

Supporting Pamela through the pandemic



Pamela first had support from Age UK Solihull many years ago, benefitting from our **Winter Warmth** advice service. However, when the coronavirus pandemic began last year she realised she needed more support from us.

Pamela got in touch, and we arranged for **Volunteer Shopper**, Katrina, to go shopping for her once a week. We also paired her with **Telephone Befriender**, Danielle, who calls her regularly for a chat. Pamela celebrated her **90th birthday** during lockdown, and Danielle dropped a cake (kindly donated by **Fountains Care Home**),

a card and some flowers to her doorstep. This was the first time the pair had seen each other, and Pamela was delighted to put a face to the voice.

Most recently, Pamela has been taking part in our **Digital Champions Project**, where another volunteer, Monica, rings regularly to help her learn how to **use a tablet**. Pamela is delighted to be **learning a new skill**, and she is enjoying **keeping in touch with her grandchildren** by email.

Pamela is grateful for the help she receives and says, “My **whole wellbeing** is centered around Age UK Solihull”. We are so pleased to be able to make a difference to Pamela’s life.

Pictured: Pamela and her son with her 90th birthday cake after it was delivered by Danielle.

Friendship on the phone

Our face-to-face befriending visits have had to be suspended due to the pandemic, but we have stepped up our **Telephone Befriending** calls to continue providing social contact for older people, who might otherwise not speak to anyone all week.



Lynsey (*left*) joined Age UK Solihull as a **Telephone Befriender** near the beginning of the pandemic. She was matched with Christina, and she calls her for a chat every week.

Lynsey enjoys her phone calls with Christina and says, “It’s **lovely** to hear about her life and how she’s keeping herself occupied.”

Lynsey says that over the past year, her

relationship with Christina has gone from a “functional checking in” to a **real friendship** where they ask after each other’s families, discuss their worries and anxieties and make each other laugh.

Christina* says that Lynsey is a “**a delight to talk to** and feels like a sister – no, a daughter – to me. She is **awesome** and despite being so busy with her own life and family, she still has the time to **speak to me**. She has **kept me alive** during this depressing time we are all going through.”



Lynsey hopes to continue volunteering after the pandemic, and Christina can’t wait to see Lynsey in person when face-to-face visits restart.

**Model used for photo of Christina*

Raise funds while you shop

Whenever you buy anything online – from your weekly shop to your annual holiday – you could be raising free donations for Age UK Solihull with **Easy Fundraising**. There are over **4,000 shops and sites** on board ready to make a donation of up to 15% of what you spend and it **won’t cost you a penny extra** to help us raise funds. Sign up at **www.easyfundraising/org.uk**, select **Age UK Solihull** as your chosen cause and start shopping!



Go to **www.ageuksolihull.org.uk** for information on our services.

Acknowledgments

We have continued to receive fantastic support from so many people and organisations, including:

Ardenlea Care Home

Asda Parkgate

Baron Davenport Charity

Birmingham Business Park

Capitol Mobility

Countryside Properties (South Midlands)

C P Barbers

Eastcote Park

(The) Edgar Lawley Foundation

Edwardian FC

Encore Café, The Core

(The) Eric W Vincent Trust

Fountains Care Home

George Henry Collins Charity

Grace Academy

(The) Grimmitt Trust

IMI

Jaguar Land Rover

Ken Barrett

Knowle & Dorridge Ladies’ Circle

Knowle & Dorridge Rotary Club

Legal & General

Marston Green Primary School

Mayoral Charitable Fund

(The) May 1961 Trust

Mill Lodge Primary School

National Grid

OneStop, Hatchford Brook Road

QS Davisons (Solicitors)

(The) Roger and Douglas Turner Charity

Saqib Bhatti MP

Solihull Council

Solihull School

St Augustine’s School

Tesco Bags of Help

Waitrose Solihull

We’re All Making a Difference Charity

(The) William A Cadbury Charitable Trust

Bag a bargain or declutter your life



Our two charity shops are busy preparing to reopen after Easter. If the government’s roadmap goes to plan, our **Castle Bromwich** shop will open on **Monday 12 April**, and our **Hobs Moat** shop will open on **Wednesday 14 April**. We’re looking forward to welcoming you back! **Good quality donations are welcome**, so if you’ve been having a spring clean declutter, you can drop your unwanted items to either shop (please note the Shirley Age UK shop is not ours).

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

events@ageuksolihull.org.uk (Fundraising)

volunteering@ageuksolihull.org.uk (Volunteering)

Website www.ageuksolihull.org.uk

Social Media

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Age UK Solihull Newsletter Issue 18 · Spring 2021

newsletter

Eastcote Park Care Home · Coronavirus Update · Befriending · Local business and community support

We’ll be back soon!

In line with the Government’s Roadmap out of lockdown, we are planning the reopening **of our vital services**.



We are hoping to reopen our **Community Advice Hubs** in late May, recommence one-to-one **Befriending** visits in May/June, and restart our **Postural Stability Exercise Classes** in June.

