

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE MEMBER CHAMPION FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMPACT 2021/22

This is my fourth and final report as Voluntary Champion for the London Borough of Havering as my four year election term comes to a close.

I am sending a massive thank you to our volunteers along with the voluntary and community and enterprise sector across the Borough. Over the last two years the partnership working across the sector and between public sector agencies has been truly amazing.

There is now a new collaborative spirit which has come out of Covid-19. Havering as a Borough cannot afford to lose this as we go forward and face possible new challenges such as the growing refugee crisis as a result of the War in Ukraine.

Volunteers maintained their gesture of goodwill and strength to assist others which was particularly inspiring as Covid-19 became relentless and we entered a second year filled with uncertainty and wondered if this vile disease would ever subside.

Volunteers continued assisting in an assortment of ways for people that were isolating by dog walking, delivering cooked meals, food parcels, shopping and prescriptions. These small acts of kindness were so important in protecting our most vulnerable.

Volunteers continued the befriending by phone which was a highlight for residents that were isolating and or living alone. This improved mental health and Havering Mind were at the forefront of this intervention.

Arrangements continued for online quizzes, singing in groups, dancing, bingo, exercise classes, wine evenings. These were just a few activities that continued across the Borough in support of our vulnerable residents. This is so important and was so pioneering in ensuring people were cared for.

In short, this partnership between the Council and the Voluntary Sector, through the Compact, has been very productive and this partnership continues to grow as we work together ever more cohesively and seamlessly.

I believe that our Voluntary and Community Sector are the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.



THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COHESION FORUM

Meetings are chaired by the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public. Meetings continued being held on the last Thursday of the month on a bi-monthly basis and remained very well supported. With regard to community projects the Council work together with partners. Updates from Public Health were included in each meeting as the pandemic continued. This year the focus has once again been Covid-19 which continues throughout 2020 and 2021.

THE COMPACT FORUM

The main meeting where the voluntary sector come together to share information. The main topic of discussion continued to be Covid-19 and about the swift response of our voluntary sector during this period. However, as we move away from Covid-19 the new Integrated Care System which will eventually replace Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) has become the focus.

THE HAVERING VOLUNTEER CENTRE

The Havering Volunteer Centre has to be truly commended for the incredible organisational skills in arranging for volunteers to assist at vaccination stations which commenced from early morning, throughout the day and into the evenings be it wind, rain, sleet or snow our volunteers stood strong to assist and support people arriving for their vaccinations.

Havering Volunteer Centre (HVC) was founded on 6th October 2015 by the Chief Executive Officer; Shelley Hart. Securing fully accessible premises in January 2016

within the centre of Romford Town and supported by the local authority Community Development and Resilience team via an annual grant, HVC became a registered and fully operational charity on 25th February 2016.



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

HVC is the only licenced Volunteer Centre operating in Havering and works within the recognised Quality Accreditation Scheme operated by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO), who are the national body for Volunteer Centre's, with HVC attaining accreditation status in 2019. HVC recognises the importance of obtaining accreditations and continue to strive to achieve these recognised standards and maintain its excellent standing in the voluntary and community sector.

HVC is also an award winning centre of volunteering excellence having been recognised on several occasions for the work undertaken in the community. Since 2016 HVC have achieved various nominations, awards and accreditations from the Mayor of London, NCVO and the Queen's Award.



The Voluntary Sector in Havering is one of the most adaptable, empowering and selfless environments. It's a sector full of inspirational people and organisations that strive to deliver the very best of services for the residents in Havering.

In August 2021 following a call for support from Central London VCS partners; Havering Volunteer Centre released a call to arms for the community to support the Afghanistan Humanitarian Crisis. They called for clothing, bags, shoes, blankets and pushchairs on a 2 day drop of at a local site in Romford, the support and outpouring of love was incredible, far greater than anticipated. Within 2 days they received in excess of 1000 bags of donations, this took a small army of volunteers close to 9 weeks to sort through, box in to size and gender and then prepare for distribution.

These donations were then driven by HVC volunteers into Central London and distributed across 1,800 rooms, rooms that often hosted families of 6-10 people. This was a mammoth undertaking and is testament to how much community spirit, goodwill and love there is in our Borough.



Bi-monthly Havering Volunteer Managers Networking Forum.

