2018 Our Year in Numbers

1,920 new older people joined us

6,470 older people
- 59% over 80 years
- 20% over 90 years
- Average age 82

22,600 hours of volunteering, worth £230,000

4,082 driving and escorted shopping trips

192 befriending matches
- including 88 new matches

66 gardening and DIY jobs

192 dedicated volunteers

3 groups for people with dementia

192 befriending matches
- including 88 new matches

24 groups, meeting 756 times over the year

7 local schools supporting us

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1/ These are our figures for the financial year ended 31st March 2018.
2/ We have based this sum on the London Living Wage Value of £10.20 per hour.
We are pleased to present our fifth annual impact report, which demonstrates the difference Link Age Southwark has made to the lives of older people, our volunteers and the wider community in Southwark this year.

2018 is our charity’s 25th birthday year, and we want to take this opportunity to honour two key figures from the early days: Ted Salmon, the first Chairman of Dulwich Helpline, and Reverend Bruce Stokes, the first Chairman of Southwark Churches Care (the two charities which combined forces in 2012 to become Link Age Southwark). We are sure that in those early years, neither could have imagined that in 2018 we would be regularly supporting almost 650 older Southwark residents or that so many people from all sections of the local community would be playing a part in realising our vision of friendly, vibrant local communities where older people thrive.

It’s been a year of both sadness and successes for the volunteers, older people, supporters and staff who make up the Link Age Southwark family. The sadness was saying goodbye to our Honorary President, Tessa Jowell, who has supported the charity since the very earliest days of Dulwich Helpline. She showed such characteristic fortitude during her illness and we will miss her greatly.

Our successes have included: delivering on the second year of our expansion programme; running 24 exercise and activity groups; matching more befriending relationships than ever before; and our amazing volunteers clocking up a massive 22,600 hours supporting the older people of Southwark. The icing on the cake in our birthday year was to receive the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service. This award was created by the Queen in 2002 to recognise excellence in voluntary activities carried out by groups in the community. It is described as ‘the MBE for volunteer groups’. What a fabulous testament to all that our wonderful volunteers do.

Nothing stands still and it’s also been a year of beginnings and endings. Ruth Driscoll has taken over from Gemma Juma as the charity’s Director and in October 2018 Katharine St John-Brooks stood down after seven happy years as the charity’s Chairman, handing the baton on to Caroline Havers. 2018 also marks the end of over fifteen years occupying offices in Dulwich Community Hospital. The site is being redeveloped and our new HQ is at Dulwich Grove United Reformed Church.

Here’s to another 25 years of making Southwark a great borough to grow old in!
Link Age Southwark is a vibrant local volunteering charity with an impressive track record of supporting older people to thrive in later life. Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organisation and they and our small staff team have been helping make Southwark a better place in which to grow old since 1993.

We recruit, train and manage volunteers to deliver services to older people across the London Borough of Southwark. These services reduce isolation and loneliness, improve people’s quality of life, their physical and mental health, and enable older people to live independently in their own homes for as long as possible. Our services are free to everyone over 60 and people with dementia who live in the London Borough of Southwark. The average age of the people we support is 82. Our volunteers come from across Southwark and beyond.

We pride ourselves on being rooted in the local community, and on working to deliver our values in all that we do. Through our connecting communities model, we harness the energy and enthusiasm of volunteers and local organisations across the Borough to create a vital connection between older people and the communities in which they live.

Our Mission and Vision

Link Age Southwark’s vision is of friendly, vibrant local communities where older people thrive.

Our mission is to help older people stay connected with their communities, alleviating loneliness, improving health and wellbeing and making communities stronger through volunteering.

Our Values

**WE ARE POSITIVE**
We bring joy, vitality and warmth to every setting we enter.

**WE HAVE A ‘CAN DO’ ATTITUDE**
We encourage everyone to share their unique skills, talents, passions and experience with each other.

**WE ARE ALWAYS CONNECTING**
We know that connecting with other people is critical to everyone’s wellbeing.

**WE RESPECT EACH INDIVIDUAL**
We see the person, not their age, and always truly listen to the person in front of us, seeking to understand their point of view.

**WE ARE NOT ALONE**
We work in strong partnerships and link older people with our volunteers, and with other services which will help them and their communities thrive.

Some Facts

**Dulwich Helpline** was set up as a joint venture between St Barnabas and Dulwich Grove United Reformed Church run completely by volunteers.

**LINK AGE SOUTHWARK** was founded 25 years ago as two separate charities (Dulwich Helpline and Southwark Churches Care) which merged in 2012 and became Link Age Southwark in 2015.
Our work alleviates loneliness and isolation, supports people to maintain their independence, brings together members of our community, improves people’s health and wellbeing, and helps to create a happier and healthier society.

We have enabled 440 volunteers to support 647 older people this year, up from 407 volunteers the previous year. The average age of the older people using our services is 82 years. 20% of them are aged over 90 and 59% are over 80 years old. 45% of the people using our services are from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups.

We have made significant progress in expanding our services this year (the financial year ending 31 March 2018). We have matched 88 older people to a volunteer befriender compared to 60 matches made the previous year, an increase of 47% in a single year. This brings to 192 the total number of befriending relationships we support. We have launched two new social groups, bringing to 24 the total number of exercise and activity groups our charity offered in community settings across Southwark. Our exercise and activity groups met 756 times over the course of the year, compared to 657 times the previous year.