However, timings may change due to updated government guidance, so please keep an eye on our website **www.ageuksolihull.org.uk** and our social media **@ageuksolihull** or telephone us on **0121 704 7840** for up-to-date information.

Whilst we await the reopening of our face-to-face services, we remain open by telephone. See our services contact details overleaf.

Joe thanks his volunteers for their support

The past 12 months have been difficult for everyone and we have been warmed by the **feedback** we have received from **grateful clients**.



One such client is **Joe** (*left*), an 88 year old widower and former journalist, who has benefited from **telephone befriending** from **Laura** and **weekly shops** from **Helen**.

Says Joe, “I have a designated shopper who takes my order for supplies of food and brings them to the door of my home every week. She even took the generous step of taking me to the surgery where I received my vaccination.

“And once a week I am called by another volunteer to **enjoy a chat and relieve the gloom of days in isolation**”.



Laura (*left*) was halfway through a counselling course when the pandemic struck and was keen to work with older people, having had experience of grandparents in the

family with dementia. Joe was her first client as a new volunteer. “Chatting to Joe each week **gives me a lift too**. We talk about the news, but also talk about happier times in our lives and **keep each other positive**. We’ve all needed someone to off-load to during all the madness and talking to Joe has been very **rewarding**. He is a lovely man”.

Helen (*right*) was also a new volunteer. She’d thought of becoming a volunteer for some time, having seen posters at the Red Lion, looking for volunteers for our Wednesday Lunch Club before lockdown. When the pandemic struck, she instantly wanted to do something to **help older people** and approached us for a role and began volunteer shopping for Joe and another client in May 2020.



Joe echoes the thoughts of many of our clients, “I am **grateful** for all the help I receive and that, I feel sure, will be a sentiment shared by all the recipients of the charity’s generous measure of **goodwill and support**.”

Local charity | Local services | Local people

Registered Charity Number: 1055887



Pass it on! If you have a printed version of this newsletter, don’t throw it away after you’ve read it. Why not pass it to a friend to read or leave it somewhere in the community (but don’t litter!) for someone else to find?

Our egg-cellent partnership with BBP



For the third year running, **Birmingham Business Park** have collected donations of Easter Eggs from their occupiers, stakeholders and **Marston Green Junior School** for us to deliver to our clients. We are so grateful for the **86 eggs** collected by the Business Park, plus more kindly donated by our sponsor, **Eastcote Park Care Home**. They are sure to bring some Easter cheer.

Poinsettias and chocolates at Christmas, fundraising from their **home-farmed honey**, **festive wreath-making kits** for our clients and

OneStop helps stop the cold



To begin our new partnership with the Hatchford Brook Road store, **One Stop** kindly donated **£3,600** towards **emergency heaters** during the Winter, as well as donating **£1,000** towards our **Covid relief appeal**. They will be

National Grid provide electrifying support

National Grid, whose offices are close to ours on Homer Road, have also continued to support us throughout the pandemic.



An employee-led **Community Focus Group**, led by Chantelle Bogira, has made over **2,700 welfare calls** to older people who are feeling isolated or anxious.

These calls have provided a friendly chat, and helped pick up on any further support needs.

Calling all knitters (or those who want to try)



Our 2021 **Big Knit** campaign is truly underway! Now in its 18th year, the campaign asks supporters to knit little **bobble hats** to go on the top of **Innocent Smoothie** bottles. The target this year is for us to submit **8,000 hats**. For each one you send us, **Innocent donates 25p**. So with your help, we could receive **£2,000**, which would support our services to older people here in

sponsorship of Online Quizzes are just some of the other ways in which **Birmingham Business Park** have supported Age UK Solihull during its two-year partnership. The partnership has been extended into a **third year**, due to the limitations brought about by the Covid restrictions last year.

Park Development Manager, **Liz Allister**, is leaving the Business Park to begin a new venture in May. We are sad to see her go but wish her **all the best** and thank her for all she's done over the last three years.

Pictured: Easter eggs collected by Birmingham Business Park, at our Olton Lunch Club in 2019.

working with us throughout 2021, joining in our campaigns and activities as part of their community partnership programme.

Pictured: Lorraine Hart, Fundraising Manager, with Lisa Harvey, OneStop Manager and one of her customers with the new heaters.

Chantelle says that the calls are the **high point of the day** for the colleagues as well as for the older people. Two members of the team have found it so **rewarding** that they've joined us as **Telephone Befrienders** on a more permanent basis.

Other recent support we've received from National Grid includes an **online fundraiser**, donations of **food parcels & PPE, hamper bags** for our clients at Christmas, and a **£1,500 donation** to fund **10 tablets** for our **Digital Champions Project**.

Solihull. Patterns are available from our website at www.ageuk.org.uk/Solihull/big-knit or email events@ageuksolihull.org.uk and we'll send some to you. We've already posted off over **4,000 hats** and you have until **1 October** to send any more into us at **The Core, Solihull Library, B91 3RG**. Can't knit? Why not make 2021 the year to learn this new skill? Even if you only knit a few hats, every one we receive will make a difference.

Shop through smile.amazon.co.uk to raise money for us each time you shop with Amazon.

