



**Hello and thank you to all our volunteers for an incredible 2023 which saw older people in Surrey supported in so many ways thanks to your phenomenal efforts. Your achievements included over 19,000**

**hours of volunteering time in 2023 – thank you everyone for every single hour. Wishing you all another successful year of supporting older people with the valuable time you give to Age UK Surrey!**

## Breaking news – Sue to retire

Sue Zirps, CEO, “I guess retiring comes with mixed feelings and my decision to retire has certainly done that! I have worked for Age UK Surrey for the past 30 years and I can honestly say that almost every day has been a pleasure with no two days ever the same! When my daughter was 4 (she now has her own children of 9, 7 and 5) and going to nursery school, I spotted an advert in my local paper for someone to set up a Home Help Service in the Haslemere area. I started off with a desk and a phone in the middle of a huge office which was actually the Doctor’s flat right up in the eaves of Haslemere Hospital!

I have enjoyed many different roles in the organisation, gradually taking on additional responsibilities. I have worked with so many different people over the years which has been a joy (mostly!). I have seen so many changes in staff, many changes in service offerings and huge changes in obtaining funding. Years ago, it was relatively easy to get funding from local authorities and from trust funds and it was far less of an issue than it is currently and has been over the past 10 years.

At times it has been rather like being on a roller coaster but that is the nature of working for a charity! ... I was reflecting on the challenges people face in later life and if they have changed. Some people have always been lonely and isolated, but it was not talked about years ago, so it is a good thing that we recognise it and talk about it now and try to help connect people with their local communities. ... The biggest change I think I have

seen is with home care packages which were readily available 30 years ago and much of the service was provided directly by the local authority as opposed to being contracted out to agencies. It was easy for people to get support then whereas now the criteria are such that it is extremely difficult as funding is so tight.



I leave the organisation in a good place and in the capable hands of Diana Bignell who will take over as Interim CEO until someone is appointed to a permanent position. We have a very dedicated and committed team of staff and volunteers who are highly skilled and experienced. I am sad to be leaving and will really miss everyone but wish the organisation the very best for the future.” **Thank you Sue from us all for the support you have given to older people these past 30 years. Sue will retire on 31st March.**

## PLEASE SAVE THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY

**You are invited to our Summer Party on Wednesday 3rd July 2pm at Denbies Wine Estate.**

**A Go50 Walk is offered from the Denbies entrance at noon around the beautiful estate.**

**We will be sending you an RSVP at the beginning of June and hope you will join us.**



## Vintage Retail Stores

Thanks go to all our shop volunteers at Haslemere, Lingfield and Esher shops who excel at displaying, making sales and assisting customers. Their contribution ensures smooth running and the takings support our work. **Jennifer, Athena, John, Kate, Liz, Ros, Sarah & Sue** to name a few, and to all of you in retail, thank you.

## Clockhouse Happenings

Thank you to our Clockhouse volunteers and staff who recently welcomed the **Chancellor** to The Clockhouse community centre. Jeremy Hunt found out more about The Clockhouse Cafe, the array of activities on offer including The 10-3 Club, as well as the wider range of services Age UK Surrey provides across the County.



Thanks to all our amazing volunteers who modelled and supported before, during and after the **Vintage Fashion Show** which raised £1051.67 for Age UK Surrey.



Our thanks to **Sandra**, who although describes the Clockhouse as her 'lifeline' is actually a big help to us. Sandra lost many friends and colleagues when she retired but now says "I have a Clockhouse full of friends; both volunteers and clients". Sandra attends Bingo sessions and Balance exercise classes besides being on the fundraising committee. Sandra also volunteers by being a host and making visitors feel welcome. Thank you, Sandra and all our other friendly volunteers who help clients feel part of our community centre.

Thank you also to our caring volunteers **Ann and Lesley** and others who help with The 10-3 Club who are on hand all day to provide support and care.

Thank you to all our volunteers for making the time to attend or view our Safeguarding Refresher training presentation. This is vital for us to keep up to date on best practices and reporting procedures and identify areas of concern so we can support those who are vulnerable.

A huge thanks to **Belinda**, for her can-do attitude and willingness to undertake anything sent her way. A special thank you too to **Anne W** who diligently organises the weekly transport rosters at The Clockhouse and for always being willing to step in when we are shorthanded.



A special thanks also goes to **Jean Spencer, Carol and Wendy**, as well as **Ros and Mike** of Tech Support, all of whom give so much of their time to volunteering in many different ways!