This forum hosted by the Havering Volunteer Centre provides a platform for those who manage volunteers to come together to discuss good practice, opportunities, training and provide support and assistance to each other. Each meeting is attended by approximately 20 different community organisations and groups. Speakers promoting the British Red Cross, Homelessness, COVID updates, funding opportunities and climate change are just some of the subjects discussed. This Forum is an excellent way for those attending to share updates on their organisation/groups, their new initiatives, events and activities. Although the 2021/22 meetings have been virtual there was still an abundance of information shared and support provided.



If you would like to become involved as a volunteer please contact the Havering Volunteer Centre – 01708 922214 ☺

In my role as Champion for the Voluntary Sector, I have met with so many wonderful people at the organisations and community groups, all coming together creating cohesion and making Havering a wonderful place to live, work and visit.

Havering is blessed with so many keen volunteers across Havering all seeking to ensure each day is brighter for others by giving up their time

MEETINGS AND ENGAGEMENTS

As member Champion for the Voluntary and Community Sector, I attended and engaged with several organisations but unfortunately this became limited as I contracted Covid-19 and Pneumonia myself.

However, I was able to continue with my Bi-weekly meetings with Officer Jerry Haley to keep up to date regarding the voluntary sector. I also engaged with Officer Kim Smith via Zoom to discuss the ongoing support of organisations in the Borough.

I have listed some of my engagements as follows:

- The Romford Film Festival 24th - 28th June, 2021
- Meetings with Officer at Bedfords Park re Signage for Bridle ways and footpaths (all discussed regarding updating and renewing) – July 2021 onwards.
- The Partially Sighted Society - Barbeque at Upminster - 28th August, 2021
- Havering Mind - AGM – 22nd September, 2021 via Zoom

- The Talking Newspaper - AGM – 25th September, 2021
- Apple Day at Bedfords Park Walled Garden – 3rd October, 2021
- Horseman Sunday, Village Green, Havering-atte-Bower – 10th October, 2021
- Harold Hill Community Hub Launch – 14th October, 2021
- BME Annual Communal Community Celebration – 23rd October, 2021
- Mental Health Champions Meeting – via Zoom – 26th October, 2021
- Havering Association for People with Disabilities - AGM – 4th November, 2021
- Sight Action AGM – 8th November, 2021
- Havering Safeguarding Adult Board & Children Partnership via Zoom - Safeguarding Week 2021 - 8th to 12th November, 2021
- Bi-monthly Community Cohesion meetings via Zoom
- Bi-monthly Compact Forum meetings via Zoom
- Havering Volunteer Centre meetings via Zoom
- St Francis Hospice – In my role as Voluntary Champion I am always eager to support them. Because of their ongoing work they continue to be an anchor within the Borough.
- Havering Volunteer Centre AGM at the Queen's Theatre – 31st Jan, 2022
- Throughout these unsettled times I have maintained contact with the Queen's Theatre and the Brookside Theatre to support them in any way I can. We are immensely fortunate to have not one but two successful and marvellous theatres in our Borough.

Romford Film Festival held at Premiere Cinema, Mercury Mall

The Romford Film Festival had prepared for its fifth year at Romford's Premiere Cinema at the Mercury Mall Shopping Centre. This magnificent event is organised and lead by Spencer Hawken, Festival Director and Natalie Bays, Festival Co-founder along with their dynamic and passionate team.



The Romford Film Festival had a showcase of independent films including feature films and short films.

This has become an Annual International Film Festival and 2021 see a show case of over 200 films across three full size screens.

This Festival offers an incredible opportunity for people the choice of going along to watch first class films throughout the day time and/or the evening over a period of five days.

The launch was celebrated with guests which also included Film Makers, Actresses and Actors arriving at the launch to be greeted on the red carpet by Festival Director Spencer Hawken and Natalie Bays (Festival Co-founder).



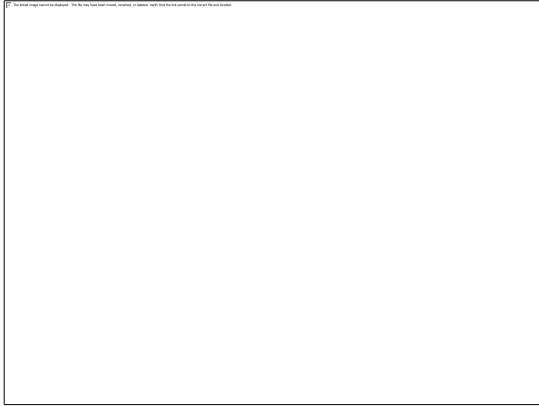


The Festival was concluded with the Awards Ceremony on the 28th June with a black tie event. The Mayor of Havering Cllr. John Mylod presented an award and I was very proud to present an award for the 'Best Cinematography' which was 'The Snow Maze'.