Jas and Ian take to the skies!



Two of our supporters, Solihull Radio's **Jas Rohel** and **Ian Lewis** from Solihull Council, have pledged to take the leap this year and raise funds for us by taking part in a **tandem skydive**. So far, they have raised a combined total of over **£1,300** which will make a huge difference for local older people.

If a skydive is something you would like to tick off your bucket list, why not sign up to do one this year in aid of Age UK Solihull? You can choose any weekend, and if you raise at least £450 you can jump for free! The airfield has Covid precautions in place, but if restrictions or weather conditions prevent you from jumping on the day, it can be rearranged. Find out more at www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull/parachute-jump

Key dates for your diary



Big Knit Hats

Submit by **Friday 1 October**

www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull/big-knit



Online Virtual General Knowledge Quiz

Tuesday 4 May Book now at:

www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull/quiz-night



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

Tuesday 15 June

Wear **purple** and donate to virginmoneygiving.com/fund/weaad2021



Online Virtual General Knowledge Quizzes

Tuesday 13 July & Tuesday 12 October

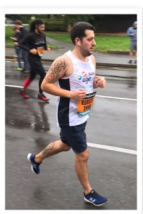
Booking details to follow.



Slip into Slippers

Friday 1 October

Wear **slippers** and donate. Details to follow.



Great Birmingham Run

Sunday 10 October

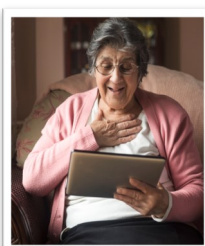
Details to follow.

Win cash prizes!



Join our **100 Club** to be in with the chance of winning **cash prizes** every month, while raising vital funds to help older people in Solihull. It costs just **£24** per year to be entered into our monthly draws. To find out more, visit www.ageuk.org.uk/Solihull/100-club, email events@ageuksolihull.org.uk or leave a message (we'll call you back) on **0121 704 7842**.

Let's get digital



Recent research by Age UK found that nearly **2 million** over-75s in England are still **digitally excluded** in a Covid-19 world. We have started a new **Digital Champions Project** to help local people get online. **Volunteer Digital Champions** are matched with a local resident to help them learn to use a **touchscreen tablet**. Clients have been learning how to use **emails, online shopping, video calls, registering with their GP practice, ordering prescriptions, Solihull Library online services, Google Maps** and **searching for information** online.

We applied for **five tablets** from the national **Age UK** charity and these have been given directly to clients. We also have a partnership with **Solihull Council** who have provided **ten tablets** for a **loan scheme** as a pilot project, and the generous funding from **National Grid** bought **another ten** for us to **loan to clients**. So far, **ten clients** are being supported with the new tablets, and **two clients** with a tablet they already owned. Many of them have been feeling **isolated** or have **mobility problems** and they have been very **grateful** for the opportunity to use the tablets. To find out more please email catherine.gulati@ageuksolihull.org.uk or call **07397 718 455**.

Want to fundraise for us? Email events@ageuksolihull.org.uk to discuss

With thanks to our sponsor:

Eastcote Park
Luxury retirement village and care home

Located in the heart of England, close to the village of Knowle and just 4 miles from Solihull, Eastcote Park offers luxury retirement living in a community setting.

Opening Spring 2021, this brand-new development comprises 34 high specification 2-bedroom luxury apartments together with exceptional private amenities and extensive resident services and offers so much more than traditional retirement developments.

A state-of-the-art luxury 50-bedroom care home providing residential, dementia and respite care will also form part of the community at Eastcote Park, thereby offering the reassurance of care and support if required.

Take a tour of Eastcote Park
Call now to book your private tour of Eastcote Park including the superb communal facilities and luxury care home. Tel: **01564 758325**

www.cinnamoncc.com/eastcote

Eastcote Park, Knowle Road, Eastcote, Solihull B92 0JA

Sad losses

It has been an extremely difficult year, with many of us unexpectedly **losing a loved one** during the pandemic.

The team at Age UK Solihull was devastated to lose another of our colleagues when Hubs Team Leader, **Martin Wood**, sadly passed away in January. Martin previously worked at the Citizens Advice Bureau in Solihull and came to Age UK Solihull in 2019.

The team were also saddened to hear of the passing of **Brenda Lyon**, who had volunteered with the Fundraising Team since 2014. She was a kind and gentle lady who lit up our office every Friday in her support of the charity.

Our thoughts are with everyone who has lost a loved one and also with those who have experienced other personal losses during the pandemic.

If you have lost a loved one and would like to create a tribute page for friends and family to post their messages to them, you can set one up at muchloved.com. You can choose to have in memory donations made to us here at Age UK Solihull if you wish, which helps us help others in future.



Could you be an Age Angel?

We need to raise **£1.6m** each year to run our services, and we couldn't do that without supporters like you. Our **Age Angels** make regular donations to help us continue helping older people in Solihull. Just **£5.00 a month** could enable us to

send a Befriender to provide company for a lonely older person. For more information about becoming an Age Angel, visit www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull/age-angels



Age Angels illustration by **Meghan Allbright**