

Age UK Cornwall & The Isles of Scilly

Celebrating Volunteers' Week

Angela's Story - Befriending



During Volunteers' Week we wanted to take an opportunity to celebrate volunteering in Cornwall by sharing stories written by our Volunteers.

Every day, in so many ways, our volunteers give their time and effort to make an incredible difference for older people. Without them, we couldn't be there when we're needed most.

Angela's Story

My name is Angela and for many years I have been a volunteer befriender for Age UK Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. **I have found Volunteering and supporting people to be the most rewarding experience and I believe my story is somewhat unique.**

Having befriended two ladies previously, I was approached by my Co-ordinator to visit a lady who had been referred to Age UK Cornwall & The Isles of Scilly by her local GP. I was then given a summary about her hobbies, interests and personality. On this occasion, I was a little reluctant to agree to visit as, initially, I had reservations about our compatibility and I know how important building rapport and trust is for our Befriending service.

How wrong I was!

After a little persuasion, I agreed to a meeting with this lady. I was accompanied by my co-ordinator who thought we would be a really good match. I was still apprehensive, however, on the day in question **I discovered that we had an immediate rapport and we were soon left to talk and discover more about each other.**

Shortly, she was telling me about her life and childhood and where her mother

was born. I began reminiscing of my own childhood and began thinking "**her background is very similar to my own**" especially with our mothers' having the same maiden name.

Family ties

We continued to talk, and quickly realised that we were related. **In fact our grandfathers were brothers making us second cousins!** It has been a wonderful journey getting to know each other and we look forward to our time together. We really have made a difference to each others life.



Angela (with her new family)

I would encourage anyone who wants to give friendship and to receive the same in return, to become a volunteer befriender for Age UK Cornwall. You are giving someone, who is probably very lonely, a valuable connection. The reward you get is the satisfaction of knowing that your presence, kindness and warmth has given someone a reason to be happy again.

My friend has told me that I have given her confidence, and, she has given me a family that I never knew I had! I can certainly recommend volunteering for Age UK Cornwall. **You may not find a relative, but I am sure you will find a grateful friend.**