

## **ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE MEMBER CHAMPION FOR OVER 50's – 2019/20**

This was my second year as Champion for the Over 50's and I was able to build upon the foundations and connections that I established in my first year and assist wherever I could in raising awareness of issues that concern the Over 50's.

### **Inter- Generational Project**

The Group started meeting in January 2017 and has since gone from strength to strength.

Councillor Ciaran White (Champion for Young People) and I, together with Cliff Reynolds, the Chairman of the Over Fifties Forum and several Council Officers have met several times this year with members of the Youth Parliament and over 50s Forum to engage in discussion and debate with topics chosen but the young people.

An interesting interactive theatre programme 'Friend or Faux' funded by the Havering Safer Neighbourhood Board (MOPAC) to help raise awareness of mate crime, cuckooing and county lines was well attended by both groups.

The programme opened with a performance of a short play which offerered a number of scenarios featuring relatable characters that come into the life of Pete who is living independently and has to work out who is his 'Friend' and who might be 'Faux'. Through audience participation and discussion, Pete is helped to understand what behaviours are accepted in life. The key messages of the programme are:-

- . You can't trust everyone.
- . How you can spot a crime like mate crime, cuckooing or county lines.
- . Do not lend money or property.
- . What is appropriate physical/sexual behaviour.
- . If you don't like how someone is treating you tell a trusted person.

The programme proved very popular with both young and old, helping us understand through theatre how the most vulnerable in our society are often targets of these types of crime.

The number of participants increases at every meeting and both groups acknowledged that they had learnt a lot from each other.

## **BME Forum**

Havering BME Forum is a Community organisation of Havering Black and Minority groups, They exist to support the creation of a cohesive society through the recognition of diversity, and the promotion of knowledge and awareness. The Forum works in partnership with the London Borough of Havering and other agencies towards the attainment of the ideals for stronger local communities.

It was with great pleasure that I was asked to join as a committee member of the Forum helping with the arrangements of the Annual BME Community Cultural Celebration/Black History Month in October, which was opened and attended by the Mayor of Havering Cllr. Michael Deon-Burton and the Keynote Speaker Vernal Scott Corporate Diversity Advisor at London Borough of Havering. All who attended had a great afternoon.

In March, the Forum in partnership with the Council hosted the very first 'Love of the Commonwealth' event, which recognised and celebrated the relationship between Commonwealth countries and Great Britain. The event was designed to bring people together in the community, increase community cohesion in Havering and celebrate unity. Other organisations and local businesses including Youth Parliament, Volunteer Centre, Havering Association for People with Disabilities, the Havering LGBT group, Over 50s and Inter-Faith Forums, also attended. The event demonstrated the heart and willingness of BME Forum, the London Borough of Havering, local groups and people to make our community a caring and inclusive place to work. The Forums work is integral and vital to tackling local challenges and improving life in our neighbourhoods.

## **Havering Dementia Action Alliance**

The progress to encourage Hornchurch to become a Dementia Friendly High Street has seen many businesses sign up to becoming Dementia Friends, with some businesses receiving dementia friends awareness training and progressing further to become Dementia Champions. A competition to 'design a sticker' is to be launched in a local Hornchurch Junior School with the support of Julia Lopez the MP for Upminster who will help judge the entries. These stickers will go in the shop windows once staff have received dementia friends training and signed up to the Havering Dementia Action Alliance.

Councillor Gillian Ford has set up a successful dementia choir in Upminster. The choir is 50/50 people affected by dementia and carers and members of the public.

A Lanyard Scheme has been endorsed at all Tesco stores. Customers get to keep the lanyard to wear whilst shopping to alert shop assistants that they may require assistance. There is also a similar scheme operated in London City Airport.

The Havering Dementia Alliance Pocket Telephone Directory listing useful contact numbers for Health Providers, Council Services and Safer Neighbourhood teams, can be obtained from the Havering Over Fifties Forum or Havering Dementia Action Alliance.

## **Havering Association for People with Disabilities (HAD)**

I am a member of the Board of Trustees for this Association and I have taken part in several fund raising events over the past year to support the valuable work of the charity. These included a Charity Football Match at Averley FC between Tottenham old boys and HAD supporters, a Garden party with entertainment and barbecue in July 2019, a fundraising quiz at the "Crumpled Horn" and Christmas events

HAD continues to offer a wide range of courses and social activities and to promote independence and improve the quality of life for disabled people in the Borough.

## **Sight Action Havering**

Sight Action Havering is a registered charity and has been operating in the Borough for almost twenty years.

The Committee normally meets at Yew Tree Lodge nine times per year and provides a major support service to those at risk of, or living with, sight loss.

The Charity is totally funded from donations and provides an information and advice service and a telephone support line.

I was appointed as the Council's representative to this Charity in November, 2018 and in this capacity, attended a Sight Action Day at the Salvation Army in Romford in June 2019 and Afternoon Tea at the Queen's Theatre in September 2019.

The Group is active in raising awareness of issues that affect those with sight loss, such as the difficulties of social distancing for visually impaired individuals during the Coronavirus pandemic and the importance of considering those with sight loss in the placement of street furniture when planning applications are submitted.

Most recently, Sight Action Havering led a campaign to establish a formally constituted "Friends of the Secret Garden Group" to improve the Secret Garden at Harrow Lodge Park. It is hoped that Braille and raised letter signage to plants and features can be installed as well as auditory beacons to aid orientation. The Group is seeking advice regarding expanding the garden's accessibility for other sensory

impaired individuals and its potential as a commemorative peaceful haven within the Borough.

## **Health Champion**

I have undertaken training to become a Health Champion. The Council is collaborating with Tapestry to offer courses in Understanding Health Improvement. The programme enables participants to assist individuals and communities in making healthier choices and promote awareness of medical conditions. My main role has been to act as a conduit between residents and Council services and act as a point of contact to other agencies.

## **Di's Diamonds and Diamond Geezers**

The main aim of the group is to tackle isolation and provide older people with the opportunity to socialise and meet people in a safe environment. Meetings are co-ordinated by Age UK, enabling people to meet for entertainment, quizzes and other social activities. I was invited to speak to the Diamond Geezers earlier this year to give them an overview of the Over 50's Forum, this was facilitated by Tesco Hornchurch who were very generous with their tea and cake. These groups play an important part in our community, so my intention going forward will be to support as many of their functions as possible to raise their profile.

## **Havering Over 50's Forum**

I have attended meetings of the Over 50's Forum regularly over the past year and the Forum continues to be well supported and an important means of communication and information sharing.

The Over 50's invites speakers to attend meetings. There is a wide and varied programme and this year, speakers included Gary Etheridge Director of Nursing, Safeguarding and Harm Free Care ( BHRU Hospitals NHS Trust), Mark Jones, Operations Manager, Grounds Maintenance (London Borough of Havering), Keith Prince London Assembly Member, David Bobin, Welfare Rights Officer, and representatives from HealthWatch, the Police and Fire Services, As well as various bodies offering advice on how to access services.

There were also opportunities to socialise and the Forum enjoyed a Garden Party attended by the Mayor of Havering and our friends the Chelsea Pensioners which was held in the beautiful HAD gardens and a Christmas Lunch at the Railway Hotel Hornchurch with our special guests from T. Cribb undertakers, Pinney Talfoud Solicitors and Tesco with over 60 people in attendance.

All events and fundraising came to an abrupt end in March 2020 with the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic. As the Champion for the Over 50's, I would like to pay tribute to the London Borough of Havering and Council Officers' response in supporting elderly and vulnerable people in these difficult times.

**Councillor Christine Smith**