



# Age UK Redbridge, Barking and Havering Newsletter

*December 2021*





Welcome to our December newsletter. We hope everyone is keeping well and looking forward to brighter days ahead. We wanted to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! The Holiday season has approached us so fast and we hope you're excited as much as we are. Over the festive season our offices are closed from the 24th-4th of January 2022.

We would like to remind you that our Wanstead Activity Centre has reopened for lunches and we have restarted some of our activities. For more information about times and available spaces, please contact the Centre on: 020 8989 6338. We have restarted our computer courses, these are face to face lessons in small groups (all socially distanced) in our conference room at Age UK RBH. If you are interested in the computer courses and would like to join the waiting list, you can call Janet on 02082206000 or email:

[janet.west@ageukrbh.org.uk](mailto:janet.west@ageukrbh.org.uk)

Would you like to meet older people in your area? Join the weekly drop in at the Gants Hill United Reform Church, Woodford Avenue, Ilford. Every Thursday, 1 – 4pm you can enjoy coffee and company.

The club was set up by Maria Jarrett, who is a trained counsellor. She and a colleague set up a drop in club for older people who may be lonely. She is keen to make clear that *'Although we are coming from a Christian base this is NOT only for Christians and all persons from the community regardless of their faith or lack of will be welcomed warmly.'*

She continued: *One of the issues that I identified whilst working remotely as a counsellor was the loneliness of the older generation. Therefore, I established the*

*drop in club with the main aim of providing a safe place for these members of the local community to come for a few hours each week to meet and make friends to alleviate the boredom that loneliness brings.*

Gracie, an Age UK RBH client, discovered this club and found them so welcoming that she wanted to let other older people know about it.

### **Home Support Team-Recruiting Now**

The Home support team has recently added two new Home Support Workers to its numbers, Sam and Katie. Both are providing domestic assistance to service users throughout the three boroughs which has allowed us to increase the number of service users we offer help to.

We are currently looking to recruit another person to the team to allow us to continue to grow and reach more people who need that little bit of support in their homes. Home support does as it says, helps people undertake tasks in their homes that they struggle with without taking over and compromising their independence.

Of course, some people need more help than others and the Care plan is tailored to reflect this. We work very much to the mantra, *"if you can do it safely, do it, if you can't, there is no shame in having a little help."* Kelly the Senior Manager for the service added *"I have been part of the Home support Service for 18 years in various roles and I take to heart the responsibility of looking after our service users and will always do my best to give them the best service possible."*

To apply for the Home Support Worker position please contact Admin on 0208 220 6000; email [admin@ageukrbh.org.uk](mailto:admin@ageukrbh.org.uk) or please visit our website [Job opportunities | Age UK Redbridge, Barking & Havering](#)





## My Health Matters Latest

My Health Matters is a Public Health commissioned project supporting healthy living in Havering.

Sharon Adkins from the My Health Matters team was joined by Suzannah Sallaby on 1<sup>st</sup> September and they have just started to return to outreach events around the borough.

Their community project aims to help improve the health awareness of local residents by signposting to relevant services and resources, supporting them to adopt healthier lifestyles and train up volunteer Health Champions throughout Havering to assist.

Last month Health Champions supported the official launch of the Harold Hill Community Hub plus the return of the BME Forum Outdoor event in Langtons Gardens. Just in these events, the team engaged with over 100 residents in 11 different health topics.

Training and webinars continue online via Zoom for now. If you are over 18 and either live, work or volunteer in Havering, course dates are now



available in January 2022. A background in health is not necessary but you will need to attend 2 morning sessions to qualify – the training is free and accredited to RSPH Level 2 standard. Once qualified, the team then offer further, free optional training in specialized topics such as Nutrition, Mental Health and Diabetes awareness.

For further information, please contact:

[myhealthmatters@ageukrbh.org.uk](mailto:myhealthmatters@ageukrbh.org.uk) or call 07538 798478





### Sparko TV

Sparko TV, a friendly interactive TV channel created for the less digitally able.

Sparko TV is all about creating communities, it is an innovative new way for older people to connect with family, friends, community and local services from the comfort of their own home via their own TV!

Sparko offers new skills & hobbies; connection to 2-3 live activity sessions each day, including exercise (seated and standing) music, cookery, craft, piano concerts, dance, afternoon tea and more; connection with family & friends via face-to-face calls, private access to personal uploaded photos; selection of topical video clips including hobbies, culture, religion, pets, exercise etc, library of films & talking books. Additional content of choice can be requested and uploaded where possible.

