

## Age Concern Update- August 2020



Hello all,

Please find an update about Age Concern Todmorden.

### **AGM**

We were due to hold our AGM in September. This is not going to be something we will be able to do safely in person. Our client group tend not to use zoom or similar, so we do not feel an online AGM would be accessible enough for our clients. Therefore, the AGM for 2020 is cancelled. The Charities Commission will be informed, with the reason as Covid-19.

The Trustees will decide in Spring about a new date.

Many people like to attend our AGM to find out what we have been doing. We produce an Annual Report every January for the Abraham Ormerod fund. They awarded us three years of funding from 2018-2021 of £15,000 per year to replace the money we lost from no longer being an Age UK. We would be happy to share the 2019 report with anyone who would like to read it and will ensure everyone receives the 2020 report when it is produced.

### **Update**

Age Concern Todmorden has been open and operating throughout the pandemic, ensuring older people in Todmorden always know they have someone to turn to. From March to June we primarily operated as a lockdown support organisation, trying to ensure people had food, prescription and were staying safe. Once it became clear that most people would be ok for essential food supplies, we focused primarily on being a source of clear information and reassurance, and friendliness during what has been a deeply stressful and lonely time. As many of you will have similarly experienced, this was for many a frightening and isolating period, and more so when your vulnerability (though age and health conditions) means you are more susceptible. Being cut off from loved ones was particularly devastating for many.

We have continued our daily drop in by phone, so people always know they have someone to talk to. We have had many enquiries requiring information, assistance, and reassurance. We are proud of the fact that the office was shut for only one day since the lock down was announced. We have done our best to always have someone at the end of the phone, and we have even welcomed people into the office when it was impossible to assist via phone.

Working from home, Stella has conducted over 300 wellbeing calls. Conversations have been everything from a five minute check that people are safe, imparting useful information (such as which local shops are open), giggles about hairstyles sprouting, and some calls turn in to hour long chats to help relieve worry or isolation. We have had some good laughs, but tears too.

A huge part of this pandemic has been the lack of clear information- older people in particular are far less likely to be online- and people have been left confused and stressed about the advice and options available. We created a number information sheets, letting people know about local organisations and services and how they can help, different food

and shopping options, and ways to keep well at home. This information has been distributed by volunteers to hundreds of people.

Thanks to weekly donations of food from Morrisons our volunteers have been able to make up 260 food parcels including the information sheets and delivered them to Roomfield House, Roomfield Court, Ridgefoot, Yew Tree Court, Stanley Cryer Court and Hallroyd area. For some people, that doorstep chat was their first conversation with someone else in person for weeks.

We have distributed activity packs of quiz and colouring books and acted as a book swap when people ran out of reading material.

Our 'Portraits on Our Doorstep' project has been highlighting awareness of older people in lockdown- 23 people have had their photograph taken for an exhibition at Todmorden Information Centre, which we know many people have enjoyed.

We featured in a large article and ongoing campaign by Yorkshire Post about the state of buses in Yorkshire.

## Currently

As some of you may be aware, we have had to move to an appointment system to ensure social distancing and the time to clean between clients. Stella is in the office Wednesdays and Fridays, but otherwise working from home- only one staff member can be in the office to maintain sufficient social distancing when we have clients. We are currently focusing on office appointments and phone calls to help with day to day issues such as council tax queries, applying for flats, TV licence, utility bill help, blue badge applications etc. Stella completes admin and wellbeing calls.

## Future

What we do as winter draws on is currently unclear. The lunch clubs are very unlikely to restart until next spring, as are m/any other social activities we hold. Stella will expand the wellbeing calls in winter when people start to become isolated once more, and we will work with people taking them out individually as a way of building confidence. However, if anyone has any ideas or come across other initiatives then please let us know! We want to ensure people are resilient, confident, and connected. However, it is difficult to know how to do this and reduce isolation when there will be little opportunity to bring people together.

Our finances will also be a concern. We would ask that you keep us in mind for any donations.

Thank you all, we hope you are keeping safe and well.

Alexandra, Sarah and the Trustees.

