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An Exciting Year Ahead for Compaid



A note from our Chief Executive, Steve Sherry:

“As we embark on a new financial year filled with growth and opportunity, we are excited about the plans that lie ahead for Compaid.

“We are proud of the strong reputation Compaid holds across Kent, and I am delighted to announce that **Michelle Ford**, my successor, is already hard at work preparing to take over as CEO on 28 May 2025.



“We’re focused on expanding our digital outreach services, increasing attendance at our digital training centre, and modernising our transport services fleet—all with the goal of reaching more people and making a bigger impact. To achieve these goals, we will rely on the continued excellence of our operations, successful fundraising, and the growth of our dedicated volunteer base.

“Thanks to the dedication of our staff and volunteers, we have outperformed over the last year, and I encourage everyone to keep up the momentum. Together, as one team, we will continue to provide the right support at the right time to our clients.

“Let’s make this year another remarkable one for Compaid!”

Get to Know: Simon Newberry, our new Trustee



In this issue of The Voice, we would like to introduce you to **Simon**, our newest Trustee.

Simon Newberry MBA, FRSA is the Managing Director of Purple Compass Ltd, a company focussed on providing interim executive management support, programme management and consultancy services.

He has over 20 years of experience working on public-funded contracts that provide a variety of services and support to socially excluded individuals. He has also worked with several social investors to implement new and improve existing social outcome contracts working with some of the most marginalised groups of people across the UK.

Here’s a fun Q&A we asked Simon:

Q: What hobby or activity do you enjoy doing most in your free time? Tell us one interesting fact about this activity?

Cold water swimming. I am an active member of TriSwim who operate Chipstead Lake where I swim all year around without a wetsuit. I am also fortunate enough to have a cold plunge at my home - think hot tub in reverse. I ‘plunge’ most mornings at 3 degrees C for

around 5 minutes. I love the buzz you get from this - and it helps with my various aches and pains!



Q: If you could take only 3 things to a deserted island, what would they be?

I love the outdoors so I would be very practical and take a large knife, flint (for starting fires), and an old parachute for shade!

Q: What dish could you eat forever and never get tired of?

Cheese sandwich!

Q: If you were to write a book about your life, what would the title be?

“Don't Be Afraid To Try.”

Looking back, I have made some life choices which I regret because I was too scared to try or to pivot and change direction. More recently, I have managed to achieve some life goals even with my current disability - I have no right Achilles Tendon or functioning calf muscle!

Q: What is something on your bucket list that you are yet to accomplish?

To fast rope out of a helicopter - did I mention I always wanted to join the military?



Thank you Simon for these great answers!

Look out for who will be answering our Q&A next!

Transport News

Important Update regarding 'Out & About Service' in Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells

We regret to inform our passengers that, due to the absence of grant funding to support our Tonbridge & Tunbridge Wells 'Out & About' transport service, we implemented a trial fare increase in an effort to sustain operations.



Unfortunately, after several months of assessment, it has become evident that the service remains financially unviable. As a result, we have made the difficult decision to discontinue the service, **effective Friday 4th April 2025**.

We sincerely apologise for this outcome and recognise the inconvenience it may cause to those who depend on it. We encourage our clients to explore alternative travel arrangements through our other transport services.

We appreciate your understanding and support.

For further information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our Transport department on **01892 832447** or send an enquiry to **enquiries@compaid.org.uk**.

Could we help you travel across Kent?

Our accessible transport is available in Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone, Sevenoaks and other districts across Kent!
Book your journey up to 7 days in advance by calling us on
01892 832447 between 9am – 4pm, Monday to Friday.

For more information:

www.compaid.org.uk/accessible-transport



Volunteer with our Transport Team

Can you spare a few hours a week?

Fancy becoming a volunteer driver?

“If you want to find something to do to really give you satisfaction, fulfilment, and just the pleasure of knowing you’re making a difference to somebody else’s life as well as your own, then Compaid is the perfect place to come and volunteer.”

- Peter, Compaid volunteer

Join our friendly Transport team as a volunteer driver and make a difference! Support passengers to leave their homes to enjoy days out with family and friends, attend medical appointments, day centres, and grocery shopping.