How we work

- We receive referrals from GPs, other health professionals, social workers, charities, older people themselves, and from their friends and family.
- Our team of experienced staff assess older people in their own homes and connect them to services and activities provided by Link Age Southwark, our volunteers and other partners.
- We provide a volunteer befriending service, matching isolated older people with a friendly, trained volunteer to visit them once a week.
- We run regular exercise and activity groups in community settings, ranging from Bridge to Yoga, from Singing to Reminiscence, and many more.
- We provide volunteer and wheelchair-accessible transport to ensure older people can access activities outside their homes.
- We work with local schools, linking generations together to share and develop new knowledge and skills.
- We provide practical support including light gardening and odd jobs so that people can live independently in their own homes for as long as possible.
- We have a specialist programme of activities for people with a confirmed diagnosis of mild-moderate dementia and support for their carers. This includes peer support, reading and music groups especially designed for people living with dementia.
- We work in strong partnerships with other local organisations across the Borough, putting the needs of older people first in all that we do.
Southwark is a thriving London borough with a growing population. The need for our services continues to increase as the number of older people living locally grows, and more of them live alone. There is particularly high demand for our services amongst people aged over 80, people living with dementia, and older people with mobility problems who find it difficult to get out and about in the community.

- **35,600** people aged **over 60** live in Southwark.
- **Over 9000** people **over 65** live alone in the Borough.
- The number of older people living alone in Southwark is projected to increase by **11,000** by **2033** and the increase will be largest amongst the **over 75s**.
- **1846** people have a confirmed diagnosis of dementia in Southwark, and this number is rising year on year.
- Southwark is ranked **sixth highest** for loneliness amongst people **over 65** out of 32 London boroughs, and **13th highest** out of 326 local authority areas nationally.
- There are **1.2 million** chronically lonely older people in the UK as a whole.
- **Half a million** older people go at least **five or six days** a week without seeing or speaking to anyone at all.
- **Two fifths** of older people say the television is their main company.
- Chronic loneliness is a health risk factor comparable to tobacco, alcohol and obesity. It increases the risk of heart disease and stroke, premature death, depression and dementia.
- The number of older people living in deprived households in Southwark is the **7th highest** in England and poverty is closely correlated with loneliness.
- **19%** of Southwark’s older population is from BAME groups and research indicates problems of ‘hidden loneliness’ amongst these groups.
- Lonely people are more likely to visit their GP, enter residential care early, and use A&E independent of chronic illness.
- It costs the UK economy **£26 billion** a year to care for people with dementia.
- In a recent survey of people living with dementia and their carers in Southwark, more than **60%** of respondents wanted access to better support including befriending, information and advice, training and awareness-raising.

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\[3\] Age UK ‘No one should have no one’ (2016).
\[5\] McDaid, Bauer and Park, ‘Making the economic case for investing in actions to prevent and/or tackle loneliness: a systematic review’ (2017).
\[8\] Mental Health Society ‘The Lonely Society’ London (2010).
\[11\] NHS Southwark Clinical Commissioning Group ‘Improving dementia services in Southwark – engagement results 2015-16.’
Dee, Courtney and Chris

“They are a lovely couple” laughs Dee, when talking about her befrienders, Chris and Courtney. “I wouldn’t have chosen anyone else and I’m not just saying that because they’re here!”

Courtney is originally from New Jersey and works as a social worker. She met Chris, a lawyer, while they were both working in New York. They moved to South London together and once settled into their new home decided to look into volunteering. They read an article about Link Age Southwark’s befriending scheme and decided to give it a go.

They were introduced to Dee in February and have been visiting her once a week ever since. They have quickly built up a great relationship and it is clear to see that Dee is thrilled to have met them. “You’re not having them back” she says “and don’t you dare let them go with someone else!” “All very good for the ego” laughs Courtney.

Dee doesn’t leave the house very often, so Chris and Courtney accompany her on short walks to the local park. More importantly, they chat and laugh together. Dee has a great sense of humour and jokes that Courtney is only visiting her so she can lose her American accent and develop a cockney accent, just like hers!

Dee has always lived in London and life hasn’t been easy but she has lots of wonderful stories to tell. She lives with Mr Bud, her ten year old dog, and Zorba, her oriental cat, both of whom she clearly adores. She used to be a keen gardener and was very proud of the way she transformed her garden when she first moved in, with neighbours often coming to visit. Unfortunately her health no longer allows her to garden but she has recently tidied up her balcony, where she can now enjoy some outside space and watch the world go by.

Courtney thinks Dee was brave to agree to have a couple as her befrienders. Not everybody wants two people visiting instead of one. Dee however can only see the benefits, for example if one of them gets delayed or stuck at work the other can always make sure they are available. “They’ve also got a good system worked out” she jokes “they never both talk at the same time!”

Tessa Jowell MP accepts the role of Patron of Dulwich Helpline.

Southwark Churches Care reaches 50 volunteers.
The difference we make

We pride ourselves on being a small local charity that makes a big difference. We take time to understand the impact of our work. We have clear goals and a theory of change to help us understand what we do and why. We use a range of qualitative and quantitative tools and approaches to measure the changes that result from our work.

These include annual surveys, focus groups, independent

“The main difference that Link Age Southwark makes is helping me to feel better within myself, stronger and happy in many ways.”

“Link Age Southwark is a wonderful organisation that has helped a lot of people be less lonely.”

1996 Dulwich Helpline employs its first paid worker.

1997 Southwark Churches Care accepts volunteers from outside the church, including people referred by mental health services to build their confidence to go back to work.
evaluations, social return on investment studies, and monitoring of activities. We use the findings to improve our services and communicate to others about the impact of our work.

In May 2018, we surveyed the older people using our services to get their feedback on the impact our support is making on their lives. An independent specialist data company analysed the results for us pro bono and they were extremely positive this year. Our service users reported feeling less lonely and enjoying improved mental wellbeing as a result of the support we provide.

