

ANNUAL REPORT 2014–15

Vision

East Grinstead and the surrounding villages are a place where everyone has the opportunity for good quality of life in later life.

Mission

To provide activities and services that promote, influence and improve wellbeing and quality of later life in East Grinstead and District.

Values

- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Team work
- Recognition
- Commitment

Registered charity number 1127168.

Company number 06695518.

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This report can be provided in a large print version if required.

If you have any other requirements for the provision of this information, please let us know and we will happily do our best to accommodate your needs.

We publish the Accounts for the year at our AGM as a separate document.

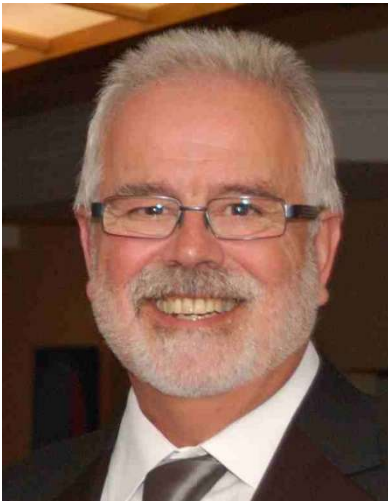


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Report from the Chair



Whilst enjoying and benefitting from the brand relationship with AgeUK Nationally, it is important to remember that we are a locally funded and locally managed Charity. Being local means that we relate to you, as all our Staff, Trustees and Volunteers are local too.

Whilst our focus continues to be on providing services for existing and new members, we cannot insulate ourselves from the wider financial climate.

Funding from traditional sources remains tight and is unlikely to be improved within the foreseeable 5 years.

As with virtually all sectors of business, commerce and charity, we have to keep a tight rein on expenditure whilst incurring the increased costs imposed on us when organising trips, outings, and activities.

The Charity is governed by a Board of Trustees and we have worked hard to increase the Board so as to provide even greater support to our Chief Officer, Pam Mitchell. This has only recently begun to be successful and Pam has worked significantly above her contracted hours, which shows the dedication and commitment she has to our members.

As at March 2015 our Board, all volunteers, now comprises:

- Alan Rengger, Chair and Trustee
- John Bowers, Trustee and Company Secretary
- Margaret Belsey, Trustee

The following are Board helpers

- Len Donoghue, Volunteer
- Stephen Fallowell, Volunteer Board Secretary

The following have been co-opted to the Board during 2015 for confirmation at the AGM.

- Mike Hollins, co-opted Trustee

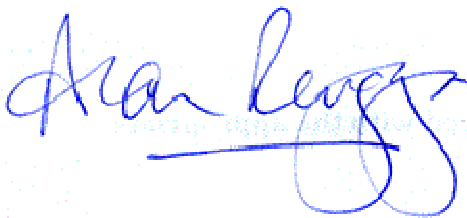


- Jo Morcom, co-opted Trustee
- John Belsey, co-opted Trustee
- Victoria Dickinson, co-opted Trustee

The combination of expertise available to Pam from the Board now includes Human Resources, Legal, Funding and Bidding, Health and Safety, Risk Assessments, Financial, Operational and Information Technology.

Despite our relatively small size, we have to meet all the requirements of our Funders, The Charity Commission, Companies House and AgeUK. This is a significant workload and I would like to say a massive THANK YOU to all the members of the Board for their individual contributions during the year.

Finally, the biggest THANK YOU must go to Pam and her staff and many volunteers. These are the people who deliver the services that you all enjoy. I hope you take the opportunity to read the rest of this report, as most of it is devoted to providing you with an insight into what we have delivered during the year and examples of the many beneficial outcomes achieved.



Chair of Board of Trustees



Chief Officer Report

1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015

Yet another year has passed and as last year it's hard to believe time has gone so quickly since the last Annual Report. Looking back over the past year and gathering information for this report, I am amazed by how much we've achieved and I feel very proud of our organisation and its amazing staff and volunteers – without them and their high level of commitment, we would all be much poorer.

As always, staff and volunteers (including our trustees) have worked tirelessly to improve the organisation's future and the number and variety of services we are able to offer to members. We also couldn't manage without our members themselves, especially those that support us in every area of our work.