For more details, call Judith Williams at **01892 351055** or email
judithwilliams@compaid.org.uk

Digital Skills News

Introducing our Outreach Team!

Our Outreach Digital Skills Training team had a meeting recently to catch up on all the amazing work that has been happening, and thought it would be a great opportunity to take a group photo. *(The lovely Karen was holidaying up a mountain when this was taken, but she sends her regards!)*



From left to right:

Izzy, Nicole, Robert, Norman and Sara.
(Not pictured: Karen)

Since September, we have slowly and steadily been building up Outreach services. Thanks to various avenues of funding, we are now able to be out and about in community venues all across Kent, offering digital skills support to those that require it.

We are currently at community venues in **Tonbridge, Pembury, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks,**

New Ash Green, Hextable, Edenbridge and **Swanley**, and are also undertaking pilot projects with charities Grow 19 and Spadework. There are more opportunities coming up soon in Maidstone and Hartley, so we are looking forward to the busy times ahead. Many of our sessions in these venues work on a drop in basis, but we can also book clients in so that they know they have a dedicated slot for support.

Our team answers queries on lots of different digital skills topics and help clients get the most out of their devices and being online.

Whether they only come once or several times, we are always happy to give support. Here is some lovely feedback that our clients have given us on the sessions:

‘This has been life changing’

‘I am leaving with a smile on my face!’

‘This has all been so helpful’

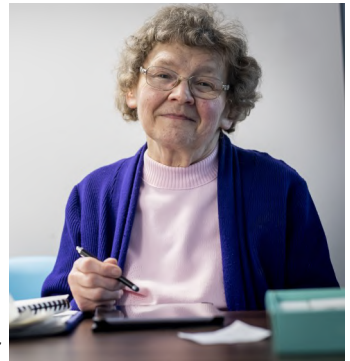
‘She has been absolutely wonderful helping me’

Our team look forward to an interesting year, reaching and helping more people in the community.

Outreach Client Stories

Pat’s Journey to Independence with Online Shopping

Pat, an older woman facing significant health challenges, urgently needed to learn how to shop for food online before being admitted to the hospital. With the support of our Outreach trainer, Karen, she gained the skills and confidence to do just that.



The first step was connecting to Wi-Fi. Karen guided Pat through finding networks in her settings and entering passwords. By taking notes and practicing, Pat soon felt confident navigating her old iPad and connecting on her own.

Next, Pat learned to use essential apps on her phone. Karen helped her get started with WhatsApp and email so she could stay in touch with family. Then, they moved on to online grocery shopping. Pat chose Tesco, and with Karen’s support, she learned how to browse the website, select groceries, book a delivery slot, and enter her address. Now, Pat has her own Tesco account and feels much more

independent. She can now order food when she needs it, giving her one less thing to worry about as she focuses on her recovery.

Tech Tip: How to protect your online accounts

A strong password helps keep your accounts safe by making it harder for people to guess or steal your information. It reduces the chance of someone getting into your personal details without permission. A strong password is:

- **Long**, with at least 12 to 14 characters
- **Varied**, with a mix of upper and lowercase letters, symbols, and numbers, and be different for each of your online accounts
- **Random**, with no complete words like “password” or any personal details
- **Private**, so no one except you knows what your passwords are.

Volunteer with Us

Are you proficient in using a computer or smartphone?

Do you enjoy helping others?

Do you have a few hours to spare each week?

Fancy becoming a volunteer trainer?

In our Paddock Wood centre, or with our Outreach team, you will be supporting older, disabled, and vulnerable people learn essential skills to use their devices and access the internet confidently and safely.

For more details, call Judith Williams at
01892 351055 or email
judithwilliams@compaid.org.uk



Staff & Volunteering News

Making Meaningful Connections in the Heart of Kent



Our Business Development and Commercial Executive, Amanda Sheer, and Social Media Assistant, Ife Disu, recently attended the ‘Making Connections’ networking event at the Angel Centre in Tonbridge. Hosted by Imago and Stronger Kent Communities, this event brought together a vibrant mix of local organisations, all dedicated to providing essential mental, economic, and health support across Kent.