“90% are happy or very happy with our services.”

As a result of using our services:

“80% of our older members say they feel less lonely.”

“80% feel more positive.”

“77% enjoy life more.”

“69% feel better connected to their local community.”

“66% get out of their house more.”

“68% are better able to manage living in their home.”

*130 people returned the survey, which is a good response rate.

“1997 Dulwich helpline moves into offices in 108 Lordship Lane.”

“1997 Southwark Council Social Services takes over funding of Southwark Churches Care.”

Our gardening and DIY services were also extremely highly rated.
They are better connected to the local community, getting out more, and better able to manage living in their own homes.

The average number of services we are providing to each older person has almost doubled this year, up from an average of 1.6 to 3 services per person. The more of our services a person used, the greater the improvements they reported in all these aspects of their lives.

We are extremely proud of the difference we are making!

Using more of our services impacts positively on the likelihood of an older person feeling less lonely

We also asked people to tell us in their own words the main difference our services have made.

They spoke about feeling less lonely, fun and laughter with new friends, getting out more, experiencing less physical and mental pain, and feeling a renewed sense of purpose in life. Many of the comments expressed warm thanks to our volunteers for doing such an excellent job. We are extremely proud of the difference we are making!

97% say that our newsletter makes them more aware of helpful services and activities in the community

94% are happy or very happy with our groups

89% are happy or very happy with our parties

92% are happy or very happy with their volunteer befriender

81% are happy or very happy with our regular volunteer transport

82% wouldn’t change anything about our services

2000 Southwark Churches Care supports over 200 older people.

Our exercise and activity groups for older people are central to our vision of friendly local communities where older people thrive. The groups meet during the day in venues provided free of charge by community partners such as care homes, sheltered housing units, churches, libraries and pubs.

They are delivered by our dedicated volunteers, working alongside professional tutors if required. As well as offering activities ranging from exercise to reminiscence, from arts and crafts to bridge, music and more, the groups have a strong social dimension.

Each is a circle of local friends meeting regularly for conversation, often over a cup of tea. We offer a transport service to ensure no older person is excluded from attending our groups because they are disabled or have mobility problems.

More than 75 dedicated volunteer drivers offer a door-to-door service, and we also use a disabled-accessible community minibus to bring people to our groups.

This year, our volunteer drivers made more than 2500 journeys escorting older people to our groups, parties, and on visits.

“We all the volunteers who run the groups are thoughtful, informed and kind.”

“I have something to look forward to every week that gets me out of the house, and I have made many good friends at the different groups.”

2001 Southwark Churches Care becomes a registered charitable company.

2002 Dulwich Helpline is named “Southwark Community Services Group of the Year” by Southwark Civic Association.
to the shops and hairdressers. We are however struggling to recruit enough volunteer drivers to meet demand for this service, and would love to hear from you if you are interested in becoming a driver, or supporting the service in other ways.

This year, we launched two new groups, bringing to 24 the total number of groups we offered during 2017/18. Our new groups were an exercise group in Bermondsey and a mixed activity group in Camberwell. Our groups met 756 times during the year, which is a 15% increase on the number of group sessions held the previous year. 197 older people attended the groups and between them clocked up an amazing 4137 attendances over the course of the year.

We carry out evaluations of each group every two years to gather feedback from older people about the group to make sure it is meeting their needs and that we are providing the best possible service. This year, seven groups were independently evaluated.

“I meet more people and a wider range of people. I go out regularly and look forward to the groups. Life is more enjoyable and more fun.”

Dulwich Helpline works with 300 older people.

Dulwich Helpline becomes a registered charitable company.

2004 MAR 2004
evaluated and 47 group members took part in the evaluations.

The results of these evaluations were extremely positive. Group members told us they really enjoyed the social opportunities provided by the groups, including the chance to make new friends and have conversation with people, and that the groups motivated them to go out rather than staying indoors all day.

All the volunteers, both those leading the groups and the drivers, were highly praised for the activities they arranged and their caring and helpful attitudes.

Our most popular groups are those offering seated exercise and yoga and we now have ten of these in operation across the borough. The benefits of exercise for older people are well known. Many adults aged 65 and over spend, on average, 10 hours or more each day sitting or lying down. People who are active have a lower risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, depression and dementia, and exercise also reduces the risk of older people falling. The people attending our exercise groups reported specific benefits such as feeling less pain, moving more easily and sleeping better as a result of participating.

When asked how we could improve our groups, a small number of people requested additional volunteer support and more frequent sessions, but 85% of people felt the frequency of meetings was about right, and 87% felt we already provide enough support.

Overall, our groups are clearly achieving our aims of reducing social isolation and loneliness, improving people’s physical and mental health, and improving older people’s quality of life.

100% of group members said attending the group increased their energy and their social contact

100% felt that the venue was conveniently located

100% were happy with refreshments at groups where these are provided

95% of those who participated in the evaluation said that they had already or would in the future recommend the group if they knew someone living locally who could attend
Link Age Southwark’s newest group was launched in December 2017. Its members meet at D’Eynsford Sheltered Housing Unit in Camberwell every other Monday afternoon to enjoy a varied programme of activities.

Most of the members either live in the sheltered housing unit or on the D’Eynsford estate but the friendly group always gives a warm welcome to any new members from outside and they are made to feel comfortable right from the start.

The afternoon starts with a catch up chat over tea, coffee and fruit or biscuits before the members warm up with some gentle chair-based exercise. They then move on to the main activity of the afternoon which can be anything from singing to a quiz, poetry, craft, reminiscing, or listening to a guest speaker. One recent speaker recounted stories of working as a midwife for 36 years in Uganda.