Achievements for the past year include:

- Intergenerational IT partnership with Outset Youth Action.
- Intergenerational research and drama project with Central Sussex College, culminating in the drama production "Paper Minds", piloted at Christmas party and well-received by members at its final screening.
- Twitter and Facebook pages managed better with volunteers Philippa and Mark.
- Involvement in Dementia Friendly East Grinstead initiative.
- Gospel of Life Group arranged Sponsored Walk in aid of our charity.
- Partnership with Central Sussex College and initial move of hair salon.
- Well received Partnership event with Mid Sussex Older People's Council.
- Partnership with EG Sports Club around new funding for older people's activities.
- New trustees and volunteers on Board – Len, Jo and Victoria.
- Fundraising quiz at East Grinstead Sports Club raised £760.



East Grinstead Courier photos to help in our search for new premises



- Lingfield Lodge donating money for new computers.
- Winning £440 in the Waitrose Community Matters initiative.
- Presentations to staff at Moatfield Surgery and attendance at events for older people at Judges Close Surgery.
- New member database compiled by Alan (our Chair) and set up by Jackie (our Administrator).
- New LGBT project started and looking for funding.

and finally


- The possibility of new premises on the horizon (watch this space!).

However, although the organisation has had many well-deserved successes this year, it also comes to the end of this financial year with a number of challenges:

- We continue to struggle for finance to provide existing services and it will get harder next year with the new tender for day services, on which we will be working in partnership with our neighbours, Age UK West Sussex. However, the money is stretched further, meaning that even if we are successful there will be less money than we are running services on currently. We are therefore looking for different funding streams and alternative sources of money to secure our future and hope to encourage local donors to invest in supporting local older people through our work.
- In terms of funding, people mistakenly think that all Age UK local services are funded by Age UK nationally for running costs. We are constantly told that we don't need money as we are part of a big national organisation, whereas the truth is that we are small and independently funded. This is especially relevant when people so kindly leave us legacies and bequests – unless they are donated to Age UK East Grinstead & District they don't come to us.
- We are committed to being able to continue to provide services to older people in East Grinstead and the surrounding rural areas. However, the rural areas provide a challenge for us in terms of numbers of staff to take services out of East Grinstead.
- Although there may be an opportunity for new premises on the horizon, this continues to be a challenge and will remain so until we have better and more spacious premises from which to run our services.



- We have also done much work on improving internal structures and procedures. We have done this partly through staff restructures, which continue this year, and I would like to thank staff for bearing with us through this long process.
- Staff and volunteers continue to do all they can to build up our business, including working more extensively in our local community. It may seem obvious but unless we all take knowledge of our work out to older people, they don't know about us – and amazingly after 40 years in Queens Road, some people still don't know we exist!!!
- Finally, we would like to do more to put ourselves at the centre of our local community, not only in terms of members, volunteers, funders, etc., but also in terms of being able to encourage people in our local community to support older members of our society. If you think you can help us, please do contact me. I am happy to visit you to tell you more about our work.





Quotes received during the year

"East Grinstead Sports Club was delighted to play host and support the Age UK East Grinstead & District Quiz Night in March, it was a great evening and so good to see everyone enjoy themselves and raise funds for this fabulous cause. We look forward continuing to support Age UK East Grinstead & District and work with them on future fundraising events"

Jackie Huggett, East Grinstead Sports Club

"The Prevention & Wellbeing Commissioning Team within the Public Health Directorate, West Sussex County Council has continued to work closely with AUKEG&D and in partnership with Mid Sussex District Council to support the delivery of day services at Swan Mead and in the community. It has been a busy year for AUKEG&D with several changes and 2015/16 is likely to present further change. However, Public Health WSCC is committed to continue funding the day services programme for the forthcoming year 2015/16."

Geoff State, Senior Contracts Officer for Prevention & Wellbeing,
Social Support Commissioning, West Sussex County Council

"Once again, Disability Access- East Grinstead Area can only express admiration for the sterling work of Age UK East Grinstead & District in the services it provides for the senior citizens of the area. May we hope that you succeed in finding the new Trustees that you desire, and that ultimately you may achieve more suitable premises for your purposes."

