

ANNUAL REPORT



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We are hoping this year's Annual Report, in a new and eye-catching format, will not only display our work professionally, but also capture some of the excitement, enthusiasm and rewards of the past year working in our much-loved charity and with our professional staff team, our passionate volunteers and our appreciative members.

2016/17 was certainly an exciting year. We have many wonderful memories of many days providing fun, activities and support for our members and for older people in East Grinstead and the surrounding rural area. However, as always it was also a year full of challenges, especially the difficulties of raising funds to continue providing much-needed and much-appreciated services. We currently provide a centre where people come every week for meals, company and entertainment, a programme of regular trips, holidays and clubs, exercise, IT and other classes, an excellent Help at Home service, which helps people to remain in their own homes, and our Carers Short Breaks Service, which provides respite for carers of people living with dementia.

These services are run by a dedicated and committed team of staff and volunteers, and are supported by a professional team of Trustees. More detail can be found in the following pages but our aim is to provide a better life for older people living in the area of East Grinstead.

We hope you enjoy reading about our work. If you would like more information, especially about the difference we have made to people's lives, please contact our staff team.

Elaine McGloin, Chair, March 2017

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Carers Short Breaks



There have been many changes within our service over the last 12 months; our dementia service, formerly The Saturday Club, is now known as the Carers Short Breaks Service. This is for individuals living with dementia or memory loss as well as the elderly and frail.

Our respite services give carers/family members the opportunity to have a break from their caring role, either by leaving their loved ones in the capable hands of our friendly staff, or by attending the session together.

Members enjoy a range of activities as well as a freshly prepared meal.



While we receive excellent feedback from members and their families, we have lost clients due to the progression of their dementia and general health.

So we've tweaked the service to improve it for those in need of a break from their caring roles, opening our clubs to the elderly and frail, and offering carers the opportunity to attend sessions with their loved ones.

We are in our third year of funding from West Sussex County Council Carers Short Breaks fund and hope to continue to raise member numbers in order to help as many people as possible.

Kate Strong, Carers Short Break Coordinator

Help at Home

Help at Home is our paid for service which supports people over 50 to live independently. We help clients in a practical reliable way by offering weekly help with housework, laundry, ironing, bed changes and shopping. Our Help at Home team also provides people with friendly regular company and a trusted means of accessing support and advice if needed.

During 2016/2017 our Home Assistant Team delivered more than 3,200 hours of service to 74 homes - an increase of 30 per cent

Jackie Dowling, Help at Home Coordinator

'My home assistant has been a tower of strength. She has taken over jobs I can no longer tackle to keep my house clean'



Volunteers

I was introduced to Age UK East Grinstead & District in 2013 and since then have helped organise the Trustee Board on matters of health and safety and human resource issues, using the expertise I had developed in my working life.

I have enjoyed putting my skills to good use, but, even more, a sense of joy in seeing how people, both young and old come together from all walks of life to give their time freely for the good of others. We all have skills learnt and inherent that can have a positive impact on the lives of others. We sometimes underestimate our own abilities or the impact a simple act of caring can have on the lives of people.

In these straitened times when the ability to have paid resources are under constant pressure the need for those who can give their time freely is critical in ensuring small and locally-run charities such as ours can not only survive but prosper.

My heartfelt thanks goes to all those who volunteer and to those who are considering volunteering, remember 'no act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.'

Stephen Fallowell, Volunteer

Operations

I have instigated many changes and revamped some old ways to be able to provide our staff, volunteers and clients a safer, cost effective and more enjoyable experience when using our services.



We have rebranded the kitchen, with Cliff Bates (head cook) and Jane Kell (kitchen assistant) providing high quality, nutritious and extremely tasty main lunches and desserts, rewarded with the renewal of our 5 star rating from the EHO inspection.



Other innovations include entertainers, talks and musicians coming to the Swan Mead Centre at least once a month.

Behind the scenes, savings have been made with a complete overhaul of all our suppliers from paper clips to insurance without compromising on standards. This will be the ongoing strategy to reduce costs but without reducing standards.

Barry Gilbert, Operations Manager



Trips and holidays

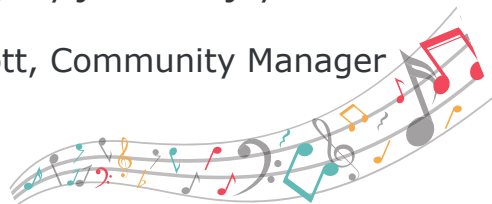
All trips and holidays have been very successful with most of our members enjoying new places to visit and making new friends. We have taken three holidays this year - to Bournemouth, Sinah Warren, Yorkshire and plan to do many more. Our many trips have included Holiday On Ice, greyhound racing and a visit to the Houses of Parliament.



This year we have been able to take members away who would not otherwise be able to come without a carer as we were given a Disability Grant. This has made a big difference to the lives of members and their families and we hope we will get the chance to do this again.

Thank you to all our members for your support and making my job so enjoyable.

Lana Scott, Community Manager



Centre activities

We now have more members than ever coming through our doors and making new friends and participating in activities - some booking for one of our delicious meals. We have had more entertainers and speakers this year.

And we now have a beginner's IT class, a Visually Impaired (VIP) club and an art and crafts morning. Music Friday also continues to be a great attraction.

Sue Willox, Centre Manager



Tai Chi has proved really popular, growing from three to 20 people taking part every Tuesday.

Zumba Gold, which runs on a Wednesday, is also going really well, with numbers growing every week.

Lana Scott



Our new website is nearly ready to go live and posts to Facebook and Twitter are much more frequent with Facebook posts reaching hundreds of people - especially posts about the news which reach up to 766 people.



Jack Berry, Volunteer



DONATIONS 2016/17

We received just under £103,000 of unrestricted donations in 2016/17, including donations from Saint Hill and their associates, amounting to around £57,000.

The Lingfield Lodge Trust continues to support us and gave us £16,000 in this year. We also received money from the East Grinstead Common Good Trust and the Justice and Peace Group.

We were fortunate to receive the balance due from the Mayor's charity and from the fundraising concert organised by ConChord Big Band.

The remainder of unrestricted donations was made up of bequests, collection tin collections, the Charityfeast scheme and other small donations.

The 500 Club is proving popular, with the numbers increasing and we now receive just over £100 per month, an increase of 20%. It was decided to do the draw quarterly, with the increased winnings being £100, £50 and £30 respectively.

For full account details, see our website at www.ageuk.org.uk/eastgrinstead.

Age UK East Grinstead & District operates in East Grinstead, Copthorne, Worth, Crawley Down, Turners Hill, Ashurst Wood and West Hoathly.

Working with and for local older people across our area to make a real and positive difference to their wellbeing and quality of life



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