The group is co-ordinated by our volunteer Jean who has a long-standing connection with Link Age Southwark. Jean’s involvement began in 1998 when she worked at James Allen’s Girls School (JAGS) running their Community Service Programme. She helped supervise the students’ befriending relationships with older people and hosted annual tea parties. Nowadays, these have become a regular fixture in the Link Age Southwark calendar, our Spring Party jointly hosted every year by JAGS and Charter School.

When Jean left the school in 2002 she became a volunteer with Dulwich Helpline (as it was then) helping with events, groups and driving. In 2008 she joined our staff team as Volunteer Coordinator, and since retiring in 2013, she has continued to be a great supporter of Link Age Southwark in many different volunteer roles.

Jean’s ideas, energy and enthusiasm are already much valued by the people at this group and we want to thank her for taking on the role and doing such a great job. One of the group members, Joan, said “I really enjoy it. It gives me something to look forward to.” Mary, who has also joined the group, said “I really look forward to coming to the group. It’s brilliant and I enjoy every minute of it.”
Our core service for older people is befriending, which we have been delivering for 25 years. In 2017, we were awarded a quality mark for this service following a rigorous assessment process by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations. This year, as proud holders of the Mentoring and Befriending Approved Provider standard, we have been working hard to ensure our service reaches more people, and remains of the highest quality.

When an older person is referred to us, a member of our experienced staff team visits them at home for a face-to-face assessment to fully understand their needs. We then carefully match the older person to a vetted and trained friendly volunteer living near their home. The befriending volunteer visits the older person at home once a week for a chat, outings or focused activities like playing board games or reading the newspaper.

This year, we have expanded our befriending service significantly. We matched 88 older people to a volunteer befriender during 2017/18, an increase of 47% on the number of matches we made in the previous year. This brings to 192 the total number of befriending relationships we have supported over the course of the year, a significant increase on the 141 of the previous year 2016/17.

This growth in the number of our befriending relationships is matched by a commitment to providing a high quality service. This year, 92% of people who have a befriender told us they are either happy or very happy with our service, which is exactly the same impressive score as we achieved the previous year.

We hope our volunteer befrienders feel proud of these results! “Befriending service is a life-saver!” “At least you feel that someone out there knows I exist. Sorry, but my neighbours are not very friendly.” “It is something to look forward to. It brings a nice feeling of what I could once do, listening about everything of everyday life and family.”

Research shows that befriending schemes have a positive impact on mental wellbeing and other benefits such as social life and connectedness to others, coping, confidence, independence, physical activity, and trust in others. The evidence also suggests that befriending may have greater benefits for very elderly people. “Never has it been more important to understand and to foster the resources of communities to prevent, delay or meet health and social care needs. Befriending can be effective and cost-effective in many ways and in a wide variety of circumstances. As Britain’s care system faces up to new economic challenges, there will be renewed interest in the roles that communities can play. Befriending is a key component.”

Professor Martin Knapp, Director, School for Social Care Research London School of Economics and Political Science
Ulina and Rhianna

One of the joys of our befriending scheme is the close friendships than can be created even over a short space of time. Rhianna has been coming to see Ulina and her husband for just over a year but it is clear that they have already formed a very strong bond.

“We love her so much” Ulina says, “She’s so lovely and really helpful and she’s always there for me”. In 2010 Ulina was taken into hospital to have an operation which left her needing lots of physiotherapy to regain her mobility. Although her husband was on hand to help, it was suggested that she got in touch with Link Age Southwark to make use of our befriending service so that someone could come to her home regularly and support her while her health improved. Rhianna works as a freelance film critic and was keen to fill some of her free days with volunteer work. She discovered Link Age Southwark at a local Christmas Fair and was introduced to Ulina. It is easy to see how their friendship has grown. Ulina has a real zest for life and so many interests, including playing the guitar, fashion design, singing and salsa dancing. She may not be able to do as much as she used to but her passion and determination are clear.

Ulina feels very lucky to have met Rhianna and the feeling seems to be mutual. “We talk about everything,” says Rhianna, “Ulina is very good at giving me advice and is always really positive, we love seeing each other!”

May and Bill

“I was always meant to meet you” says May about her good friend Bill. Ten years ago, Bill moved to Southwark from North London to be closer to his daughter and grandchildren.

After a career in the Army and later the Foreign Office he had retired and was keen to engage in some volunteer work.

He joined Link Age Southwark as a volunteer befriender and his wonderful friendship with May began.

May is truly inspirational. She has just celebrated her 100th birthday and a card from the Queen sits proudly in her living room. Over 40 people from the local community came to celebrate with her “and it is all people I have met through Link Age Southwark” she beams. Her energy and positivity are infectious and it is no surprise that she admits to “never really feeling my age.” May was only 65 when she sadly lost her husband but her warm personality has led to this strong network of friends who help take her to hospital appointments, bring her meals, drive her to lunches and even the local film club; although she laughs “the last time we went there I was the only one left awake because the others had all fallen asleep!” A few years after meeting May in 2009, Bill had a successful kidney transplant which he says gave him a new lease of life. Until recently he ran a twice monthly pub lunch group in West Dulwich and when asked why he would recommend the befriending scheme he says “its great fun, I’ve learnt a great deal and met an awful lot of people through it, it’s an enriching experience all round.”
In a recent survey of people in Southwark with a diagnosis of dementia, more than 60% said they wanted access to more befriending services and more than 40% wanted access to more group activities.1

Over the past five years, Link Age Southwark has developed specialist expertise in providing exactly this type of support to people living with mild-moderate dementia in the local community. Our dementia service is designed to reduce isolation and increase social interaction and wellbeing following a diagnosis. We support volunteer befrienders to visit people with dementia at home every week for activities such as walking, chatting, reading and playing games.