Paul Johnson, Chairman, Disability Access –East Grinstead Area

"As our population ages we have more and more residents with additional recreational and care needs. Age UK East Grinstead & District provides a wide range of activities for the most active semi retired and retired people to vital care and respite services for our most vulnerable residents. The work of Age UK East Grinstead & District is an important part of the caring and compassionate community of East Grinstead and deserves support from us all."

Cllr Norman Webster, Baldwins Ward Councillor

"Moatfield Surgery is delighted to work in partnership with AGE UK EG for the benefit of both our patients and our staff and we are very grateful for the support and collaborative information sharing between the two service providers."

Heike Burnett, Practice Manager - Business, Moatfield Surgery



Financial Review

A great deal was achieved this year in developing our bookkeeping records to ensure that your Trustee Board gets meaningful and current financial information with which to monitor individual service areas.

There still is some work to be done in this area but at least we can report that it is well on the way.

A new volunteer came forward to support the Trustee Board in a finance role and this will add dedicated financial management and control to this fundamentally important area.

Overall we sustained a loss for the year which has to be met from our reserves. We need to maintain a level of Reserve and therefore our performance must improve.

The Board has therefore produced a budget for the year 2015-16 and is producing a strategic plan for the next 5 years to demonstrate how the future performance can be improved as needed. These documents however, recognise that, whilst the current economic climate is regarded as improving, many charities in a variety of sectors are finding it difficult to secure the funding required from traditional sources to maintain their service provision. We have additional challenges in that Swan Mead does not enable us to expand our range of services as required, and the Help at Home service which is not funded by grants, has to succeed in an increasingly competitive commercial environment.

Once again our accounts have been independently examined by Alexandra Durrant , Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors and are presented in a separate document.



Donations received

Unrestricted	
Organisations	£9,100.88
Private	£2,637.50
Total	£11,738.38

Restricted Saturday Club	
Organisations	£2839.50
Private	£632.00
Total	£3,471.50



Centre Activities by Lana Scott, Activities Manager

All our members enjoy coming to our centre for delicious home-cooked lunches and fun activities.

We are always looking for ideas for new activities and welcome any suggestions

For our more active members, we run a variety of regular activities, including exercise classes, such as Tai Chi, Zumba Gold, chair Zumba and chair exercises, day trips and IT classes (which are run in partnership with young people from Outset Youth Action).

IT classes are run from Swan Mead and are going from strength to strength as more members join us to get to grips with the benefits that learning computer skills can give them to find information, keep in touch with friends and family, do their shopping, etc.

Exercise classes are run both from Swan Mead and from Chequer Mead. Both are proving a huge success and we are looking to increase these in the future to incorporate line dancing, ballroom dancing and maybe a swimming group at the local pool.



For members who prefer a quieter life, we provide activities such as bingo, beetle drive, quizzes, music, games, art and craft, cake decorating and animal petting.

Again, we are looking to increase this range in the future.



Members enjoying their visit to Swan Mead



Trips and Outings by Lana Scott, Activities Manager

Another year of exciting trips and outings for our members, as well as two extremely successful member holidays. Our members really enjoy getting out and about.

We couldn't run our extensive programme of trips and outings without the help of our wonderful volunteers, who give up their time to help us.

Each year's programme is compiled from member ideas gathered from evaluation forms and personal requests.

We aim to provide more trips and outings in 2015-16 and always welcome suggestions.



This year's programme included:

Apr 2014: Bluewater shopping trip

May 2014: Bournemouth holiday

Jul 2014: Trip on the London Eye

Aug 2014: Eastbourne Bandstand trip

Sep 2014: Greyhound Racing in Brighton

Oct 2014: Bluebell Railway trip



Oct 2014: Ceramic Poppies at the Tower of London

Nov 2014 Lakeside shopping trip

Nov 2014: Turkey and Tinsel holiday

Mar 2015: 'Paper Minds' theatre trip

Mar 2015: Greyhound Racing in Brighton

Mar 2015: Bluewater shopping trip

Some of this year's trips



Turkey and Tinsel Holiday



Ceramic Poppies





The Bluebell Railway



Bournemouth Holiday



Case studies

Mrs C has been a member for a long time. She joined with her husband but very sadly he passed away. Mrs C didn't come to the centre for a while but then started coming back as she particularly enjoyed Zumba classes (which she had been doing when her husband was alive.)

