



**Happy Springtime to all our Volunteers! It's 2021 and welcome to the 3rd Edition of our Volunteer eNewsletter dedicated to you our amazing volunteers who are so important to us.**

**We have been living with the pandemic for nearly a year now and it has not dampened your spirits - instead, you have shown incredible patience and resilience. Our volunteering team has grown, providing the extra support that we have been able to offer older people.**

**The current delivery of the Coronavirus vaccines has provided light at the end of a long tunnel. With the recent Government roadmap outlining the resuming of services after lockdown, we too are eagerly anticipating the reopening of our services over the next few months.**

**Everyone's experiences of volunteering with us have been individual and here are some of your volunteering stories that we would like to share with you all.**

## FARNHAM HOSPITAL ACTIVITIES

Age UK Surrey has been delivering activities to elderly patients at Farnham Community Hospital since November 2014. Run by volunteers, it gives patients the opportunity to socialise and join in activities of their choosing, for example, quizzes, reminiscence exercises, crafts, games, singing and occasionally chair-yoga too.

The activities are designed to help boost confidence, encourage people to chat and provide mental stimulation. A consultant reported: The activities offered boost our patient's morale and act as a prompt for on-going communications between patients.

The volunteers usually visit weekly but unfortunately, the pandemic has meant visiting has had to be suspended during lockdowns. Age UK Surrey has worked closely with the hospital to ensure that when the volunteers were able to go in, they had additional training so that they could protect themselves and others while adhering to hospital Covid guidelines.

Sally, the lead volunteer for hospital activities with her team of volunteers were last allowed to visit the wards in

Farnham Hospital in early January this year. They make such a difference to people, especially those who have no or very few visitors. One of the elderly patients they met was very upset as she was so lonely as she was recently widowed and worried about her future. She was grateful to have someone to talk to.

## LEAD VOLUNTEER SALLY

Sally and her team of hospital volunteers say that volunteering at the hospital has been an absolute privilege.

**"Like most people one finds oneself wanting to give back to the community. It came naturally and felt right"**

"My mother suffered from Alzheimer's disease so I came into the role with some experience and knowledge of what to expect. There is no pressure from anyone, therefore

I can be myself and chat freely with the lovely elderly patients to my heart's content."

The majority of the patients welcome the team of volunteers warmly. Some are maybe a little more apprehensive of their presence but it does not take the volunteers long to make the patients feel comfortable once they explain the purpose of their visit.

"Clearly some patients do require more assistance with some of the activities e.g., quizzes and certain board games but always we manage to engage the group fully. We are obviously pleased that patients that we have connected with over weeks are well enough to go home – but you can't help feeling sad to say goodbye".



"I am keen to resume these sessions once the pandemic has eased and we are finally allowed back into the wards". As Covid-19 cases continue to fall we hope that Sally and her team of volunteers will be back on the wards soon.

## PLEASE SAVE THE DATE Summer Party on 13th July

We look forward to seeing you at a wonderful venue we have reserved to celebrate summer, to socialise and to personally thank you for all the support you have given older people.

## 10 YEARS OF GO50 WITH CLIVE

Clive, was a financial advisor for a leading bank before retirement and is currently the leader of GO50, a programme which aims to introduce people aged 50+ to a healthier lifestyle and the benefits of regular exercise. Socialising as one exercises adds significantly to the benefits. GO50, we are excited to announce, will be reopening fully from July – updates will be on the website and via email.

**"Walking with Age UK Surrey, there's no better way to keep healthy and enjoy the glorious countryside with like-minded friends."**

Some of you might recall that Clive led an hour's walk around the vineyard and hills before our Volunteer party

at Denbies in 2019, not just for physical activity but to better appreciate the beautiful scenery. Clive has walked throughout the pandemic, when allowed, from duo walks to groups of six. Clive and the Walk Leaders are supporting the "return to being active" after restrictions are lifted, allowing our clients to connect to nature in our spectacular Surrey - and in bigger groups.



Thank you to Clive and his team for their support to help our clients benefit mentally, socially and physically from walking! So, raise your glasses as we not only celebrate Clive's ten years of leading walks and also the return of the GO50 Programme in July.

## THANK YOU, EVERYONE

Thank you for continuing to keep in touch with clients, who can now with lockdown being lifted, look forward to enjoying again the social aspects of our services. Each Service Manager will be in contact with you as soon as Government Guidelines allow us to recommence our Community Activities and face-to-face Home Visiting.

Thank you to the **Tea and Chat** and **Café Culture** volunteers who will be able to resume sessions, once venues are permitted indoor hospitality. **GO50** Walkers are determined to lead their clients out of 'lockdown lethargy' and back to activity in nature, blowing away those Covid cobwebs.

Thank you to all our new and existing volunteers who have stepped forward to help with our **Volunteer Shopping** and **Check in and Chat** services. As restrictions start to relax, **Befrienders** will be able to visit their clients again. **Hospital Activities** will resume too, augmenting patients' morale and mental stimulation.

Our **Information & Advice** team are supporting their clients over the phone. Our **Digital/Computer Support** team are manning the Digital Helpline and will be resuming their direct support of clients as well. Announcements will be made about **Men in Sheds** and **Haslemere Lunch Club** soon.

A huge thanks to our **Admin, Marketing, Help at Home** and **Finance** volunteers who have been incredibly supportive throughout the pandemic and have helped us with phone calls and database work – your efforts are so appreciated by us all – Marion in Volunteering and Jenny and Sally with the Help at Home work, thank you.

The dates for the reopening of all our services will be announced in the coming weeks, subject to Government guidelines. Volunteers are vital to us and we will keep you fully informed of timings as appropriate. **Without you we couldn't do what we do so effectively; a big thank you!**