

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE MEMBER CHAMPION FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMPACT 2020/21

INTRODUCTION

As Voluntary Champion for the Borough my first and foremost comments without any hesitation are to thank the wonderful volunteers across Havering. People have come together and united in so many ways assisting with delivering cooked meals, delivering shopping and prescriptions; dog walking for residents that have been isolating, befriending residents by phone who are isolating at home, organised online quizzes, singing in groups and supporting vulnerable people.

A massive highlight has to be the Havering Volunteer Centre for organising volunteers to assist at vaccination stations. People in our Borough have shown solidarity, courage, kindness and empathy each and every day.

Sending an enormous thank you to Shelley, Rebecca and all the team at the Havering Volunteer Centre. Thank you so very much for all that you have done and continue to do.



The Havering Volunteer Centre were immensely proud to announce how incredible the HVC Vaccine Volunteers have been this year. Collectively all the volunteers have covered approximately 1,900 hours of vaccinations and supported two Covid-19 Vaccination sites with a massive total of 25,313 hours within a six month period. Let us all join together with applause for the wonderful success of the vaccine programme rolled out by our fabulous team at the Havering Volunteer Centre.

Another celebration for the HVC in June 2020 was for their 5th Birthday and the team are proud to announce that they have registered over 7,000 individuals to volunteer, placed 6,469 volunteers into volunteering roles both short and long term and supported over 300 organisations with over 900 volunteering opportunities. Over 4000 prescriptions have been delivered along with 1100 emergency food parcels. 600 foodbank vouchers have been issued.

If you would like to find out how to volunteer with the HVC you can contact them on 01708 922214.

The Havering Volunteers Managers Forum hold regular meetings which I attend. The function is to update all the volunteer managers of the voluntary sector throughout Havering regarding all aspects for volunteering.



MEETINGS ATTENDED AND ENGAGEMENT

As member Champion for the Voluntary and Community Sector, I attend several meetings and try to be as involved as possible. I engage with as many organisations as possible without limiting myself to a few aspects of the role. I have attended and been involved with the following organisations.

THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COHESION FORUM – Meetings are usually held on the last Thursday of the month on a bi-monthly basis regarding community projects that the Council are working on together with partners. There have been updates from Public Health in each meeting as we have worked through the pandemic. This meeting is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection.

THE COMPACT FORUM – is the main meeting where the voluntary sector come together to receive and give information. The main topic of discussion has been

Covid and the response of our voluntary sector during this period. I attend and provide updates regarding my work.

AGM'S

Some of the meetings I attended included the Havering Volunteer Centre, Havering Mind, HAD and Sight Action.

In the past twelve months I have also been a committee member for the Havering Art's Council and enjoyed attending their informative and interesting meetings



SIGHT ACTION HAVERING AND THE HAVERING VOLUNTEER CENTRE

FRIENDS OF THE SECRET GARDEN AT HARROW LODGE

The Havering Volunteer Centre have joined up with Sight Action Havering to support and work together to create a beautiful outdoor recreational space for the sensory impaired at Harrow Lodge. The Garden is an ongoing project being filled with an abundance of sensory plants to touch and smell so that residents with sensory impairments may enjoy this dedicated safe space. The garden now boasts more than a thousand varieties of flowers and plants.

The garden had faced an uncertain future until the HVC

took over its maintenance in 2016. Volunteers are welcome to help at the garden and Shelley Hart of the HVC arranges volunteering days at the garden. Also workers from National Rail have been involved in the volunteering days and Shelley liaises with Cash Boyle

The Havering Volunteer Centre were very happy to reach a crowdfund target with support from the Council.

I fully support the Garden and enjoy going along to meetings and assisting in the garden despite the unknown weather conditions and volunteers sometimes being caught in the rain.



A Memory Tree was donated by Dementia Action Alliance who also provided new circular benches and the tree was planted in April 2021.

Memory Tree Planting

The Mayor of Havering Cllr John Mylod planted a memory tree at a tree planting ceremony and gave a heartfelt speech. The Mayor finished his speech by saying how pleased he was to plant the tree in memory of all the people we have lost through Covid-19 and said that we have to also remember all the happy times.

SIGHT ACTION

Sight Action are a registered Charity and usually meet at Yew Tree Lodge.

The Charity are funded by donations and offer immense support to people at risk and or living with sight loss.

The Charity provide a Havering Talking Newspaper which is a non-profit organisation located at Harold Wood and provide a free weekly service of local news which is recorded onto USB memory sticks for vision impaired people within the Borough.

I recently met with Mo and Mike Brace to discuss ways I can support them at Sight Action and we discussed how more support needs to be provided at the Queen's Hospital. I am also meeting with some of the Sight Action team and volunteers at the Talking Newspaper premises to try and help to promote the newspaper.

HAVERING ASSOCIATION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (HAD)

I was happy to go along and meet some of the residents that attend the HAD for coffee and a chat whilst ensuring that social distancing was maintained.

The HAD team supported their visitors and residents throughout the Lockdown and are looking forward to welcoming more people back to enjoy the social activities that they provide.

The HAD team encourage residents to maintain wellbeing, be confident and independent. They also have a beautiful garden that residents can enjoy when visiting.



TAKE A KNIFE SAVE A LIFE – TAKSAL – FOUNDER STEPHEN GOWERS



I continue to engage with Founder Stephen Gowers and Manager Robert Dean in the TAKSAL Team. They exude enthusiasm along with the rest of the team.

It was wonderful news that they received their Registered Charity Status and so well deserved.

Team TAKSAL are a pillar of strength within the local community and continue to support ever since Stephen Gowers started the organisation in 2019.

The team are committed to making a difference in the Borough and work towards providing a safer place for people to live and enjoy. They continue to organise patrols and search for dangerous weapons, which are safely removed and disposed of.