Now that Mrs C has time to spare, we have been talking to her about all the trips and holidays we organise and she is keen to try them out.

Mrs C came on a few outings and enjoyed them so much that she booked on one of the holidays, after which she said that she had enjoyed herself and everyone had been great company and she would look forward to doing more in the future.

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On one of our many trips to London, Mrs R booked to come to London with us with a friend but said she didn't want to go on the London Eye as she had a fear of heights. On the day we travelled, we have 3 late cancellations and therefore had some tickets spare for the London Eye 'flight'.

Mrs R was told this on the minibus and asked if she thought she might change her mind because it would be a great experience, we would all be with her and she could sit in the centre of the pod with someone if she didn't want to look out. She thought it through and by the time we arrived she had decided to come with us. Everyone was very pleased and very supportive, realising what a hard decision it had been for her but wanting her to enjoy the experience.

We got into the pod and made sure Mrs R was still happy. She replied she was fine and was actually enjoying it. Once we 'took off', she stayed in the centre of the pod (where she felt happy) but managed to look out to experience all the wonderful views of London.

When we got back to earth, Mrs R said: "That was the greatest feeling" and thanked us for supporting her to be brave.

-0-0-0-



Help at Home Review by Jackie Dowling, HAH Coordinator

East Grinstead Area

No. of Clients as at 1.4.14:	45	(75.5 client hours per week)
New Clients during period 1.4.14 to 31.3.15:	15	(23.5 client hours per week)
Cancelled Clients during period 1.4.14 to 31.3.15:	25	(43.5 client hours per week)
No. of Clients as at 31.3.15:	35*	(58.25 client hours per week)

* Includes 3 clients currently in hospital long-term (5 client hours per week)

Burgess Hill/Haywards Heath Area

No. of Clients as at 1.4.14:	13	(20 client hours per week)
New Clients during period 1.4.14 to 31.3.15:	0	
Cancelled Clients during period 1.4.14 to 31.3.15:	2	(3 client hours per week)
No. of Clients as at 31.3.15:	11**	(17 client hours per week)

** Includes 1 client currently in hospital long-term (1 client hour per week)

Key Points

In both areas the current number of hours per week includes any changes existing clients have made to their agreed hours during the reporting period. Once again our charges have not been increased during this financial year and a 1.25 hour slot has been introduced for one client who specifically wanted this length of appointment.

We continue to support a small number of existing clients in the Burgess Hill/Haywards Heath area whose commitment to us over many years we are very happy to reciprocate. This group of clients receive superb support from their Home Assistant who works completely alone in that area and whose absence record is impeccable. No new clients can be taken on in this part of Mid-Sussex which is outside the geographic boundary of AUKEG&D.



As in previous years the majority of cancellations result from client mortality or moving into residential care, but disappointingly this year we have also seen several cancellations due to service disruption (see below). On a more positive note, we have provided short-term support to several clients who just needed extra help for a few weeks following illness or a spell in hospital.

In the East Grinstead area, a total of 2672.25 hours were billed during the year, a small rise from 2600 in 2013/2014.

In the Burgess Hill/Haywards Heath area, a total of 737.00 hours were billed during the year, compared with 1543 in 2013-2014.

The total amount billed was £43,683.16, compared with £53,335.40 in 2013-2014.

Service Review

2014/15 is a difficult year to report on as Help at Home has been the subject of much uncertainty and pressure, and for some clients in the East Grinstead area this has affected our ability to provide a consistent, reliable service.

The year began well with nine new clients being taken on in the first three months. However, in July 2014 the Trustee Board placed greater priority on determining the future direction for Help at Home and began a review of service. Instructions were given for a freeze to be made on both the recruitment of new clients and additional Home Assistants. Since that time Home Assistant capacity has been stretched to the absolute limit, especially during periods of staff holiday and sickness. The physical demands of their workload, low pay rate and the sometimes lonely and isolated nature of the role, are huge challenges for some of our Home Assistants who nonetheless remain committed both to their clients and the organisation.

