AGM Speech 2020

When I sat down to write this report it was difficult for me to think back to before March this year when social distancing deep cleaning and hand santitising became part of our routine.

The year 2019 started very well for me as I had a period of extended leave to travel to New Zealand. The staff team supported by the trustees did a magnificent job whilst I was away for a month. I don’t think they hardly noticed I was gone!

In April we had over 40 clients attending for 76 sessions over the 4 days. This did decline as the year went on and generally over the last few years attendances have not been as high as previously.

The largest percentage of clients attending were the over 90s, our oldest lady being 100 this December. The second largest group was at the other end of the scale the 65 to 75. Generally these clients have had or are waiting for a diagnosis of dementia when we come into contact with them.

Only one client throughout the year was supported by WCC the rest paying privately, although they may be in receipt of direct payments which we are not aware of.

The number of clients who attend to give respite to carers makes up the largest number of those attending with those living alone making up the remainder.

The Centre continues to offer a wonderfully welcome to older people and provide an opportunity to socialise in a friendly atmosphere with a routine that most find comforting. The staff give excellent support to the clients, finding out about hobbies and activities that have been enjoyed and linking sessions to these. It is important to have meaningful activities. Linda continues to lead the seated exercises, a music and movement session of about 20 minutes held at least twice a week. New things are tried as well as old. Music is a big part of the day and our new friend in the room the device called ALEXA really helps with this.

I cannot praise the staff more highly for their flexibility and they are to be commended on their length of service, the shortest employment is now 3 years with our cook heading the list at over 25. I have been fortunate to have worked alongside Helene our administrator for over 10 years now. She has been an excellent support to the trustees and myself.

Our partnership working with the Burrow Nursery and Pre- School in the later part of 2019 was really fantastic. Mims Blackburn acted as staff liaison for this and the connection between the 2 groups was so good to see. It was every bit as good as the TV programmes depicting a similar partnership working. It is so sad that this has had to be put on hold for the foreseeable future.

The commitment of our volunteers is excellent the drivers, befrienders and kitchen help. They work well alongside the paid staff and lend that additional support and add to the atmosphere. I will just mention Alan Wood who sadly died recently. He gave many years to volunteering driving to Waverley. A true gentleman in every sense.

Our chief fund raiser Jean did us proud again at the Lights Switch On raising over £600 for the charity and is bust thinking of ways of fund raising this year in a different climate. Our variety of room hire group have been most supportive this year the first to offer tombola prizes and also first to buy tickets

My thanks go as ever to the board of trustees admirably led by David Lansdowne. My good wishes go to the trustees who are standing down especially Tony Dalton who has always been very supportive.

Who would have thought that this financial period would end as it had begun with me on extended leave again due to a national lockdown, not quite the same as site seeing in Singapore NZ and Hong Kong and on furlough with the rest of the staff team. The pandemic has touched us all and greatly affected that face to face contact and the physical contact that places such as Waverley thrive on. It does remain to be seen what the future holds for gatherings such as ours. WCC deemed us to be COVID secure and did comment on how our compliance did not feel clinical and we had still retained that homely welcome. So it all remains positive.