Our experienced staff run three social groups designed for people with dementia, offering a range of physically and mentally stimulating activities that are not only enjoyable, but also proven to slow the progression of dementia.

We also provide escorted transport, so that people with dementia who would ordinarily face challenges leaving the home setting are given the opportunity to experience our groups, parties and outings.

This year, we supported 124 people with dementia, up from 118 the previous year. We supported 43 befriending relationships for people with dementia, up from 39 the previous year. 36 people attended our specialist groups for people with dementia during 2017/18, an increase from the 30 people who attended them during 2016/17.

Link Age Southwark is a founder member of the Southwark Dementia Action Alliance in which we play an active role to help make Southwark a dementia-friendly community. We also hold regular Dementia
Friends Information Sessions, a programme led by the Alzheimer’s Society. This year, we helped 30 members of the local community to become Dementia Friends by running four information sessions.

“I learnt a lot more about dementia and am encouraged to find out more and spread awareness.”

Peer Social Group

Our Peer Social Group meets fortnightly at Dulwich Community Hospital and offers games and activities designed to be both mentally and socially stimulating.

The emphasis is on having fun and positive interactions between friends. A Social Return on Investment study by the Health Innovation Network for South London when the group first began found it delivered the following benefits:

- A reduction in loneliness and isolation
- A feeling of stimulation, including memory stimulation, more than if people remained at home
- An increase in wellbeing from having a sense of purpose and enjoying their time at the group.

Drawing on best practice in evaluating outcomes of support services for people with dementia, this year we asked attendees at this group six questions on the same themes as the original study to get their feedback on the group.

Here are some of their responses:

“The group lifts my mood and I enjoy the company and the activities.”

“It’s always lonely at home but the group makes me feel happier.”

“I like mixing with different types of people and to have company.”

We also asked carers and loved ones of people who attend the group for their feedback and they told us:

“My mum has always liked interacting with people. So thank you for bringing that back to her.”

“The activities enhance the quality of my mum’s life and ultimately help reduce our stress and anxiety levels as carers.”

This year, in collaboration with our community partners, our Peer Social Group has enjoyed a rich mix of activities including a theatre workshop, storytelling, gallery visits, movement and mindfulness sessions, a virtual reality experience, beauty therapy and a visit from a junior school choir.

‘NHS Southwark Clinical Commissioning Group ‘Improving dementia services in Southwark – engagement results 2015-16.’

Reading Group

In this popular fortnightly group members take it in turns to read aloud and discuss short stories and poems at Dulwich Library. The material is eclectic to appeal to all tastes and always leads to interesting conversations with members sharing life experiences. Some members are avid readers and others prefer just to listen and take it in.
Mary responded to an advert posted on the East Dulwich Forum asking local residents if they had a spare hour per week to befriend an older person in the community. Despite living a very busy and full life as an art lecturer, Mary thought “Surely I have an hour a week to spare” and so she went ahead and applied. Mary was later introduced to Barbara who has dementia.

The Link Age Southwark volunteering team took care to find a suitable match, and Mary says as soon as she met Barbara she knew “it was worth waiting for.” Barbara had been an art teacher and Mary has just become Head of Fine Art at the Chelsea College of Art, news which Barbara delighted in, because she herself had been a student there in the 1940s. This initial spark and coming together of interests and careers allowed a bond to grow and flourish and after that Mary visited Barbara every week at her care home for over a year.

Barbara said of these meetings, “We speak the same language, I don’t have to explain myself” which sums up the comfort and ease of the friendship they had.

Initially, during the first months of the visits, Barbara and Mary would spend time drawing together but after that they tended to chat about each other’s lives, current affairs and politics (Barbara at 92 still read the newspaper every day and liked to keep Mary on her toes!) and of course the shared passion that cemented their friendship – their love of art.

Barbara told Mary about her rich and varied past – her early childhood in India, the experience of being a young woman in Brazil, being a widow with three young children, teaching schoolboys in Hampstead, being a volunteer guide at the Tate Gallery and retiring to Dulwich. Barbara loved to hear what Mary did in her life between visits and she proudly kept Mary up to date with her children’s careers.

Mary enjoyed chatting to somebody of a different generation – she used to have interesting and lively chats with her father and in some ways her conversations with Barbara helped fill the gap left when he died.

Barbara died before this report went to print and we are grateful to her family for giving permission for us to publish this story in her memory.
Link Age Southwark is committed to working in close partnership with others to make Southwark a better place for older people and people living with dementia. We work with local businesses, charities, sports clubs, community groups, housing providers, the NHS and Southwark Council whenever we have the opportunity to make more of a difference together.

We are a proud member of COPSINS, the Consortium of Older People’s Services Providers in Southwark, which has been working together since 2012 to ensure that older people have access to services which help improve their quality of life, support their independence and promote their wellbeing.

We work alongside our COPSINS partners – Age UK Lewisham and Southwark, Blackfriars Settlement, Southwark Pensioners Centre and Time and Talents – to deliver high quality services, share expertise and best practice, and to ensure that together we have the best possible impact on older people’s lives.

We are also a member of the Campaign to End Loneliness, a nationwide network of organisations and people working together to ensure that loneliness is acted upon as a public health priority at national and local levels.

In our 25th birthday year, we launched our Ambassadors scheme, a group of high-profile figures living locally who have kindly agreed to help publicise our work supporting older people.