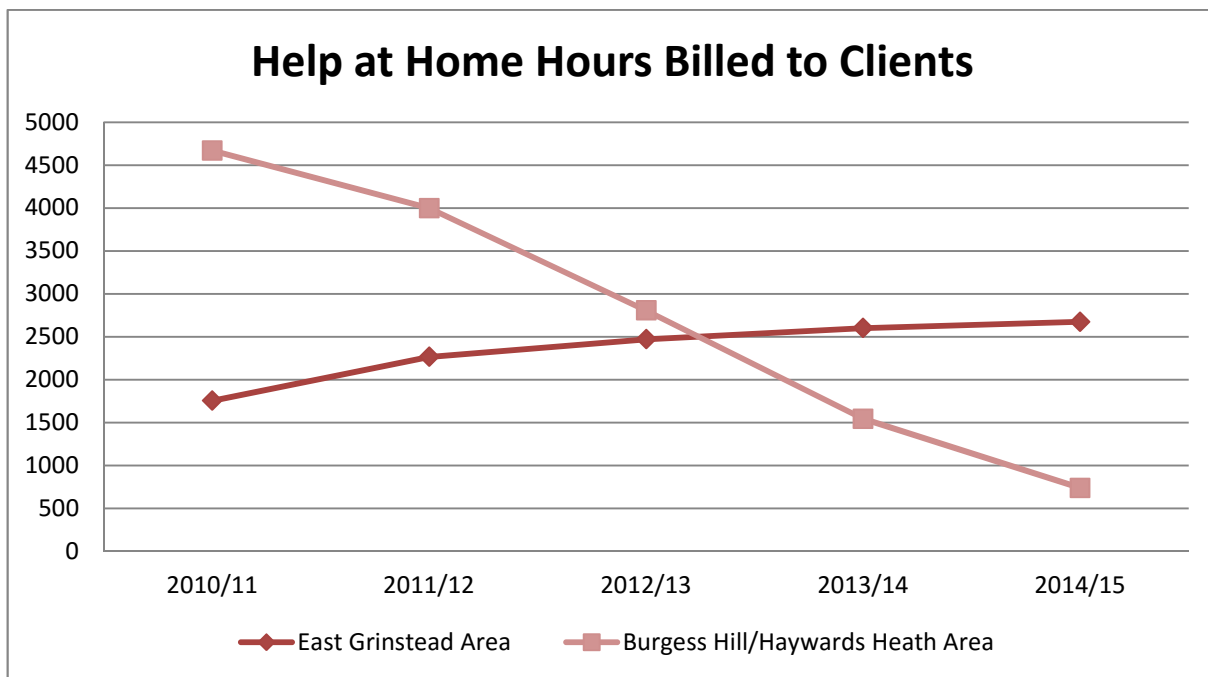
Pay rates and overhead costs are key areas for the Trustees to investigate and consider within the review, which is still ongoing. Crucially the benefits to the organisation, the clients and the staff members concerned, of changing from our current model of employing Home Assistants on zero hour contracts, to running Help at Home with self-employed Home Assistants in a similar way to many other AUK branches are at its heart. Meetings have been held with Age UK West Sussex and Age UK Horsham District to gain a better understanding of how the self-employed model works and which support functions would still be required. There have also been informal discussions with our current Home Assistant team, most of whom have expressed a preference for keeping their employed status.

At the beginning of January 2015, authorisation was given for new clients to once again be taken on in the East Grinstead area, provided this was within the capacity of the existing Home Assistant team. Demand had remained consistent and it is a testament to our name



and reputation that there were people who had waited several months for AUKEG&D Help at Home to be available, rather than go elsewhere. Subsequently authorisation was also given to recruit a Bank Home Assistant on a short-term contract to help reduce pressure in times of holiday/sickness absence. As ever, recruiting a suitable Home Assistant proves to be a lengthy process when working hours cannot be guaranteed and the pay rate is poor.

Final decisions are yet to be made over the future running of Help at Home and any transition from employed to self-employed model. During this current state of limbo the existing team continues to support clients to the best of their ability, new clients are being taken on in the East Grinstead area as and when space in schedules becomes available and the service operates as effectively and efficiently as it can within the constraints placed upon it. In view of this, it is worth highlighting that against all the odds, in the East Grinstead area Help at Home achieved an increase in hours billed to clients for the fifth year in succession.



