

## Surge in Volunteers!



It's been so heart-warming to see the fantastic support we had from local people during the pandemic - both from our **existing 300 volunteers** and from **180 new volunteers** who joined us to take on new roles.

As we couldn't run our face-to-face services, most of our previous volunteer roles couldn't continue, so we've been grateful to so many volunteers who **swapped to new roles** to help isolated older people.

Volunteers helped with our temporary **Emergency Food Bank** and took supplies out as **Food Delivery Volunteers**. Others became **Volunteer Shoppers** or supported clients as **Telephone Befrienders**, whilst **Social Club Volunteers** kept in touch with club members by phone.

As some volunteers are returning to work, we'll soon be looking for **new volunteers**. If you can spare an hour once a week to chat to an older person please contact us on [volunteering@ageuksolihull.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ageuksolihull.org.uk).

## Corona Heroes

Hot on the heels of our 2019 Solihull Community Involvement Award, our volunteers were recognised as "**Corona Heroes**" by **Solihull MP Julian Knight**. The Solihull Observer headlined our story, quoting our clients and volunteers. Here are some of the lovely quotes we've received since the start of the pandemic:

"I absolutely love it! Age UK Solihull and my clients are extremely appreciative of everything I do."

Sharon - volunteer

"Volunteering is not only rewarding to do something useful for others, but it also gives me a feeling of worth. VE Day reminded me that my Grandads were often asked, "What did you do in the war?" In a few years time, if my granddaughters ask, "What did you do in the COVID epidemic?" I will have lots to tell them thanks to Age UK Solihull."

Steve - volunteer

"I would just like to say a very big thank you for all your help today and the food parcel that you delivered. I was very worried about going out the weekend looking for food but the "Angels from Age UK Solihull" came to my rescue and sorted me out. Thank so much to all your team for your kindness and help."

JH - client

"Volunteering is so rewarding. I have struck up a real rapport with the lady who I chat to. She's like my second Mum! The calls are a lifeline for our users who are feeling even more isolated and lonely."

Rosie - volunteer

"I really enjoy my chats with my befriender, Pam. They break up the day as it can be a long, lonely day on your own. She is kind and takes the time to listen to me."

Gladys - client

"My volunteer, Lyndsey, is awesome; I feel like I have known her all my life. She is such a lovely kind lady. We chat about her children and it cheers me up."

Christina - client

## Acknowledgments

There are so many people and organisations who have supported us over the past 6 months through the crisis and we can't include them all here, but here are a few names to mention:-

**AG Magicians**

**Age UK (national charity)**

**Barchester Healthcare (Fountains Care Home)**

**Barclays**

**Baron Davenport Charity**

**Beaumont Hill Farm**

**Benji McComiskey**

**Birmingham Business Park**

**Broad Oaks Road Support 2020**

**(The) Clothworkers Foundation**

**Corporate Solutions Logistics**

**Crowne Plaza Hotel**

**Edwardian FC (Rugby Club)**

**Encore Café, The Core**

**Evesons Charitable Trust**

**Healthwatch Solihull**

**Heart of England Community Foundation – Coronavirus Resilience Fund**

**IMI**

**Jacks Supports**

**JLR**

**John Lewis**

**Knowle & Dorridge Lions**

**Knowle Masonic Centre**

**Legal & General**

**Lorraine and John Hart**

**Matt Smith**

**Meriden Rotary Club**

**MK Health Club**  
(cheque handover pictured below)

**Morrisons Solihull**

**National Grid**

**Neighbourly Fund**

**Olton Cricket Club**

**OneStop Carriers for Causes**



**Paragon**

**Provincial Grand Lodge of Warwickshire**

**Rotary Club of Knowle & Dorridge**

**Sembcorp**

**Severn Trent Community Fund**

**Shirley Lions**

**Sing! Bentley Heath**

**Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust**

**Solihull Round Table**

**Solihull Self-Isolation Support Group**

**Solihull Summerfest**

**Sydney Mitchell Solicitors**

**Tesco**

**Unique Senior Care**

**Vellum Masonic Lodge No 5845**

**Waitrose**

**Western Power**

**(The) Wilkes Partnership Solicitors**

### Age UK Solihull Services

**Information & Advice/Community Advice Hubs**  
0121 709 7590

**Benefits Visiting Service** 0121 709 7592

**Direct Payments Support Service** 0121 709 7591

**Home Support Service** 0121 704 7848

**Linking People Together (Befriending)**  
0121 704 7846

**Postural Stability Exercise Service** 0121 704 7845

**Winter Warmth Helpline** 0121 704 8080

### Stay in touch

**Age UK Solihull**  
The Core, Solihull Central Library, Homer Road, Solihull, B91 3RG

**Tel** 0121 704 7840 (Reception)

**Email** [info@ageuksolihull.org.uk](mailto:info@ageuksolihull.org.uk)  
[events@ageuksolihull.org.uk](mailto:events@ageuksolihull.org.uk) (Fundraising)  
[volunteering@ageuksolihull.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ageuksolihull.org.uk) (Volunteering)