Our Age UK Sparko service has received over 130 referrals of interest, each referral is contacted and the service is discussed, we currently have a community of 62 members, 55 which are active members with the remaining pending installation and/or considering the service.

We continue to introduce new live sessions and have recently provided, "Sporting Memories" and "Current Affairs" both topical interactive sessions. A session was held with a public protection officer, which provided fraud and scam awareness.

The Wallace Museum now regularly hold virtual art exhibitions for our members, these have proven very successful. Age UK Advice & Information service provide informative sessions, informing and enabling clients to make contact to this if needed. For service information, Please contact Vivienne Greengrass on :07949359055

### Lucky Volunteers

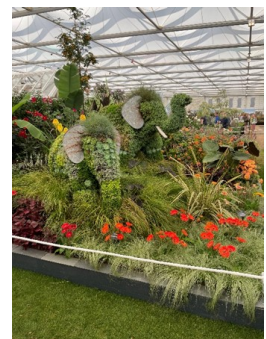
Our Lucky volunteers visited the Chelsea Flower Show on the 27th of July, Age UK (National) arranged for us to receive 2 pairs of tickets to be given to volunteers for the show

on Wednesday 22nd September 2021. The tickets had to be allocated by 10th August. There was not much time to communicate the opportunity, so staff nominated volunteers that had gone the extra mile during lockdown. We would like to thank Age UK for organising the tickets and thank you M&G for their generous donation.

"Chelsea Flower show was a brilliant day out. Each garden merited a good long look, and each was different. My favourites were the Guide Dog Gardens, the Container Gardens and the Balcony Gardens, where I could see ideas I might use in my own small garden. The Pavilion and the many trader sights were interesting too. We watched the stone balancing art list in action and the sculptures and nursery displays were very striking. All in all, a world away from our end in London! "Nikki and I had a fabulous day. The weather was perfect and the displays were wonderful, we even had a lovely chat with one of the Chelsea pensioners" Volunteer Lesley.



Guide Dogs Gardens



Container Gardens



Lucky Lesley!



Sculptures





## Advice & Information Service *Winter Warmers*

Winter is upon us and the days and nights have become a lot colder. This means that we will be turning up our heating to ensure that our homes are warm. Due to the increase in Gas and Electric bills or other reasons sadly some people will be choosing between “Heating & eating”!

*There are a number of financial help schemes that can help with your energy bills this winter.*

### **Winter Fuel Payment**

This is an annual tax-free payment to help with heating costs. Make sure you're registered to get it— once you are, you'll receive it every year without having to do anything. For further information you can contact the Winter Fuel Payment Centre on: 08007310160.

### **Cold Weather Payment**

If it's very cold where you live (at or below 0 degrees) for a period of time, and you're receiving certain benefits, you may be eligible to receive £25 a week for each 7 day period of cold weather.

### **Warm Home Discount**

This is a discount on your electricity bill. You may be able to get it if you get Pension Credit or are on low income.

### **Smart Meters**

Smart Meters are a new type of energy meter being offered free to every household. Smart Meters record exactly how much gas & electricity you use and automatically send regular readings to your energy company and you won't have to take meter readings any more.

### **Support from your Energy Supplier**

If you're finding it difficult to keep up with energy bills or you owe money to your energy supplier, your supplier has a duty of help.

### **Your Energy Supplier Should:**

- Review your payments or debt repayments
- Offer payment breaks or reductions
- More time to pay your bills
- Access to hardship funds
- Priority Service registration
- Review your existing Tariff Plan to ensure that the plan you are on is affordable based on your usage.

### **Priority Service**

If you're over the state pension age or live with a disability or health condition you can ask to be placed on the Priority Service Register. This gives you access to a range of support, including priority assistance in an emergency, advance notice of planned power cuts and helps with prepayment meter access. For further information and to register, contact your Energy Provider or our Advice & Information Service.

### **Winter Vaccinations**

It is extremely important to get both your coronavirus booster and flu jab this winter. They're different vaccinations that will help protect you against different viruses.

*Flu Vaccination*— If you haven't had your jab then contact your GP or go along to your local pharmacy.

*Covid Booster Vaccine*— You're eligible for a booster jab 6 months after your second dose of the vaccine. The NHS may contact you directly about booking your booster jab. Alternatively, you can call 119 or visit the NHS website.