Achievements

- Some Home Assistants have been involved in conducting new client assessments, working alongside the Co-ordinator.
- Over the last fifteen months, all clients in the East Grinstead area who have had Help at Home for more than 12 months have been re-assessed to update work plans, evaluate



current needs and enhance customer relations. Once again Home Assistants have been involved in recognition of their critical knowledge, experience and expertise.

- Home Assistant personal review meetings are now held with the Chief Officer present every six months. The Co-ordinator keeps regular phone/email contact with all Home Assistants and encourages the team to visit the office for support when needed.
- A draft Home Assistant service handbook was developed by a consultant working with the Help at Home Co-ordinator and Chief Officer. This handbook had almost been completed but regrettably has not been finalised or issued pending outcomes of the service review.
- The Help at Home Cancelled Client (exit) questionnaire has been redesigned and is issued to all clients or their representatives who no longer wish to use the service as an evaluation and development tool.

Help at Home Team

Thank you to our Home Assistants for their enduring support to the people who so rely on us, especially those team members who consistently put clients in front of themselves to ensure service is delivered. Currently our team is made up as follows:

Home Assistants for East Grinstead Area:

Cathy Barrett, Brenda Lisney, Katie Lucocq (from May 2014), Cora Newark, Sue Willox

Home Assistant for Burgess Hill/Haywards Heath Area: Tricia Faulkner

Help at Home Co-ordinator: Jackie Dowling

Leavers during this year:

Caroline Brenchley (Bank staff), Becca Cachia (Volunteer Admin support), Kira Sadler

Service Quote: "All going well with my clients - love Mrs B, we get on very well she is always smiling and very easy going - she said that since I've been going her nurses said the place looks lovely and clean so I'm pleased with that."



Saturday Club by Kate Strong, Saturday Club Coordinator

Our Team

Saturday Club Coordinator - Kate Strong

Day Care Assistant - Cathy Osborne

Day Care Assistant - Sue Willox

Chef - Patricia Owden

Bank Staff - Stella Osborne, Anne Longshaw

Bluebird Bus Driver/Saturday Club Volunteer - Ray Betts

Saturday Club Volunteers - Sandra Isted, Sarah Scamell, Nikki Robson, Elin Harrison, Claire Graham, Jan Simmons

We continue to be very fortunate to have marvellous volunteers on our team and know that without them, we would not have the thriving service that we do today. If you have considered becoming a volunteer or have an interest or wish to work with people living with dementia, please get in touch. We are always looking for individuals to undertake various roles within the service – even if you can only offer a small amount of time. Equally, if you have a skill or hobby that you could share with us, we would love to hear from you.

Our Project

The Saturday Club, offering respite for people and families living with dementia, currently has 13 members. This vital service allows carers or family members to have a break from looking after their loved one, whilst our friendly team offer stimulation, companionship and activities for those with dementia.

Our service, currently operating at Glen Vue Day centre in Railway Approach, is open on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month. The facilities and equipment within the centre, owned by WSCC, are specifically tailored towards people living with a physical, sensory or memory impairment and people with an acquired brain injury.

Our supporters

We are privileged to have many supporters. This year we have received donations from the Catenian Association Provincial Council, St Cecilia Lodge and others. We are also most appreciative for the continued support from Glen Vue Day Centre, Moatfield Surgery and the Alzheimer's Society.



The last 12 months



In October 2014, Age UK East Grinstead & District successfully secured funding from West Sussex County Council Carers Short Breaks Grant to run the club for the next 3 years and allowed us to join forces with partnering organisations, Age UK West Sussex and Crossroads. Working together will help us to develop links with the wider community, hopefully improving services for people with dementia. The Age UK West Sussex service, The Elderberry Club in Haywards Heath, runs on alternate weekends to ourselves, allowing our members to attend both clubs if they wish.

The Saturday Club has also been lucky to welcome a four legged friend to our service. Flo, a 6 year old King Charles Cavalier and her owner Claire Graham, generously undertook a vigorous health, temperament and suitability assessment with charity Pets As Therapy. On completion Flo became a certified PAT dog and now visits the club regularly alongside Claire. Members love having Flo around and enjoy feeding her plenty, if not too many, biscuits!

