

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE MEMBER CHAMPION FOR OVER 50's – 2021/22

The London Borough of Havering has the highest proportion of residents over the age of 65 in London estimated at 46,518 people, which is approximately 18 per cent of the total Havering population 260,651. It is vital that this age group stays as active and independent for as long as possible

The pandemic and the last two years have been the most dreadful time for us all, some of us suffering more than others. As the Member Champion for the Over 50's I was proud to see people coming together to support other members of the community, highlighting for me how many wonderful people there are in our Borough who have given their time selflessly to promote the wellbeing of those in need.

Over 50's Forum

We are a non-political and non profit-making organisation who offer a platform where the over 50's can find information and raise concerns that are of concern to them. The Forum works with other voluntary groups to improve the environment and people's health in Havering.

Despite not having face to face meetings this year the Forum has still managed to engage with its members, posting items of interest on our website and Facebook to distribute appropriate information to members, also through our network of faith and other small groups who still meet, and of course many telephone calls from members for updates.

We sit on various boards that are relevant to older people i.e. Transport for London reporting to the Mayors Office, LBH Safer Neighbourhood Board, Greater London Forums (all 32 boroughs), Dementia Action Alliance, and LBH community engagement, just to name a few. Zoom meetings being the preferred facilitator.

Some of the issues of concern we have been asked to raise by our members are:-

- Discharge from hospital (no voice at this time if elderly and frail).
- TV Licensing.
- Access to Services LBH (the need for a single point of contact).
- Neighbourhood Policing.
- Poor visibility of Police Officers on the streets, so no ability to engage.

The good news! Face-to-Face meetings were allowed again, so in November we were able to hold an information event at the Queens Theatre highlighting some of the different organisations that offer help and support in Havering that was very well attended, another one is booked for May 18th 2022.

Our members were able to enjoy a Christmas Lunch, enabling those who had been isolated for months to have the benefit of each other's company.

We plan our long awaited first meeting in 2022 back in the Town Hall Chamber on Tuesday 12th April, with free membership this year.

Our Annual Garden Party this year will take place in September, and we will as we did at the last Jubilee inform Buckingham Palace of the event and expect members to dress well, as you never know who may turn up!

Havering Association for People Living with a Disability

H.A.D welcome and support people with a variety of disabilities and long-term health conditions, offering a broad range of services and activities, with the object of improving their quality of life, promote independence and meet their physical, emotional and recreational needs.

With the COVID restrictions being lifted in July 2021 the team worked very hard in the background to ensure they were ready to open when it was safe to do so, and were very excited to be able to host a few small sessions in the garden in August 2021.

The clients of H.A.D were never forgotten, contact was maintained with all clients until the doors at Whittaker Hall were reopened fully.

A Christmas Party was held in December at the Ardleigh Dragon, giving a chance for friends to meet face to face and a catch up. Fun was had by all who attended (I know because I was there).

In January 2022 the doors were closed again due to refurbishment works and H.A.D were very fortunate to have the generous donation of a free kitchen from Moore's Kitchens and Wates Development with their team of contractors, to start the transformation. The staff arranging outreach activities for the clients to attend.

The doors are now open with a full programme of events planned, including crafting and arts, edible sugar paste basket making, chair based exercise, computer lessons, 'Breakfast Buddies' and the new 'Lunch and Laughter Club'. Fundraising including a Golf day, abseiling and quizzes.

Thank you to Cheryl Cable and her Team for their dedication to actively support, encourage participation and inspire people living with disabilities to lead fulfilled inclusive lives with dignity and respect.

Sight Action Havering

Sight Action (Havering) is a small independent registered charity dedicated to working with, and on behalf of, vision impaired people within the London Borough of Havering, and to raising awareness of their needs to those responsible for service provision.

During the last year Sight Action Havering with the help of the Volunteer Centre, friends of the secret garden and Network Rail, have worked tirelessly to reinstate the Secret Garden (Garden for the Blind) Harrow Lodge back to its former glory, with time spent weeding, planting and some refurbishment. It is open daily for the general public but the work continues.

Havering Dementia Action Alliance

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 living with dementia and their careers better.

With the support of Havering Businesses and Organisations, Havering has been granted the status of 'Working Towards becoming a Dementia Friendly Community'. Hornchurch is still on track to become the first Dementia Friendly High Street, with Langtons School the designated school for the Design a Sticker Competition, a sticker that will be displayed in premises that have participated in Dementia Friendly Training and signed up to become a Dementia Friendly Business

Meetings of Havering Dementia Alliance have continued virtually the past year via Teams, now back in the Town Hall face to face, all have been well attended with contributions from HealthWatch, Havering Volunteer Centre, Tapestry, Peabody, BHRUT, H.A.D., and Havering Changing, reporting on actions taken/needed/ongoing that will help make lives less difficult for people living with dementia.

Havering Volunteer Centre

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

HVC champions the voluntary sector and volunteering by a connecting, representing and supporting voluntary organisations. Their services include training, consultancy, information, resources and toolkits on governance, campaigning, strategy, impact and volunteer recruitment and retention.

The power of volunteering has never been more evident than has been seen over the last two years and the importance and need to have a strong, thriving Volunteer Centre is clear, the last twelve months have proved this.

Congratulations to HVC Chief Executive Shelley Hart and her strong resilient team in making HVC the success it is today, long may they continue to provide the vital and outstanding work for the benefit of so many in the community.

Thank you

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Officers, Cabinet Members, local Councillors and of course the Over 50s Committee who have helped me in my role, supporting older people in the community to remain independent and healthy, reducing isolation, fostering inclusion, community cohesion and working towards reducing the numbers of elderly people living in poverty.

Councillor Christine Smith