

## A day in the life of a volunteer Peter Taylor



### My background

Having spent most of my working life in Suffolk as a teacher, minister, chaplain and occasional coach driver (fun job), my wife and I retired to South Cumbria in 2008 for family reasons and to Penny Bridge in 2011. Since being in the area I have become Chaplain at St. Mary's Hospice in Ulverston, a role I count as a privilege. Added to this I am one of the local volunteer car drivers, a service I believe is essential for folks without their own transport and with few buses, if any, serving rural communities. The people I take do tend to be elderly and there is always a thankful response whether it is just a trip to the health centre locally or a longer trip to the hospital when not eligible for Patient Transport. The more I do it, the more I see just how vital this service is.

### A typical day as a driver

For me, it is a few times each month as our coordinator does have a good pool of drivers at the moment. Let's take this Tuesday as a typical example. An elderly resident down our lane needs a lift into Ulverston at 10am to do some shopping and go to the hairdressers. I have got to know Hilda very well as she is a regular user of the service. On coming back home I pick up another lady who is partially blind just after 12 noon taking her to the same hairdressers where I will find Hilda ready to be brought back to Penny Bridge. On arriving home she really appreciates the personal service given. Then after a short break it is back into Ulverston to bring the other lady back to the village. For some of these passengers who live on their own to have a chat with another human being is so important and for volunteer drivers a necessary characteristic as well as being safe drivers is to have a "listening ear."

I wonder where the next trip will be to.....  
Barrow-in-Furness? The Village Hall? I wait and see!!!!!!