Link Age Southwark was born out of the local community and 25 years later, we are proud to have maintained our roots in this wonderful Borough.

With support from our community partners, we were able to arrange five fabulous parties and eight amazing outings for Southwark’s older residents. The trips were to Southwark Park to ride trishaws, the garden of one of our Patrons, Punk Me Up ceramics café, the Churchill Theatre to see ‘My Fair Lady’, Dulwich Picture Gallery and Lavender Fields in Surrey. Thank you for your generosity!

Link Age Southwark wins award for Best Impact Measurement at Southwark Stars Awards.
Learning between the generations

Link Age Southwark builds connections between different generations and builds on the assets, strengths and abilities of all ages. We believe that by sharing ideas and experiences, both younger and older people can learn from one another and build on their strengths and abilities in ways that benefit them individually, as well as the local community.

This year, we created a rich mix of opportunities for social interaction between older people and local school children. Six local schools supported this work through fundraising, holding social events, and sharing their digital skills with older people through our ever-popular computer clubs.

Students from Kingsdale School prepared our Christmas cards for older people and gave out our leaflets in the local community. Other schools hosted or contributed to wonderful social events including our Spring Party with JAGS and Charter School featuring homemade cakes, quiz, and music, and our forthcoming Gala Dinner at Dulwich College.

We also created opportunities for older people to share their life experiences and expertise with local schools by advertising opportunities in our newsletter, and arranging visits such as a talk on life during World War Two for the children of Heber Primary School.

Computer Clubs

The Alleyn’s IT club, which started in 2012, is a Link Age Southwark group which makes great connections across the generations. During the school term, Year 12 students volunteer on a regular basis to assist older people wanting to improve their IT skills. Following a cup of tea and cake, the students work with group members to tackle whatever technical problems they may have, be it with a computer, smartphone, tablet or other devices. Susan, who attends the group, says: “Any kinds of problems I have, they solve it”. Jervaine, a regular attendee, is very happy with the service they provide: “The children are passionate; they don’t make you feel silly if you’re having problems”.

Three of the volunteers at the group, Emily, Sam and Elizabeth, say that they enjoy the chatting and find that it “empowers those who come to the class”. Each volunteer gave a full 10/10 recommendation for others to volunteer, but they may find it difficult to get a place as the group is extremely popular with the students!

The teacher who runs the group confirmed that the social side of the sessions is as important as the skills sharing, helping to break any stigma of young and old communicating. With the kindness that comes with the personalised service the volunteers provide, it’s clear to see why older people have described the Alleyn’s group as “brilliant”, “supportive” and “exceptional”.

2017 | Link Age Southwark wins Charity of the Year at the Southwark Stars Awards
At Link Age Southwark, our volunteers are central to achieving our charity’s mission of supporting older people to thrive in later life. Our fantastic team of volunteers generously give up their time to help combat isolation and loneliness among older people by providing one-to-one support, helping at groups, doing office admin, ensuring our community fundraising goes from strength to strength, and much more.

This year, we supported 440 volunteers, a 10% increase on the number who volunteered with us the previous year. 192 of these were volunteer befrienders visiting an older person once a week at home.

49 volunteers helped to run our social groups for older people. Others did volunteer driving, gardening, odd jobs, office administration, fundraising and other roles. Together, they gave approximately 22,600 hours of volunteer time, which is worth over £230,000 when calculated using the London Living wage rate of £10.20 per hour.

We were especially proud to be awarded the Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service this year, which recognises excellence in volunteering groups. The assessors for the award told us: The vital work of our volunteers has an enormous and positive impact not only on the lives of older people, but also on their own lives. Every year we survey our volunteers to get their feedback on our service. This year 85 of our volunteers responded, which is a really good response rate, and they gave us extremely positive feedback on their experiences of volunteering with Link Age Southwark.

96% feel they make a positive contribution to their local community

95% would recommend volunteering with Link Age Southwark

88% are more aware of issues facing older people

76% feel an increased sense of belonging in the local community

75% are more confident in supporting older people

“The work your group does for the community was very much admired by the independent Assessment Committee, chaired by Sir Martyn Lewis CBE. We hope that everyone involved, and particularly your volunteers, feel immensely proud of the recognition that this Award represents.”

2017 Link Age Southwark is awarded the NCVO Quality Mark for our befriending service.
Charlene has been a fantastic support to the Link Age Southwark office this year. She has been volunteering for different charities in the local area for about six years, but feels that this position has been the most rewarding “because I feel like I’m doing something towards such a great cause.”

Charlene started volunteering as a way of giving something back to the community, “We take so much on a daily basis and it was time to give back.” She thinks that we all know an older person who could benefit from the services Link Age Southwark offers and has seen what a big difference volunteering can make to people’s lives. Her role in the office involves a range of tasks from inputting data to preparing letters. She is clearly enjoying the work and spending time with people she has met while working here and is also considering becoming a befriender at some point in the future. “I think the team here at Link Age has been very supportive in every way.”

Charlene has a day job working in retail, making it even more admirable that she is such a committed volunteer in her spare time. In terms of advice for others considering volunteering, Charlene has no hesitation in recommending our charity. “The important thing is to realise that you are doing it for a great cause” she says, “even if you are doing the smallest thing it’s going to result in something huge.”

Other volunteers say
“I feel as though I’m making a difference”

“I FEEL I AM MAKING A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE TO A PERSON’S LIFE AND THAT MAKES ME FEEL GOOD ABOUT MYSELF.”