It was great to hear presentations from Charity Mentors Kent and Medway, Babons Cancer Support, Lisa’s Aid, Communigrow, and Dandelion Time, who discussed how the opportunities for our organisations to collaborate and support vulnerable people together.

A huge thank you to Imago and Stronger Kent Communities for organising such a fantastic event! It was motivating to witness the dedication of so many organisations striving to make a real difference. We look forward to developing these new connections and exploring exciting opportunities for collaboration in the future!

Upcoming Events: Volunteers Week 2025

Every year, we look forward to celebrating Volunteers Week, which will be held from **Monday 2nd—Sunday 8th June 2025**. Our volunteers are the heartbeat of our charity, enabling us to support so many transport passengers and digital skills clients across Kent.

Keep an eye on our social media pages to see how we get involved with this wonderful week, and thank our volunteer for all they do for Compaid!

The Rewards of Volunteering

We have been interviewing our transport and digital skills training volunteers to give you an insight into the enjoyment of volunteering for Compaid for the volunteer and the beneficiary!



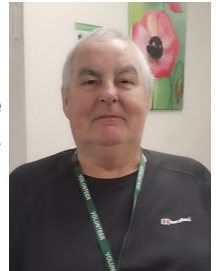
Q: *Why did you decide to become a volunteer at Compaid?*

Paula, digital skills volunteer: “I had some spare time, and my friend’s mother used to come to Compaid as she is disabled. Everyone looked after her so well and she enjoyed her time here, so I felt it was a worthwhile cause if I could help in any way.”

Peter Dove, volunteer driver: “I always thought that, when I retired, I would like to put something back into the society that I benefited from. And I also like driving a lot, so it was a good combination of being helpful to a charity and doing something I also enjoyed.”

Q: *What do you enjoy most about being a volunteer?*

Peter Silvey, digital skills volunteer: “My favourite thing is just getting around the people and getting to know the people as individuals: their different characteristics, personalities, and senses of humour. I think that’s at the heart of my own change and how I’ve come to view people who have disabilities. I’ve really come to appreciate and enjoy interacting with them.”



Dave, volunteer driver: “The thing I’ve quite liked and realised is that [our transport means] more than just food shopping [to the passengers]. It’s them meeting their friends, getting out of their room in their care home or their home. It’s just that connection as well with the community.”

Q: *What would you tell someone who is interested in becoming a Compaid volunteer?*

Paula: “Definitely go for it. It’s a really worthwhile cause!”

Peter Dove: “It’s very rewarding. It’s lovely to see the smiling faces of our clients when you’ve provided them with our transport service.”

Could you volunteer with Compaid?

Contact our HR Manager, Judith Williams today by email judith.williams@compaid.org.uk or call **01892 351055**

Fundraising News

We are extremely grateful to the following trusts and funders:

- Sir Jules Thorn
- Sir James Roll
- D'Oyly Carte
- Thomas J Horne
- Garfield Weston
- Stonewall Park CT
- Childwick
- Joan Ainslie CT
- Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council
- Cobtree CT
- Motability Foundation

whose generous grant support has allowed us to expand our services and develop new pilot programs. Their commitment has enabled us to reach more people in need, providing essential support services which are making a meaningful difference in their lives.

Thank you for helping us create lasting impact in our communities!

Baxall Construction Christmas Fundraiser

We would like to thank Baxall Construction for their generous £500 donation received from Malcolm Clark and Stuart Hardie following their successful Christmas fundraiser!

L-R Stuart Hardie (Baxall Director), Steve Sherry (Compaid CEO) Malcolm Clark (Baxall Managing Director) Diane Bradley (Compaid fundraising manager).



Tunbridge Wells Half Marathon – 23rd Feb 2025

We were thrilled to be a partner charity for the 42nd Hendy Tunbridge Wells Half Marathon this year.

Many Compaid volunteers and supporters gave their time to marshal, drive the sweeper vehicle & man our stand at the race (John Carrick, Simon Darby, Ife Disu, Nicholas Goldsmith, Jonathan Sargant, Steve Sherry & Andy Wythes.