The 6th Romford Film Festival will run this year for seven days in May from the 19th to the 25th May 2022 inclusive.



All Day Information Day at the Sapphire Community Centre, Collier Row – 10.08.2021



Havering's Housing Service held a series of community roadshows across the Borough.

One of the events took place at the Sapphire Community Centre.

The Havering-atte-Bower Safer Neighbourhood Team were in attendance to greet residents within the community.

Discussions with residents included safety within the community and keeping homes and cars safe.

The event gave residents the opportunity to speak to staff from across different services, receive advice and support regarding queries you may have if you are a Council tenant or leaseholder, and give you the chance to feedback on how Havering Council engages with residents.

There was a bouncy castle for children to enjoy and refreshments were available for everyone.

Ardleigh Green College was one of many organisations at the event and they were offering advice about the courses they have available.

Thanks were expressed for all the volunteers that helped in ensuring the event run happily and smoothly for the day.



Barbeque organised by the Partially Sighted Society – August 2021

I was invited along to the Celebration of the Annual Summer Barbeque which was held in Upminster and organised by John Slattery, Chairman of the Partially Sighted Society. The PSS are a national charity and help anybody living with sight loss. This included useful daily living devices to eye condition information covering home life, social life, work life and leisure life.

I also assisted the PSS in their search for an additional venue for their members to return for their monthly meetings on a Monday evening.

I keep in constant contact with members and meet up with them when we can 😊



HAVERING TALKING NEWSPAPER – AGM – 25TH SEPTEMBER 2021

The Havering Talking Newspaper are a Charity with an office based in Harold Wood. They have their own recording studio to make voice recordings about local news in Havering.

This facility is to support visually impaired people across the Borough of Havering whose sight is too poor to read the printed word.

This service supports people who with a disability which makes reading a strain, partially blind and blind.

The articles are recorded on USB sticks for residents across the borough who are partially sighted, blind and with some other disabilities.

Readers met once a week at the studio to read articles from the recorder for members with visual impairment and other disabilities but when Covid struck the newspaper reduced the newspaper readings to once a month.

Then, from November 2021 recordings increased to once every three weeks.

They won a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2019 which is the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK.

I was invited to speak at their Annual AGM in September 2021.

Several residents from the Partially Sighted Society and Sight Action Groups attended the meeting.

The Group discussed returning to weekly recordings from April 2022.





Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

Apple Day at Bedfords Park Walled Garden, Havering-atte-Bower – 03.10.2021

Apple Day

Sunday 3rd of October
11am-4pm
Bedfords Park
Walled Garden

Join us at the Walled Garden for our annual Apple Day on Sunday the 3rd of October!

- Stalls, Food and refreshments
- Freshly squeezed apple juice
- Produce from the Walled Garden on sale

Plus an apple expert who will identify apples brought on the day!

Bedfords Park Walled Garden

FOBP
Friends of Bedfords Park

August	September	October	November	December
2 9 16 23 30	M 6 13 20 27	M 4 11 18 25	M 1 8 15 22 29	M 6
3 10 17 24 31	T 7 14 21 28	T 5 12 19 26	T 2 9 16 23 30	
4 11 18 25	W 1 8 15 22 29	W 3 10 17 24	W 6 13 20 27	
5 12 19 26	T 2 9 16 23 30	T 4 11 18 25	T 7 14 21 28	



The Walled Garden is a community garden managed by the London Borough of Havering Council and worked in by a team from Havering Council, The 'Friends of Bedfords Park' with a group of wonderful caring and willing volunteers.

The garden goes from strength to strength because of the support and care from all those that offer to volunteer to help in this beautiful oasis.

Admission was free for the 'Apple Day' event.

There was an abundance of activities for everyone to enjoy including apple pressing demos, Tombola, a raffle, Craft stalls and children's activities with face painting.