Feedback

Our wonderful members are what make our service and we continually receive high praise from the members themselves as well as their families.

"The Saturday Club allows Mum time with people she loves and trusts. The stimulation is vital. The time apart is a godsend"

"10/10 every time. Staff all wonderful, patient, caring individuals - nothing is a problem for them and the activities are stimulating for the member"

"It's really good fun, lots to do and I feel very much brighter and happier at the end of the day"



Dementia Friendly East Grinstead

East Grinstead is one of three towns currently in the process of becoming a dementia friendly community within Mid Sussex. This Alzheimer's Society campaign is actively working alongside other local organisations such as us, to encourage various businesses, charities and individuals to support this vision by becoming a Dementia Friend.

Figures from the Alzheimer's Society show that there are currently over 850,000 people with dementia in the UK. Two thirds of these people live in the community; while one third live in a care home. Becoming a Dementia Friend gives an insight into how it feels to live with dementia; how it can affect individuals and shows how small things can make a huge difference to people's lives.

If you would like to find out more about how to arrange a Dementia Friends session for your local community or your local community group, please contact us.

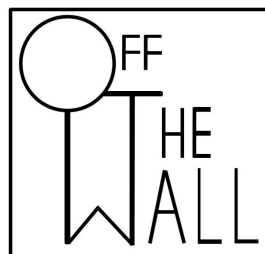
If you would like to find out more about how to arrange a Dementia Friends information session for your local community or organisation, please contact us.

Our Future

In the future we hope to continually expand our The Saturday Club and Age UK EG&D's dementia provision. Although we feel privileged to have such a successful club we still feel that more can be done to assist those whose lives are touched by dementia. There are still many people in and around the local area that we would like to reach. However, as always, this is dependent on funding. Dementia is also evidenced to some extent in all other areas of the Age UK East Grinstead & District service (although it is not a predictable part of growing older).

Kate Strong
Saturday Club Coordinator





Testimonials of 'Paper Minds'

Members of Age UK East Grinstead and District did some work in 2014/15 with drama students from Central Sussex College and this was the result. Older people were asked about their life experiences and the students turned these into a moving and inspiring performance piece.

Audience comments



"I thought that Paper Minds was a really ingenious way of representing age and how it both effects and affects us. The mirroring of the younger and older Alfie and Evie was both heart warming and visually dynamic. Seeing both versions of the same people actually made it more thought provoking to me, I found myself thinking about my future and what I'll remember. Having close family with dementia I found the piece really touching, the illness was shown in a sensitive way which as an audience member I was grateful for. The dance incorporated into it was great, I especially enjoyed the group numbers as it uplifted some quite heavy scenes. Without it I think the piece would've been a bit too hard hitting.

My favourite part was the use of the book showing their sons childhood, it was really cleverly crafted and the way the narrators worked around the stage, passing various objects and saying a few lines to aid the story was lovely. It's rare you see unique ways of portraying narrators and working them into a piece. The same goes for the use of chorus singing the song, the harmonies were beautiful, they didn't distract from the



piece but added to it, it was really lovely.

The only tiny thing I would add was that I was dying for Alfie and Evie to kiss during the dance with the envelope, it was a really intimate dance and I think it would've finished it off nicely.

It was a very well thought out piece of theatre and the amount of work put in was obvious to see, you should all be very proud of what you've done."



"This group presented a play which they had created from scratch which showed us ways of looking at dementia. It started with an old couple, one of whom had dementia and was unable to recognise her husband. We were then introduced to the librarians of their memories who retrieved books of memories from the shelves and delivered letters from the couple to each other when they were separated. Reading the diaries focused on memories of meeting for the first time, courtship and young love in the years before the second world war and later memories of separation when he was called up. He was wounded and she became a nurse who by chance was looking after him. He recovered, their love was rekindled, he proposed and they lived on into their older years and the onset of her dementia.

The acting was superb, real emotion felt by the actors and conveyed. The sequences of physical movement were executed with great precision, confidence and sensitivity. At times they were very vigorous and required considerable strength and co-ordination. The impact of the group move where the hero is blown up by an explosion in war was amazing. In contrast the tenderness, love and passion conveyed by the young couple was absolutely convincing. The pain expressed by the old husband about how her dementia affected him near the end of the play was very moving. The performance I saw was to our youth club, years 5 to 8+. They were totally absorbed for 50 minutes which on a Friday evening is amazing and shows the power of what was presented.

