



Co-ordinator's Report 2015

Fellow volunteers and friends, welcome to our AGM. I'd like to give a special welcome to our friends from our sister organisations in Redbridge and Ongar and Villages.

Copies of LVC's undertakings for the year have been circulated and show the usual pattern of visits to hospitals, clinics and surgeries. These show a slight decrease on last year. You will also see that there is a marked increase in the number of transport requests cancelled by the clients or the hospitals, often at very short notice, which might have a bearing. I very much regret that we were unable to find a driver on 20 occasions.

The use of the escorted shopping service, in contrast, shows a considerable increase, as does the take-up of clients to weekend social activities. LVC now has 3 drivers who have passed the Midas minibus test and the cost is shown in the accounts; this will be offset over 3 years which will make the enterprise more cost-effective. The social activities comprise the St. Michael's tea party and, new for 2014, the monthly fish and chip lunch set up in partnership with St. Mary's Church and ably run by Carol Campbell. Many thanks to her for making this the success it has become. We did not run the midweek outings to Finchingfield or Van Hage; the take-up in 2013 was disappointingly low and it may be that concentrating on the regular opportunities for social interaction would be a better option for clients.

The number of clients befriended on a regular basis increased slightly and I would like to thank Yvonne Rudkin for all her efforts in this area, not least in forging partnerships with Meals on Wheels, Essex Social Services and the Community Nurses at Rectory Lane. Yvonne has found that clients are not so interested in being visited in their own homes as in being taken out of the house. This proves difficult, especially in view of the transport requests which we are unable to meet.

In November 12 volunteers attended the dementia awareness working lunch and which resulted in a number of sensible guidelines to improve our service. I'm delighted that Gillian Males, from Age UK Dementia Connections has agreed to be our speaker tonight.

In June Loughton Methodist Church provided an office for our sole use, located upstairs. I would like to thank Rev Oseias Da Silva and the congregation for their continuing support and for this display of confidence in and appreciation of our work. There has been a problem throughout the year with staffing the office. I would like to apologise to volunteers for the times when the office was closed and also to thank those Duty Officers who have done many extra shifts.

I was invited to talk to the clergy involved in Churches Together in Loughton in May to update them on our work and to explore possible future partnerships.

On the financial side we are grateful to EFDC for their continuing support and also to St. Mary's Church for their very generous donation of £750.

From October to Christmas fellow volunteer Laura Watson, her friend Liz and I undertook an online course looking into social isolation among older people in Loughton. This included talking to over 100 residents about their experience and how they would like it to be better. As a result we came up with 3 suggestions which are displayed. Whilst there is no substitute for direct face-to-face interaction, people were interested in finding out more about online interaction, particularly in regard to keeping in touch with family and friends. In February, with enormous help from Barclays Bank, Loughton, we held a pilot for the Silver Surf Club, a fun, social event to familiarise older people with the use of iPads. This was a great success with over 20 people attending and we are looking to roll it out on a regular basis. The Loughton based Hasler Foundation has given £150 towards this project and a bid has been put in to Anglian Community Enterprise for 6 iPads. At the same time, we piloted the second project – The Silver Service Taxis. Recognising that we cannot provide drivers for the social activities which would make such a difference to clients' lives, this is a "nudge" campaign to encourage local commercial taxi firms to provide the same care and attention to older clients that LVC does. So far Mayflower Cars has come on board for this. Our third idea of the Silver Phone Pals has not yet been taken forward.

In February we were awarded a grant from Loughton Town Council for our own website which we hope will attract more volunteers and inform families of our services. The website is now under construction and I would like to thank the Council for its generosity. In 2014 LVC gained publicity in the old-fashioned way by taking part in the Debden Days in June and December, Love Loughton Day in July and the Farmers' Market in September.

In 2014 eight new volunteers (five drivers) joined us and I'm glad to see some of them here tonight. Sadly some have retired due to health or family commitments and I wish them well. In particular two committee members Jean Wardle, our Vice Chairman, and Brenda Bryant are stepping down; both have served for 20 years and we shall miss their experience and wisdom. I am sorry to report the death of Eric Spielman, still volunteering at 92. Eric was the friendly voice of LVC in the office over 20 years of Tuesdays. We also lost John Haffenden, a cheerful and conscientious driver for several years. In February we were saddened to hear of the death of Rev. John Price our founding Chairman. Then in June Ivy Moore who was a Duty Officer for many years and retained an interest in our work up to her death.

In addition to the usual call for drivers, visitors and duty officers we now need volunteer mentors for the Silver Surfer Club. Additionally more management expertise on the committee would enable us to build on our successes and drive the projects we have. Yvonne is standing down as Befriending Section Leader, although I'm glad to say she will continue to serve on the committee. We also need volunteers to lead the Escorted Shopping project and the Silver Surf Club.

It goes without saying that LVC can only function because of its volunteers and I thank all of you for the part you play. May you all carry on enjoying your volunteering for a long time.

Janet Thomas

19th March 2015