Refreshments were available and included homemade pizza cooked on the pizza oven on site and there was an assortment of delicious homemade cakes.

Freshly pressed juice with bottling was available to purchase from the walled garden's own orchards. There was also apple identification regarding apples grown in your garden all answered by an Apple expert attending the event.

The day was a huge success and all food produce sold out which also included fruit, vegetables, pizzas, sweets, biscuits and cakes.



Horseman Sunday at the Village Green, Havering-atte-Bower – 10.10.21



This spectacular event goes ahead every year - weather permitting - and volunteers come forward to help with the arrangements of setting up and clearing up afterwards.

As Voluntary Champion and Deputy Mayor for Havering I took part in Horseman's Sunday Service led by Reverend David Anderton of St John's Church.

Around 55 beautifully groomed horses and ponies congregated on the Village Green on a Sunday at midday for The Blessing along with residents and their dogs. There was a true community spirit amongst everyone.

I was so proud to join in with the presentation of Rosettes to the riders/horses and to owners with dogs.



Harold Hill Community Hub Official Launch – 4.10.2021



The Harold Hill Community Hub officially opened its doors by the Mayor of Havering along with Councillors, Council staff and community partners.

The centre opened four months previously and had helped over 1,000 people.



The Hub was designed to help local residents and offer advice and support regarding issues affecting them and also provide help for residents looking for work. Access for free Wi-Fi and equipment along with training, skills opportunities and social activities are all available.



The Hub includes a community food shop for residents who can pay a small fee to obtain groceries, vegetables and fresh fruit.

Residents within the local area are encouraged to support the hub as Volunteers.

**BME – Annual Cultural Community Celebration at Langtons Gardens –
23.10.21**



Felicia Boshorin, Chairman of the BME arranged their annual cultural community celebration at Langtons Gardens with Sharon Shirley also from the BME Forum.

The event was spectacular with residents from across the borough attending the annual celebration.

Everyone enjoyed the vibrant music, singing and dancing which also included African drummers and a man playing a piano. The majority of people were dancing along to the music enjoying the day.

I also enjoyed dancing along with Cllr. Viddy Persuad our Cabinet Member for Cultural and People, Andrew Rosindell MP and many Councillors

There was an array of tasty homemade hot food and an assortment of scrumptious homemade cakes and sweets.

The celebration brought people together and it was evident that everyone had enjoyed the afternoon as they remained at the event until closing time.

It was such a brilliant day for people to relax, spend time altogether and enjoy a fun filled afternoon.



Havering Association for People with Disabilities AGM – 4th November 2021



I attended the AGM for the HAD where their team of staff always extend a very warm welcome to everyone that attends meetings, social events and activities at their headquarters.

The team continued to support all their members during lockdown and were always available at the end of the phone to offer support, help and advice.

The kindness of the HAD team is always overflowing and they are renowned for their commitment in helping others.

Civic Awards at the Council Chamber, Town Hall – 19.11.2021

The Civic Awards allows us an opportunity to recognise and celebrate our volunteers in Havering.

Both Jamie Webb and Stephen Gowers were two volunteers within our community that were presented with Civic Awards by the present Mayor of Havering Cllr. John Mylod at this time and the previous Mayor Cllr. Michael Deon Burton.

Havering has many residents across the Borough who volunteer and are always prepared to encourage, support and help others as much as possible.





MY CLOSING COMMENTS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD 2022/23

The Covid-19 pandemic remained persistent but we were incredibly fortunate to be able to continue with the vaccine programme and also boosters remained readily available for everyone.

Throughout two years of troubled times with Covid-19 volunteers displayed patience and solidarity whilst stepping up to the challenge of supporting and taking care of each other.

Havering is truly blessed with volunteers that exude an abundance of true empathy, compassion and respect for one and other.

Thank you very much to everyone that volunteers across Havering and stood shoulder to shoulder for the past two years giving us the most precious gift, which was their time.

Thank you also to our Chief Executive, Leader and Deputy Leader, our Officers, Street Cleansing Team, Highways, Admin Staff, Councillors and absolutely everyone that has carried out tasks of kindness.

Let us hope and pray that this virus may one day disperse forever so we can enjoy sunshine days, good health and happiness.

With warmest wishes from Councillor Christine Vickery – Member Champion for the Voluntary Sector – March 2022