“I look forward to my befriending visit and feel happy and uplifted when I leave as I think we get on well”

“I AM HAPPY WORKING AS A VOLUNTEER AND THINK LINK AGE SOUTHWARK IS VERY SUPPORTIVE AND WELL ORGANISED”

“Visiting an isolated elderly man for a chat and company makes me feel happy”
We’re always looking for people to help us by joining our large, diverse and dedicated team of volunteers from across Southwark and beyond. By volunteering your talents you will enrich your life and make a difference to older people in your community. Our team will match your skills, train and support you to deliver our volunteer roles:

**Befriending** – regular visits to an older person
**Driving** – helping older people get out and about
**Helping at groups** – making refreshments, running activities, and enjoying the company of others.
**Odd jobs** – assisting with light practical tasks e.g. changing a light bulb or hanging a picture.
**Gardening** – helping with tidying and other light gardening.
**Escorted shopping** – accompanying an older person to the shops.
**Fundraising** – leading or helping at our fundraising events to raise our profile and valuable funds.
**Office support** – either regular or one-off volunteering in our office.
**Remote working** – writing funding bids or case studies about our work, delivering training, designing our publications, writing copy, photography and illustration.
Whatever your skills, we’d love to hear from you!

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### Paul and Ronald

Paul joined Link Age Southwark as a volunteer back in February 1995. He is a volunteer befriender and a fantastic support to us with our fundraising and community awareness campaign, always happy to put on a Link Age Southwark T-shirt and look after a stall for us to let people know about our services and volunteering opportunities.

Paul says he really enjoys the fact that volunteering gives his life structure and a feeling of a purpose. “I also enjoy the fact that you get to meet various people from all sorts of backgrounds and walks of life which is a very interesting and positive experience.”

While volunteering with Link Age Southwark, Paul has learned a wide range of skills and also attended free training courses on safeguarding, bereavement counselling, wheelchair safety skills and IT.

Paul’s most valuable work has been working as a volunteer befriender to an older gentleman called Ronald, visiting him at home for a grand total of twenty years. Together, they formed our charity’s longest lasting befriending relationship until Ronald sadly passed away aged 91 in December 2017.

Paul visited Ronald in four settings, which met his different needs as his health deteriorated. During their many encounters Paul would listen to Ronald’s stories about growing up in West London and being called up to serve during WW2.

After the war, Ronald and his wife moved to South London. Paul started visiting him in 1997 in his home in Walworth soon after his wife had died.

Together, they enjoyed getting out into gardens and walking about and reminiscing until Ronald’s health meant this was no longer possible. Thank you to Paul for twenty years of service, and to Ronald’s family for kindly giving permission for us to feature this story.
Link Age Southwark has a strong focus on value for money. As a local charity, we recognise the value of every penny that is donated and every hour of volunteer time that is contributed to support older people in our local community.

Our income for the financial year ending 31 March 2018 was £409,071, an increase of 9% on the previous year. This included substantial grants from a wide variety of funders including the London Borough of Southwark.

We had an especially successful year in our applications for funding from trusts and foundations, which generated £57,740 more than in the previous financial year. We were fortunate to receive strong support from the local community including churches, small businesses, individual donors, members of our Patrons scheme, and Business Patrons.

We benefited from the proceeds of a variety of fundraising events and activities from cake sales to concerts, parties and beer tastings. Our wonderful community fundraising volunteers had their best year yet, including a particularly successful Big Give Christmas appeal. With careful budgeting, we were able to use these funds to continue growing our services and developing our organisation.

As well as recruiting more volunteers and providing more services for older people, we created one new post on our small staff team towards the end of the year. Overall we spent less than anticipated due to delays in recruitment and in moving to our new offices. Our total expenditure was £360,828 in the financial year 2017/18.

“We were fortunate to receive strong support from the local community including churches, small businesses, individual donors, members of our Patrons scheme, and Business Patrons.
Finance and fundraising

Income and Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Financial year ending 31/3/18</th>
<th>Financial year ending 31/3/17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>£409,071^1</td>
<td>£375,481^2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>£360,828</td>
<td>£346,555</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 £6,055 of this income was restricted income carried over in our accounts to be spent in 2018/19.
2 £37,570 of this income was restricted income carried over in our accounts to be spent in 2017/18.

How we raised it^3

- Community fundraising events: £67,508 (17%)
- Donations and other voluntary income: £75,559 (18%)
- Grant income: £140,440 (34%)
- Funding from Southwark Council: £123,250 (30%)
- Bank interest: £2,314 (1%)

How we spent it^4

- Older people’s services: £341,597
- Fundraising: £19,231
- Total: £360,828

3 Income by source 2017/18.
4 Expenditure by category 2017/18.

Our charity continues to grow sustainably to meet local demand, and Trustees have set a budget for 2018/19 with a turnover of £404,500 and new ambitious but realistic fundraising targets. We are focused on securing grants from a range of trusts and foundations, growing our individual donor base including through our Patrons scheme, increasing our income from community fundraising, and seeking continued statutory funding from the London Borough of Southwark.
Freya

Freya signed up to volunteer with Link Age Southwark after reading an online article about loneliness amongst older people. She says, “I wanted to be more involved with my community and help people in some way. It is very easy to get caught up in our own lives and forget that there might be someone next door in need of support.

I have lost all my grandparents and had become aware that one of the biggest social issues in the elderly community is loneliness. I researched and found that Link Age Southwark was doing a fantastic job to eradicate this problem in my borough and I knew I wanted to volunteer with them.”

Freya is now a dedicated member of our Fundraising Committee which meets regularly to plan our community fundraising events and activities. Freya has organised some fantastic events for us this year including our All That Jazz concert with music from the talented pupils of The Charter School, Dulwich College, JAGS, Kingsdale, Dulwich Prep. She also organised our Sunset Soirée summer party which this year took place in the beautiful gardens of Bell House in Dulwich village.