**Website** [www.ageuksolihull.org.uk](http://www.ageuksolihull.org.uk)

**Social Media**  
    [AgeUKSolihull](https://www.facebook.com/ageuksolihull)

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Age UK Solihull Newsletter Issue 17 · Autumn 2020

# newsletter

Unique Senior Care · Coronavirus Response · Volunteers · Local business and community support

## An unprecedented response in unprecedented times

**Anne Hastings, Chief Executive Officer (below), expresses her gratitude to all who have supported us during the past six months.**



"I am amazingly proud of the **dedication** shown by our staff and volunteers in **responding quickly** to the coronavirus crisis and ensuring that older residents of Solihull had what they needed **right from the beginning** of the lockdown.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a very **frightening time** for our clients, particularly those who had to shield and were left **isolated** when their normal support networks were breaking down. As a result, we were inundated with calls from Solihull residents needing our help. In fact in the first six weeks alone, we saw an increase of **353%** in contacts in and out of our main reception number.



Overnight, all our services were **transformed** from face-to-face contact to telephone and other virtual contacts, and those phones were very busy, with literally **thousands of befriending calls** taking place on a weekly basis and for those most vulnerable, hundreds of **daily welfare calls** to make sure that people were okay. **180 new volunteers** came forward to help our staff and, together with many of our existing band of over **300 volunteers**, were soon engaged in **shopping** for people, delivering **prescriptions** and, probably busiest of all, packing and delivering **over 3,000 food parcels** during the height of the pandemic (right).

But we couldn't do it alone, and we are very grateful to the many **organisations and businesses** who supported us in so many ways, with **donations** and **practical help**. We also had very welcome support from everyone at the **Council** and it was good to be able to work with them to meet the very pressing and urgent needs of the residents of this lovely borough, with fantastic support from our **local community**.

Age UK Solihull continues to respond to the coronavirus pandemic and provide **support to older people** in our local communities. The way in which we deliver our service has adapted throughout this challenging time, but **older and vulnerable people and their health and wellbeing** remain at the forefront of everything we do."



Local charity | Local services | Local people

Registered Charity Number: 1055887



## Birmingham Business Park extends partnership



Age UK Solihull was voted as **Birmingham Business Park's** charity partner for 2019/ 2020, and, as this year's activities have been limited due to the crisis, the park has announced that the partnership will continue for a **third year** until the end of 2021.

The Business Park, which is home to over 150 companies and 10,000 employees, has offered support which has included collecting **food donations** and **Easter eggs** and sponsoring **virtual online quizzes**, as well as putting us in touch with **businesses on the site**, who were

keen to support.

Liz Allister, Park Development Manager at Birmingham Business Park said, "Birmingham Business Park is **delighted to support Age UK Solihull for a third year** to the end of 2021. In these unprecedented and challenging times, charities have struggled and many of the events in our busy BBP calendar have been cancelled or rescheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is only right we continue to support such a **worthwhile and local charity.**"

*Pictured: Birmingham Business Park's Liz Allister with Age UK Solihull's Fundraising team.*

## Super Sydney



A huge thank you to **Sydney Mitchell Solicitors** for raising over **£9,000** for us during our time as their charity partner. We are so grateful for all their support.

## Over 75s TV Licences



Despite pressure from Age UK nationally, the BBC dispensed with the free TV licence for the over 75s on 1 August. Those claiming **Pension Credit** do not have to pay, but for others, this is a fee that they may struggle to pay. If you're not sure whether you are eligible for Pension Credit, get in touch with us on **0121 704 7840**.

## Distantly Socialising



Our social clubs are sadly likely to be closed for the rest of the year, but we've encouraged members to keep in touch with each other by telephone. It's great to see members of our **Wednesday Friends Lunch Club** have been enjoying socially distant meet ups in a member's garden (*pictured*) when the weather allows.

**Visit [www.ageuksolihull.org.uk](http://www.ageuksolihull.org.uk) for the latest update on our clubs and other services.**

## Bags of Help from Wilkes



Local solicitors, **The Wilkes Partnership**, have kindly sponsored **reusable bags** for our **Postural Stability Instruction Classes**, for when classes resume. The bags hold water bottles, bands and class homework books, which our clients use during their 20-week course. Many thanks to Wilkes for sponsoring.