Thank you all for giving up your Sunday to support and fundraise at this event, and thank you to Tunbridge Wells Harriers and all the organisers for hosting another fantastic race!



We were fortunate to receive two free entries, which were taken by **Adam Tibbals** (87) and **Dan Bradley** (158). Dan finished 6th place and was the first Male Vet 35, while Adam finished 34th and claimed 2nd place in the Male Vet 45 category.

By participating, they not only delivered impressive performances but also fundraised for Compaid.

A huge thank you to both of them, and congratulations on their fantastic achievements.

Paddock Wood Half Marathon parking at Compaid.

Each year Compaid provides parking for the runners competing in the Paddock Wood Half Marathon.

Through the generosity of Baxall Construction and Nigel Exall who allow us the use their car parks, our brilliant willing volunteers organise two car parks near

to the race start, for competitors in return for a donation to Compaid.

This year our fundraising raised an amazing **£1076** from runners' generous runner's donations.

Together, We Can Make a Difference

At Compaid, we are dedicated to empowering vulnerable individuals through technology, training, and accessible transport. Every day, we witness the profound impact of our services—but we can't do it alone. To maintain and expand our life-changing programs, we rely on the generosity of individuals, businesses, and charitable trusts.

Our Goal for 2025/2026

This year, we need to raise **£300,000** to sustain our services—and even more to reach those still in need. Thanks to the incredible support of Trusts, foundations, local businesses, and generous individuals, we've made significant progress, but we still have a long way to go.

How You Can Help

Every contribution, big or small, brings us closer to our goal. Your support could make an immediate difference:

- ◆ **£60** – Funds a specialist trainer for half a day, helping people with complex needs gain confidence with technology.
- ◆ **£120** – Provides a full day of digital skills training for a young person, boosting their career prospects and social connections.
- ◆ **£500** – Covers accessible transport for up to 40 people, enabling them to attend medical appointments, stay connected with loved ones, and reduce isolation.
- ◆ **£5,000** – Supports essential vehicle maintenance, ensuring elderly individuals can safely travel within their communities.

Could You Leave a Lasting Gift for Future Generations?

We know it's not always an easy thing to think about, but if you're considering writing or updating your will, we'd be so grateful if you might think of Compaid.

A gift in your will—no matter the size—can make a huge difference to the lives of disabled, older, and vulnerable people who rely on Compaid's support every day. Your legacy could help us continue to provide life-changing services well into the future.

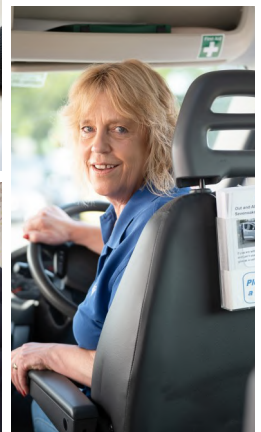
If Compaid has ever touched your life or the life of someone you care about, leaving a gift in your will is a wonderful way to ensure we can be there for others too.

Become a Supporter

In today's competitive funding climate, we are always looking for new supporters and sponsors. Whether you can offer a one-off donation, monthly standing order, a corporate partnership, or a fundraising initiative, your generosity will help transform lives.

If you or your business would like to support our work, we'd love to hear from you!

Contact **Diane Bradley**, Fundraising Manager at dianebradley@compaid.org.uk or call **01892 351054** for an informal chat.



Want to learn more about Compaid?

For more information about our digital skills and outreach training or transport service, how you can get involved with the charity through donations, fundraising events, or volunteering, and to learn more about the impact our charity has thanks to your help, visit our website:

www.compaid.org.uk

To find and follow us on social media for more updates on our services and client stories, scan the QR code here:



How to become an easyfundraiser for Compaid

3 simple steps are all it takes to support Compaid & help us have the chance to receive a £500 donation:

1. Click here to add easyfundraising.org.uk to your web browser:
www.easyfundraising.org.uk/donation-reminder/
2. Select Compaid as your chosen charity
3. Click 'Give a free donation' when notified by easyfundraising while shopping online



Thank you for your support!



Connect - Learn - Thrive

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