“I enjoy knowing that in some way I have helped to improve someone’s life. It may be small or indirect sometimes but there is great satisfaction in raising funds for a charity so that they can continue to do their fantastic work.

She has no hesitation in recommending our charity to others interested in volunteering in Southwark: “I have learnt that although you go into volunteering usually with the intention of helping others, it can also really help you. Not only does it give you great personal satisfaction, you can also make some new friends and meet fantastic people.”

Freya has found volunteering with Link Age Southwark rewarding, inspiring and fun! “You get to help others and give something back to the community and at the same time the experiences can sometimes take you out of your comfort zone which is fantastic for personal development.”

We are extremely grateful to Freya for all her hard work raising vital funds for Link Age Southwark this year.

““I enjoy knowing that in some way I have helped to improve someone’s life. It may be small or indirect sometimes but there is great satisfaction in raising funds for a charity so that they can continue to do their fantastic work.”
Thank you

To our funders
The London Borough of Southwark
The Arthur Foundation
Borough, Bankside and Walworth Community Council
Camberwell Community Council
The Charles Hayward Foundation
The Clothworkers’ Company
The Dulwich Almshouse Charity
Dulwich Community Council
East End Community Foundation
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The Sibell Foundation
Southwark Charities
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The Wakefield and Tetley Trust
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The Worshipful Company of Actuaries

To our Business Patrons
Digitab
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Michael O’Mara Books
Myla and Davis
SE Magazines
Southwark Brewing Company
Suzanne James
WaterBear Design
And to our business patrons who wish to remain anonymous.

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Tony & Sue Wadsworth
Helen Watson
Andrew & Catrin Waugh
Tom & Brenda Wells
John & Barbara Wheen
Simon White

And to all our patrons who wish to remain anonymous

To our Ambassadors
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Angela Spence
Dr. Joseph Spence
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Edmund de Waal

To our partners and supporters
Abbeystfield House, Herne Hill
Age UK Lewisham and Southwark
Alan (Kurly) McGeachie
Alley Park Garden Centre
Alleyn’s Head Pub
Alleyn’s School
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Emily Thomas
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Eva Arnold at digital-roots.co.uk
The Fox on the Hill Pub
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KETRA (Kingswood Estate Tenants and Residents Association)
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Kingsdale School
Kingswood House
Knight Frank
Kulwant Bola
Lambeth Ladies Choir
Lew Evans House
Lime Tree House
The Lordship Pub
Love My Human, Chelsea
Maisie Chan
Majestic Wine, West Dulwich
Manuel’s Italian Restaurant
Mara Sculpture
Marilyn Harper
Michael Brooke, Simon Smith and Michael Brooke Architects
M&S Lordship Lane
Nikki Young
Oddono’s Gelati
Olley’s Fish Experience, Herne Hill
Padraic Walsh
Patchwork
Paul Ewen
Paxton Green Surgery
Pearspring, East Dulwich
Pembroke House
Platform 1, East Dulwich
Push Studios
The Real Greek, Dulwich Village
Rigby & Mac
Ristorante Olivelli, Dulwich
Robert and Jenny Park
Rocca, Dulwich Village
Roger Pope, Dulwich
Romeo Jones, Dulwich Village
Rosemary and Crawford Lindsay
The Rotary Club of Dulwich & Peckham
Sarah Lockwood, K&L Gates
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South London Gallery
South London Music
Southwark Cathedral
Southwark Library Services
Southwark Pensioners Centre
St. Barnabas Church, Dulwich
St. Clement with St. Peter, East Dulwich
St. James’ Cloister
St. Mary’s Church, Nunhead
St. Stephen’s Church, Dulwich
Stephen Hendon and Neil Ellis
Susan Jackson
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Tesco Southwark
Therapy Beauty, East Dulwich
Thirdway
Thirsty’s
Thomson Reuters
Time and Talents
Tomlinson’s
Tracks Publishing
Treethorpe
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United Reformed Church, East Dulwich Grove
Village Books, Dulwich
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Wylie Monkey
People

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Juanita Fan
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Nicholas Merriman QC
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Mary Woodman

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(as of 1 October 2018)
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Jennie Linnett – Senior Volunteer Co-ordinator
Hilary Payne – Senior Service Co-ordinator
Melissa Kent – Volunteer Co-ordinator
Gemma Kern – Service Co-ordinator
Sue Yeomans – Service Co-ordinator
Saira Quli – Dementia Service Co-ordinator
Robert Larkin Frost – Operations Co-ordinator
Cynan Williams – Volunteer & Services Officer
Laura Fitzpatrick – Fundraising & Marketing Officer
Louise Lear – Freelance Assistant to Director
Pamela Saunders – Freelance Bookkeeper
Anne Williams – Freelance Dementia Service Assistant

Thank you to
All our tutors, to our volunteer drivers, administrators, office support, befrienders, gardeners, fundraisers, DIY-ers, designers, donors, and to the older people of Southwark for making this such a wonderful place to live!
For 25 years we have been providing friendly volunteer support to older people across Southwark, reducing loneliness and isolation, improving health and wellbeing, and supporting people to live independently in the community for as long as possible. Our friendly and diverse volunteers connect communities in ways that enable older people and those living with dementia to thrive in later life.

www.linkagesouthwark.org
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Registered Company No 05189161
We are so grateful to our volunteers, David Grant who designed this report, Polly Birrane who produced the case studies and photographs of people in them and Lottie Manz Smith who took other photographs for this report!

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