## Men in Sheds

We would like to thank **Anthony B, Stuart, Anthony W** and **Peter** for all the support you give to the staff **John** and **Chris** in supporting our Men in Sheds clients in Merrist Wood College, Worplesdon.

## Go50 Walks Programme

Thank you to our dedicated Go50 Walk Leaders who are leading walks all over Surrey – **Clive, Eryl, Grant, Rosemary**, and **Steve** and thank you to our Health Walk Leaders, **Jill, Tim** and **Graeme**. Thanks to their commitment and enthusiasm we are able to offer an active walk programme which introduces older people in the 50+ age group to a healthier lifestyle with the added benefit of socialising with others as they exercise. **Clive led 62 walks in 2023 and we celebrated his 500th Go50 walk** with cake midway through the walk!



## Information and Advice

Thank you to our remarkable I&A Volunteers – **David** and **Paul** who do a lot of work with our clients and **Valerie, Richard, Barbara, Judy, Mary, Martyn, Lynne and Veronica** who diligently visit our clients in their homes and help them with their claims for assistance and benefits and producing all the paperwork for processing working with the staff, helping us help more people who contact our Customer Service Team.



## Wellbeing/Befriending Volunteers

Thank you to all our incredible **Befrienders** who go above and beyond to support those they have befriended; **Debbie** takes pancakes & cake for her clients' birthdays; **Tracy** visits her client who has since gone into a Care Home. **Fred** visits his client in hospital, and so many of you go in weekly to clients' homes and be the friendly and familiar face they look forward to seeing. Thank you, **Howard, Gill Amanda, Hannah, Andrew, Robert, Pauline, Anna, Kimberly, Lynne, Carol, Caroline, Catherine, Cheryl, Christopher, Colin, Mark, Natasha, Neil, Peter, Debbie, Emma, Frances, James, Jim, Kate, Kim, Sarah, Simon, Teresa, Uma** and many others.



We have a phenomenal team of **Telephone Befrienders** throughout the County who support clients in towns and remote rural areas with a weekly friendly call and much anticipated check-in and chat. **Andy, Demi, Eleanor, Hanna, Judi, Juliet, Angela, Ann, Barbara, Rikki, Sam, Brendon, Carole, Charlotte, Claire, Mary, Danielle, Jacqueline, Tamsyn, Myles, Vincent, Oscar, Jennifer, Jessica, Lyndsey, Pauline, Sophie, Susan** are some of our star telephone supporters.

Befriending, both at home and over the telephone represents over half of our entire volunteer team for Age UK Surrey. With word of this popular service spreading, we have clients registering weekly, so thank you!

## Volunteer & Wellbeing Admin

**Michele** (Wellbeing) and **Marion** (Volunteering) received Outstanding and Long Service Awards respectively at last year's Summer Party (pictured with our Chairman). They cover all the administration for our database of over 800 clients and volunteers to the highest standard. Age UK Surrey were audited this month, and our records were examined in the minutest detail and passed – so a big thank you! Michele also calls clients and monitors their relationship with their befrienders and Marion completes the telephone references for new volunteers.



## Social groups in the community

Thank you to **Jenny and Clive** for leading Café Culture in Farnham. They even ran sessions in The Plough in Farnham throughout the Christmas and New Year period for those who might be without friends or family. Thank you **Alan and Fiona** in Café Culture Cranleigh who very kindly teamed up to take on the challenge when John passed. They have also offered to hold Community Talks, advising older people how they can be supported in later life as well as scams awareness tips.

Our generous volunteers bring everyone into the Oxted Bluehouse Centre, twice a month for activities and crafting and even occasionally a Singalong. Thank you, **Melissa, Doreen, Lesley, Caron, Harry and Ruth** for giving your time. **Karil and her team** too offer amazing support in the community of Lingfield with their monthly Tea and Chat sessions and annual Christmas special.



## Farnham Hospital Visiting

**Penny and Sarah** received their well-deserved Outstanding Awards. They are part of a team that visits patients in Farnham Hospital bringing smiles to the faces of those recovering from strokes and injuries. New team members will be joining them soon after their NHS briefing. A very well done to **Sally** and the team for their year-round kindness and warmth to the Hospital patients.



## Tech Support



**Zoe and John** (pictured with our Chairman and CEO) received their long service awards at last year's Summer Party. They are a part of the Tech Support Team who help older people understand how to use Technology.