*Pictured: Postural Stability Instruction Manager, Angela Liatis, shows off the new bags.*

## Big Birthday Surprises



Clients celebrating a big '0' **birthday** (70, 80, 90, 100) this year have been having lovely surprises on their big day thanks to local groups. Our staff and volunteers have been visiting them to deliver a beautifully iced birthday cake donated by **Fountains Care Home** in Solihull, a handmade card, and a personalised "Happy Birthday" message and song from local choir, **Sing! Bentley Heath** to mark their special day. The choir also donated **£400** to us to help during the crisis.

*Pictured: **Geoff on his 100th birthday**, proudly showing off his card from the Queen when we visited him to drop off his birthday treats.*

## Purple Participants

Our annual event to encourage the local community, and those in the care industry in particular, to help stamp out abuse in older people, was a more low-key affair this year.



**World Elder Abuse Awareness Day** on 15 June provided the chance to raise awareness and funds by wearing purple for the day, this year raising **£712**. Thank you to the Prince of Wales Care Home (*pictured*), Lady Katherine Leveson Retirement Home, Sunrise Solihull and Adult Social Care in particular for taking part.

## Online Quiz Nights

We haven't been able to hold physical events during the coronavirus crisis, but thanks to the wonders of technology, we've held **two virtual quiz nights** via Zoom in June and August, with our trusted host, **Stoo Pittaway**. **Birmingham Business Park** kindly sponsored both quizzes, and prizes were donated by **Nurture Landscapes**, (*June winners pictured with their garden fork and spade*) **Corporate Solutions (Logistics) Limited**, **Stonbury**, **HITIO Gym** and **Birmingham Business Park**. Both were fantastic evenings which raised a combined total of **£292**.



## Inspired by Sir Tom

We have had several supporters take on **personal challenges** to raise money for us during the crisis, spurred on by the heroic fundraising of Sir Tom Moore.



Local student, Matt Smith, took on the challenge to run the equivalent length of the journey from **Land's End to John O'Groats** in his Solihull back garden in aid of ourselves and the national Age UK charity. Matt was due to finish his run on 19 June, but had to extend the time due to injuries. He raised over **£1,000** for the two charities.



**Edwardian FC (Rugby Union)** not only provided incredible support with food bank deliveries, but they also raised over **£1,000** for us by walking, running and cycling over **4,500 miles** across the Six Nations Rugby grounds (virtually).

## Our Fundraising Appeal

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to cancel several fundraising events and close our shops.

We set up an **emergency fundraising appeal** on Virgin Money Giving with a target of £25,000 to help keep our vital services operating during these unprecedented times. Thanks to our amazing supporters, our initial target was quickly exceeded, and over **£76,000** has now been raised, which will sustain us in the short term.

Want to fundraise for us? Email [events@ageuksolihull.org.uk](mailto:events@ageuksolihull.org.uk) to discuss.

We have also been inviting our supporters to become '**Age Angels**', by making a regular donation to support our work. Just £5 a month could enable us to send a Volunteer Befriender to visit a lonely older person to provide regular company for them.

If you're interested in becoming an Age Angel, please email [events@ageuksolihull.org.uk](mailto:events@ageuksolihull.org.uk).



*Illustration by Meghan Allbright*

## With thanks to our sponsor:

**Unique**  
Senior Care



## A unique approach to delivering care

Unique Senior Care provides outstanding home care services to older people where they are most happy and comfortable - their own home. We take a bespoke approach with every individual, building a support plan based on what they want and require to give them and their families the best experience possible.

Offering Companionship, Personal care, as well as Live-in and End-of-life care, it doesn't matter how simple or complex our clients' needs are, we care for each person with respect, dignity and compassion.

To speak to a team member, please contact us at:  
Solihull **0121 667 5555** | [www.uniquecare.co.uk](http://www.uniquecare.co.uk)

## Goodbye and Good Luck!



After five years with the charity, our Older Peoples Information and Advice Caseworker, **Elsa-May Rodas-Cross** (*pictured left*), is leaving to start a new career in teaching.

**James Duley**, our Winter Warmth Manager, is also leaving the charity to enjoy new adventures in retirement.

We wish them both all the best for their futures.

## Sadly Missed

The Age UK Solihull Team of staff and volunteers send our thoughts out to everyone who has lost a loved one over the past few months.

In April we lost our much loved colleague **Steve Bridgman**. Steve was a benefits expert and, in the three years he worked for the charity, he helped hundreds of people fight for what they are entitled to.

We are lucky to have known him.

We have also sadly lost Everton supporter, **David Price** (*right*), who had volunteered for us for 8 years as a driver and also for some time, as a 1:1 befriender. He was a kind and unassuming man, who led a rich and fulfilling life, while also adding value to the lives of our clients. He helped dozens of clients get to our classes and clubs over the years. The Midlands' branch of the **Everton Supporters' Club** kindly donated **£175** to us in Dave's memory.



Join our **100 Club** for a chance to win cash prizes each month.

Visit [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) to raise money for us each time you shop online.