

## Setting up a Support Phone Line

It is possible to set up a local (e.g. 01234) phone number to provide support to your local community.

Biddenham Parish Council have set up the service as follows:

1. When someone calls the number they are played an outbound message
2. Once they have listened to the outbound message they are asked to press 1 to be connected with a volunteer
3. The number then diverts to the mobile phone of the volunteer
4. If the volunteer is not available the caller is able to leave a voice mail

There are some clever features that can be set up:

1. The outbound message is created by a synthesised text to voice system that actually sounds very realistic. So, it is possible to update the message frequently without having to record it. This is a great way to communicate with people who are not online
2. The divert to mobile can be set up using day and time based routing. So, it is possible to pre-configure a rota of volunteers e.g. 14 volunteers covering half days
3. Calls outside the core volunteer time are automatically routed to voice mail
4. When a voice mail is left, this can then be forwarded to an email address as an audio file. We have set it to a group email so that we are not reliant on one person answering voicemails

The service is provided by Dial9 [www.dial9.co.uk](http://www.dial9.co.uk). Their support has been second to none getting us set up with the service.

The cost is £6.99 + VAT a month for the number. You are not tied into a contract.

The divert costs are 4p + VAT per minute to a mobile. Minute bundles can be bought in advance at a discounted rate.

If you would like the configuration we have set up, please mention Biddenham Parish Council when you contact Dial9 so they can easily use our configuration as a template to set you up.

Things you will need to get set up:

1. What you want your outbound message to say
2. What you want your message to say if the divert doesn't reach a volunteer
3. The rota of diverts e.g. Mon (8:00-12:00) call 07XXX XXXXXX

*This guide has been kindly provided by Chris Gee from the COVID response network in Biddenham. Please note, he is in no way connected with Dial9 but tells us he always finds them extremely helpful whenever he has used their service.*

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