Stage management and all the essential things an audience can forget about, props, lights, sound etc were impeccable. I didn't notice that they were there.

I think this group work to very high standards and could go on to do great things."



"Dear Jonathan "Off The Wall Theatre Company Production" Just to thank you and the Students of Central Sussex College for the inspiring and vibrant show that was performed for us at Youth Clubs last Friday evening – I think you could judge from the attentive reaction from our young members that this was very well received. There were many positive comments afterwards. The detail of the production really surprised me and I was really impressed with the professionalism of



the acting, dancing and acrobatics. The insight achieved by the Students into a difficult and challenging subject was aptly demonstrated and their enthusiasm for the play was infectious. It was good to have conversations with them afterwards about how much they gained from the experience of the "tour" as well. Please wish the Students good luck with their future endeavours, and – if the experience was useful to you – we would welcome the opportunity to play host on another occasion in the future."



"We were very fortunate to have the company come into school twice to perform to Years 10 and 11.

The whole experience from beginning to end, from the swift, professional and highly organised setting up, to the very efficient and equally fast dismantling, can best be described as amazing.

The company has clearly taken a lot of time to engage with the topic and the level of understanding of some of the challenges of old age suggested a maturity well beyond their age. A number of the audience were clearly moved by the performances and our attention was held until the very end.

Technically the play was of a very high level. There was subtlety and depth in every character and an excellent use of just the right amount of physical theatre to maximum effect. The idea of having librarians as custodians of memories worked very well and was in itself very memorable. Lighting and sound complimented perfectly and there was a very intelligent and innovative use of a small number of props.

The members of the company also have excellent people skills which meant that all the arrangements and practicalities were dealt without a hitch.

Sitting in on a feedback session at the end of one performance, it was clear that the desire to self –analyse, reflect and improve was at the heart of the company's ethos and it has undoubtedly contributed to their success.

An excellent experience which I would not hesitate to recommend."

Quotes from students who devised and performed 'Paper Minds'

Level 4 drama students at Central Sussex College created the Off The Wall Theatre Company and wanted to produce a piece of performance art which expressed the views of older people today. Students visited members at Age UK East Grinstead & District and talked to them about the issues they face in society today. From this, they created 'Paper Minds' which subsequently toured schools in West Sussex and which was



performed to AUKEG&D members in The Hub theatre in March 2015. The following are quotes from the students involved:

"The best part of the Level 4 for me was the creation and performing of 'Paper Minds'. When the course is over, I would love to take it further as it was such an incredible experience and a joy to both create and perform!"

Mandi

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my time this year, getting to create the Off The Wall Theatre Company, touring our own piece 'Paper Minds' which was a truly memorable experience, one which has been both extremely enjoyable and has taught me a wide range of skills."

Livi

"I learnt invaluable real life experiences of a working actor while on tour with our devised 'Paper Minds'."

Nick

"I recently played Young Alfie on Off the Wall's 'Paper Minds' which toured around Sussex. The best part of the year for me was taking 'Paper Minds' to my youth club and reading the testimonials from the people there."

Harry

"After joining Off the Wall Theatre Company, I have enjoyed touring 'Paper Minds' and would love to see it progress further."

Megan

"If I had the chance I would love to tour 'Paper Minds' again."

Chloe

"I enjoyed exercising and improving this skill during the creation of our company's piece 'Paper Minds'."

Ellie

"I have grown and learnt so much as an actor and we have been given a whole bunch of amazing opportunities on the Level 4 course, not least being able to create and tour our own piece of outreach theatre, to deliver an important message commissioned by Age UK East Grinstead."

Elsa

"The highlight of this course has to be performing our piece of outreach theatre that we created to the members of the Age UK East Grinstead centre we were commissioned by as it was because of them that our piece came to be. Hearing their thoughts and opinions on the piece were truly heart-warming and made me feel proud to promote these amazing people."

Karl



Photo gallery

Easter Bonnets



Comic relief



London Eye



Sistine Chapel

