

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE MEMBER CHAMPION FOR OVER 50's – 2020/21

The London Borough of Havering has the highest proportion of residents over the age of 65 in London estimated at 46,709 people, which is approximately 18 per cent of the total Havering population 259,552. It is vital that this age group stays as active and independent for as long as possible.

As I enter my fourth year as Champion for the over 50's, I take time to reflect on the past year, a year which challenged us all with disappointments, boundaries, grief and hope. A year that has united all members of the community and has highlighted just how many wonderful people there are in Havering who gave their time, support and dedication selflessly to promote the wellbeing of those in need.

Over 50's Forum

During the current situation, the Forum has suspended its regular monthly meetings. Members have been able to keep in touch by phone and on-line via our blog, Facebook and Twitter. The Forum provides an important means of communication and information sharing.

Some of the main issues raised during lockdown have been:-

- The TV licence for over 75's being pursued when not due to pay, after a firm email to BBC agreement to take a declaration over the phone.
- Ongoing concerns: - Due to the merger of the local Clinical Commissioning groups, we are in contact with them to remind them of the needs of our residents in Havering.
- The concerns of our members of the inability to be able to contact their local Safer Neighbourhood teams.
- BHRUT working with the team at Queens Hospital to bringing to their attention the needs of older people when in hospital.

Going forward and as soon as we are able, we look forward to organising a Garden Party/Information and advice event for a re-launch of HOFF and a membership drive.

Havering Association for People with Disabilities

Like all organisations during the pandemic H.A.D. were faced with decisions beyond their control. Whilst all face-to-face services had to stop, they have continued to work hard to support people living in the Borough.

They arranged for a new phone buddies project, where they managed to pair up numerous people so that they were able to keep in contact during the whole pandemic.

The team also made a 'feel good' video and then shared this on social media; this reached 1200 people.

Colouring books, pads, pencils, and a paint by numbers were delivered to relieve boredom.

A "Drop off" service was provided for medicines and prescriptions and in some cases, shopping was collected and delivered.

They carried on throughout making wellbeing telephone calls, and home doorstep visits to those they knew were isolated and alone.

On Christmas day, the staff phoned various clients who they knew would be alone to wish them a Merry Christmas, have a little chat and most importantly be that one contact that they would have on Christmas Day.

In January, it was time for a change and that is when H.A.D introduced their virtual classes via Zoom, which will be ongoing even when they are reopen and resume services back in the building, as this will be a way of keeping clients involved when unable to return.

H.A.D. continues to offer a wide range of courses and social activities to promote independence and improve the quality of life for disabled people and their carers in the Borough, and they hope to be up and running a full timetable of events week beginning June 14th while keeping all safe.

Looking ahead, I look forward to meeting up with Friends in the beautiful garden at Whittaker Hall.

Sight Action Havering

Sight Action is a registered charity and has been operating in the Borough for almost twenty years, and provides a major support service to those at risk of, or living with sight loss. The Charity provides an information and advice service and a telephone support line. It is entirely funded from donations.

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.

With the help of the Volunteer Centre, friends of the secret garden and TFL, Sight Action have been able to spend sometime in the Secret/Sensory Garden {Blind Garden} refurbishing, weeding and planting to bring back the garden to its glory and hope to be hosting a picnic to celebrate its 60th Anniversary this year.

Havering Dementia Action Alliance

Meetings of Havering Dementia Action Alliance continued virtually via Teams and were well attended. Contributions from Healthwatch, Havering Volunteer Centre, Tapestry (Age UK), Peabody, BHRUT and Havering Changing, all reporting on actions taken/needed/ongoing that will help make lives less difficult for people living with dementia.

It is the aim of the Havering Dementia Action Alliance to encourage all areas of the community to make simple changes in the hope of removing the difficulties encountered in everyday life by people with dementia and their carers

The plans for Hornchurch to become the first Dementia Friendly High Street are on hold, with Langtons School still aspiring to be the designated school for the Design a Sticker Competition.

My fellow Councillor, Gillian Ford has continued with the Dementia Choir during lockdown every fortnight on a Tuesday morning and was invited to do a live video link on dementia to Harold Hill residents, which was very well received.

Havering Volunteer Centre Vaccination Volunteering Programme

The Havering Volunteer Centre provide support to the volunteer community who volunteer each year across Havering. Volunteering is a great way to help your local community.

The Havering Vaccination Volunteering Programme has been a huge success, NHS staff, doctors, nurses, Army Personnel and HVC Volunteers all coming together, working shoulder to shoulder to help get our community vaccinated.

Hornchurch Library and Victoria Hospital have vaccinated for approximately 1,900 hours over the past six months, with our volunteers dedicating over 25,300 hours in total, often with 100 volunteers a day at both sites. I am proud to say that I am one of those volunteers and have found the whole experience heart-warming.

I would like to take the opportunity to place on record my thanks to all the Officers at the London Borough of Havering who support me in my role and who work with the over 50's in the community. I would also like to Wish Jenny Gray from the Havering Dementia Action Alliance a long and happy retirement. Thank you for all your hard work supporting our residents with dementia and their carers in the Borough. Enjoy a well-deserved rest.

Councillor Christine Smith