If 6 months have passed since your vaccine dose, you can also visit a walk-in vaccination centre for your booster, if you prefer.

*For further Information & Advice, please contact our Advice & Information service on: 0208 220 60000 or email [advice@ageukrbh.org.uk](mailto:advice@ageukrbh.org.uk)*



### Di's Diamonds Activity Update

We are pleased to announce that since September Di's Diamond's social groups have resumed some face to face activities.

We still have some activities on Zoom such as our popular watercolour classes, Tai Chi, coffee mornings, photography and writing courses but so many of our members are enjoying being able to meet up again and make new friends at our various events.

Our Facebook group, which was set up at the start of the first lockdown, has been a great success. Kim has been keeping everyone entertained with reminiscence posts, jokes and general information. Our Diamond's volunteers and members have also been sharing beautiful pictures of their crafting and hobbies.

Our members have enjoyed meeting at the lovely Langtons Gardens in Hornchurch and going on day trips to Southend and on coach trips with the Elm Park Horticultural Society. Recently we participated in a wreath making workshop at Langtons, but as the weather changes we are focusing on indoor venues again.

Our New Redbridge, Barking and Dagenham Coordinator Amanda and her amazing volunteers Khim and Mimi have got off to a great start offering lots of new events across the three Boroughs. Coffee and craft meetings at Fullwell Cross, Wanstead and Redbridge Central libraries have proved very popular with card making and glass painting skill sharing. Kenneth Moore Theatre have also been very generous to let us use their foyer for creative monthly events.

Coffee and Cake at Eastbrookend Discovery Centre has been really popular as the scenery is beautiful and the cakes are delicious!

Popular Lunches include The Pipe Major, Dagenham (plus bingo), Crowlands Golf Club Dagenham, The New Fairlop Oak Pub Barkingside, Mandarin Palace, Gants Hill, Old Maypole in Hainault and Faroz Turkish Restaurant Ilford.

Our Havering Co-ordinators Kim and Fiona, with the help of their lovely volunteers, are also excited to be able to welcome back our Di's Diamonds members to lots of events in Havering.

Our popular Diamond Geezers group is back at a new venue every Monday at the Harrow Pub in Hornchurch 3-5pm with Kim and Lesley.

We offer Bowling at The Brewery Romford and are organising Museum trips to exhibitions running at the Victoria and Albert and various other Museums. We will also be resuming our popular Walks in the New Year in Havering.

To join Di's Diamonds please email: [disdiamonds@ageukrbh.org.uk](mailto:disdiamonds@ageukrbh.org.uk)

Or call Kim (Mon-Tue) : 07724 508967 or Fiona (Wed- Fri) 0737570 4448 or Monica (Tue-Fri) 074940 35950 or call 0208 220 6000 Mon-Fri 9-3pm. For more info on Redbridge & Barking & Dagenham events- call Amanda (Mon-Thurs) 07903 814076.





## Di's Diamonds Activity Update

In July we were given the opportunity to work with Space Galleries In Ilford on their amazing Mammoth Loop Textile Workshop with Artist Cecilia Charlton. Our members explored Ilford's rich History creating a Mammoth Head from textiles created over fourteen sessions partly in person and on Zoom.

The results are currently on display at the Gallery until January 2022

Wednesday's 11am – 5pm and Saturdays 11.00am – 3.00pm





## **Voices of Experience**

Voices of Experience is our User Involvement Service that seeks to engage with older people getting their opinions of services in their area. The service gets involved in consultations from the Council, the NHS, Public Health and other health charities such as the British Heart Foundation and Diabetes UK. These organisations are always keen to get older people's views on current services or proposed service developments, and will often come to us as a charity that works exclusively with older people.

During lockdown, it has been difficult to engage with people as face to face meetings and focus groups were not possible. However, Pat the co ordinator of the service has endeavoured to engage with people on-line and also by sending out surveys to existing Voices of Experience members. As the country opens up we would like to increase the membership of the group, particularly those who have access to the internet as surveys can be sent so much more easily in this way, and we are able to involve more people. However, we don't want to exclude those who are not able to access the internet and for those people, we will always provide paper surveys. If you are interested in becoming a member and having your views heard, please contact Pat the coordinator on: [pat.fitzsimons@ageukrbh.org.uk](mailto:pat.fitzsimons@ageukrbh.org.uk) or phone 020 8220 6000.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR  
TO ALL OUR SERVICE USERS AND THEIR  
FAMILIES. HERE'S TO A BRIGHTER 2022**