Team TAKSAL are active in encouraging young people that carry dangerous weapons off the street. They support them away from a lifestyle of crime so that they may become better members of the Community. They help them choose a positive path in life away from knife crime.

I actively promote TAKSAL and we hold meetings with Officer Jerry Haley. I have assisted in facilitating meetings between the police, Council and TAKSAL for the good of the community. TAKSAL go from strength to strength and are known across the Borough for their ongoing support, care and work to keep residents safe.

Team TAKSAL are an asset and joy and we are very fortunate that they continue their great work and patrols throughout Havering.

MANNINGS FAIR – Children enjoy the fun of the fair for free thanks to Owner James Manning

Members of Team TAKSAL went along every day to ensure the safety of all those that visited the fair at Harrow Lodge. Area coordinator Peter Jackson attended every day at the fair.

James said he is very thankful to Team TAKSAL who provided an ongoing safe environment.

Founder Stephen Gowers took his son along to the fair and met up with the owner James for a coffee. The idea of opening the fair for free for children with additional learning needs came to light. The cause is close to James's heart as his daughter has dyspraxia and he embraces supporting and helping others.

Stephen and James contacted me and I fully supported the idea and ensured the event went ahead which was for two and a half hours with complimentary rides, candy floss and refreshments.

We all thoroughly enjoyed seeing the families having fun and cannot thank James Manning enough for his immensely kind gesture of goodwill. We hope to hold another event at the fair in the near future.





The Manor – I went along with Cllr Jan Sargent to meet Don Tait and the team.



The team meet on a regular basis at the beautiful tranquil Dagnam Park which includes the Manor Nature Reserve which is a magnificent site.

When we arrived the Dagnam Park team were carrying out excavations of the foundations of the old manor house. The Manor House had been demolished in the 1950's.

When visiting on other occasions it was a joy to meet several of the four legged residents.



FRIENDS OF BEDFORDS PARK

Last September I went along with Cllr John Crowder to meet residents at Bedfords Park to discuss the renewal for signage for bridle ways and footpaths so that the two do not keep crossing over each other. This will aid in keeping everyone safe whilst at the same time feel relaxed and enjoy the park.

A renewal project has been launched so that works may commence in due course and riders and walkers are eager for the clear signage to be installed.



I have been along several times to visit the park and to meet more of our four legged friends that are familiar with Bedfords Park where they go for their daily exercise.



LITTER PICKING AT BEDFORDS PARK AND HAVERING COUNTRY PARK

People in the community are gathering across the Borough to litter pick as they take pride in our lush green open spaces. If everyone disposed of their rubbish safely and took it home after picnics there would not be a problem. Additionally animals can be put in danger by remnants of food and plastic bags left spilled across the grass.



There is always a hive of activity especially with the stables and farms nearby and now that yellow have been installed along Wellingtonia Avenue the farm vehicles and horse boxes can access the roads easily to reach the farms and stables.



People flock to the Parks to take pleasure in the open space especially since Covid-19. Volunteers continue to apply to help with litter picking to keep the parks litter free so that we may all enjoy the beautiful parks. Some people that visit the park also have a litter sweep at the end of their visit.

BEDFORDS PARK WALLED GARDEN



We are most fortunate to have so many volunteers that are Friends of Parks Groups in the Borough who look after our green spaces. I am in particularly close contact with Mrs Lois Amos, Secretary of the Friends of Bedford's Park. I recently invited a reporter from The Romford Recorder to go along and meet Lois to write an article about the Walled

Garden to raise awareness and gain support for the project.

The volunteers have been extra busy with planting and all their produce can be bought at the garden gate shop. Fruits, flowers and vegetables are being grown and various produce will be available to buy throughout the year.



We were happy to meet with both Pam Ditzel and Lois Amos on a visit to the Walled Garden.

Everyone is always welcome to go along for a visit on a Tuesday or Thursday between 10am and 4pm also the garden opens every second Sunday each month.

All volunteers will be most welcome to join in and help to grow produce and maintain the garden.





Land of the Fanns

In August 2020, when lockdown restrictions were relaxed an event was held in the Land of the Fanns. The flags pictured are from a community-mapping project. The 100 flags designed by the community represented particular stories and features in the landscape and a book containing all the flags and stories has recently been published.

I was pleased to be able to write in support for the project 'Havering Art Expedition – Rural Edition' that has been developed by The NO Collective in conjunction with the Land of the Fanns Landscape Partnership Scheme.

The project will be offering our Havering community free art activities, educational resources and fun reasons to explore the enjoyable landscapes of Havering. The project will be primarily aimed at families that are new to the Borough, residents that do not have access to a garden, those with limited budgets and people who

need extra support to explore their local environment.

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE DISABLED EVENT - This event was held via zoom this year and organised by Havering's Staff Ability Forum. There were some excellent speakers at this event and the Forum should be commended.

CROWD FUND INITIATIVE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH SPACEHIVE - The Council launched this Partnership in February and it has been very successful. Over £120K has been raised for community initiatives to date.

MY CLOSING COMMENTS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD - 2021/2022

No one was prepared for the Covid-19 pandemic but we became blessed with the vaccine programme which is available for everyone. We all need to support each other, take care of each other and look out for each other. No one is promised tomorrow and we have to take one day at a time and enjoy our lives. Stay well, stay strong and always be kind to everyone.

Once again thank you very much to everyone that volunteers across the Borough because your dedicated time is immensely appreciated and contributes towards our Borough being a happier home for one and all. Also thank you very much to our Chief Executive, Leader, Deputy Leader, Officers and everyone at the Council that contributes to taking care of the Borough and all the residents.

With caring wishes from Councillor Christine Vickery – Member Champion for the Voluntary Sector