement of others, understanding and care. The course runs on Thursday mornings in Burgess Hill and Thursday evenings in Hurstpierpoint, offering flexibility to suit you. If you're looking for a place to process your loss and bereavement we are here to welcome you. ❤️



befriended
Balance

Move, stretch and groove your way to improved physical confidence, wellbeing and mental health.

£5
donation per session

Wednesdays 2pm
Followed by refreshments

Restarts 4th September

Inclusive for all abilities everyone is welcome

Methodist Church, London Road, Burgess Hill

For more information, contact office@befriended.org
www.befriended.org 0300 772 7703

Befriended Balance – Falls Prevention with Fun!

Join us for Befriended Balance, our friendly and sociable falls prevention exercise class designed to build stamina, improve strength, and enhance stability. Led by our wonderful instructor Sharon, the class is suitable for all abilities, whether you're experienced or completely new to exercise. With a welcoming and encouraging atmosphere, we make fitness fun, and to top it off, we finish each session with tea and cake—a rare treat for an exercise class! We're also delighted to have students from Worth School join us each week, bringing an intergenerational feel to our classes. Come along, keep moving and grooving, and enjoy great company! 🍵🍰😊