



Annual Report

April 2016 – March 2017



With thanks to our funders and supporters



439 Wilmslow Road, Withington, Manchester M20 4AN
Tel: 0161 434 9216

ASSIST Neighbourhood Care

Who we are...

Email: withingtonassist@gmail.com
Web address: www.withingtonassist.org.uk
Registered Charity No: 1062675

Management Committee

CHAIR

Libby Spencer

TREASURER

John Dolan

SECRETARY

Brenda Barnett/Robert Nicholls

Other Members

Jacqueline Kirkby
Malvyn Paris
Geraldine Yorke
Brenda Barnett
Margaret Redhouse
Pip Cotterill
Salle Dare
Pat Ford

MEET OUR STAFF TEAM

Judith Bridgehouse



Project Manager

Debbie McGowan



Cook

Amelia King



Project Support
Officer

Volunteers April 2015 – March 2016

Barry Ashbee
Stephen Attree
Noreen Barlow
Brenda Barnett
Joana Carvahlo
Pip Cotterill
Jenny Courtney
John Crocker
June Critchley
Danny Daly
Salle Dare
Elisabeth Diamant
John Dolan
Faith Escreet

Asif Hassan
Patricia Ford
Eleanor Holland
Sara Jaspan
Baharak Jooshandeh
Eleni Karakiogi
Eleanor Holland
Jacqueline Kirkby
Cal Lavelle
Peggy Lavelle
Ray Lavelle
Marlene McCarthy
Joyce Murphy
Robert Nicholls

Pattie O'Donovan
Malvyn Paris
Ruth Perrin
Humaira Quadir
Margaret Redhouse
Mousumi Sengupta
Michelle Shiel
Libby Spencer
Margaret Spiteri
Emily Standbridge
Brian Stephenson
Ellen Tomany
Dee Dee Vitty
Dawn Yarwood
Geraldine Yorke

Assist Chair's Report

Assist continues to work in partnership with Manchester City Council and other funders to provide much needed support to older people in Withington, as well as valuable volunteering opportunities for local people.

We now have to accept it as the norm that we operate within a very uncertain funding regime which means that staff and trustee time and energy has to be directed towards fundraising and sometimes away from service delivery. This is a difficult balance which we hope we manage effectively. We constantly review and monitor our budgets to ensure that we are only spending what we can afford to. We continue to be grateful for the increasing financial contribution made by our service users whose donations and bequests now make up an essential element of our funding.

Despite this and as this report shows, Assist continues to find ways to provide good quality affordable services which aim to support people to live happy, independent lives. This is mainly practical but also often emotional support. We understand how social activities such as the Tuesday club, Film Club, walks with the Rambling group and other events, and trips to concerts at the Royal Northern College of Music, really do enhance people's quality of life. We benefit from having a group of enthusiastic volunteers many of who find volunteering personally beneficial; enhancing their retirement or as a way of getting back into paid work. It is important to us that our volunteers feel valued.

I would like to thank our funders, including Manchester City Council and others who award us funds (recognised at the start of the report), as well as to Withington Methodist Church, our landlord. Thanks also to our co-ordinator Judith who, with Amelia and Debbie comprise our small staff team.

Assist relies on the time given freely by its trustees to ensure that affairs are properly run and I thank them for this. We have a small dedicated board of trustees but would welcome interest from others who feels they would have something to contribute.

Libby Spencer - Chair

November 24th, 2017

Assist Treasurer's Report

Firstly I would like to thank all the Trustees and staff at Assist for their continued excellent work during the year.

This, together with the volunteers' efforts and user generosity has enabled Assist to attain over 32% of its funding from sources other than the core funding by the council during this financial year. Despite the uncertain nature of its core funding, Assist manages to continue operating at the same level of service. Hopefully, if successful in the Our Manchester funding application, the next round of council support will be within a three year contract, which would give Assist the stability it needs to really thrive. Staff and trustees will then have the security and flexibility to apply for longer length, larger funding pots to support existing activities, as well as looking at ways to grow.

Libby Spencer, Acting Treasurer

November 2017

Report from Project Support Officer

Foreword

Assist had a successful year of fundraising to supplement our income from MCC. We were able to continue our regular activities, as well as adding two new ones (Ramblers and RNCM).

Financial Year April 2015 to March 2016

Happily, our funding from Manchester City Council through the Health and Wellbeing Grant was maintained again this year at the reduced rate, enabling us to cover staffing costs and office overheads.

Thanks to our team of dedicated volunteers, our service users continue to enjoy meeting friends, good food and the comfort of a warm, safe building every Tuesday at lunch, every Friday at Exercise Classes and each month for Film Club. The monthly Film Club which was set up using sponsorship money from Greggs, continues to be something our service users look forward to. Numbers have grown over the months to reach attendances of up to 30 local, older people, and has encouraged us to consider setting up a new monthly group such as a Tea and Talks activity or a regular coffee morning using the film club donations to get it going.

In addition to our regular activities, we have now introduced regular visits to the Royal Northern College of music, and piloted a Rambler's project over the summer months, which we hope to repeat next summer.

We have been successful in obtaining a number of small grants from a variety of sources including Adactus Housing, Simply Health and the local Authority. We also continue to benefit from the kindness and generous support of the Withington Methodist Church.

The first outing of the year was closer to home than usual, with 30 guests going for lunch at the Wythenshawe College Training restaurant. The food was excellent, and everyone enjoyed the change of scene. For those who were interested, lunch was followed by a short tour of the "Geodome," the College's new eco-greenhouse.



(Lunch at the Wythenshawe College Training Restaurant)

June also saw another wonderful session presented by the Singaporean Nursing Students, through Manchester University's Student Development and Community Engagement Division. Our thanks as always go to Kirsty Huchinson and Cath Foster, who facilitated the event. This year, our volunteers and service users were treated to a series of fascinating talks and a slide show about life in Singapore, and a delicious buffet was enjoyed by all.

Our annual seaside trip this year was to Lytham St. Ann's in July. We had lunch at the St. Ives Hotel before walking along the promenade and having a look around the local shops. Although the weather wasn't brilliant, we all had a lovely time and managed to catch a few rays of sunshine on the pier. Many thanks to all our Volunteer wheelchair pushers, who enabled some of our frailer members to get a breath of fresh sea air and enjoy a lovely afternoon exploring the town.



(Joan, Ruth, Emily and John, enjoying some refreshments in the town centre)



(The promenade wheelchair parade!)

In September we celebrated Kathleen and Thelma's 99th Birthdays with cake and a special performance from St. Cuthebert's school choir.

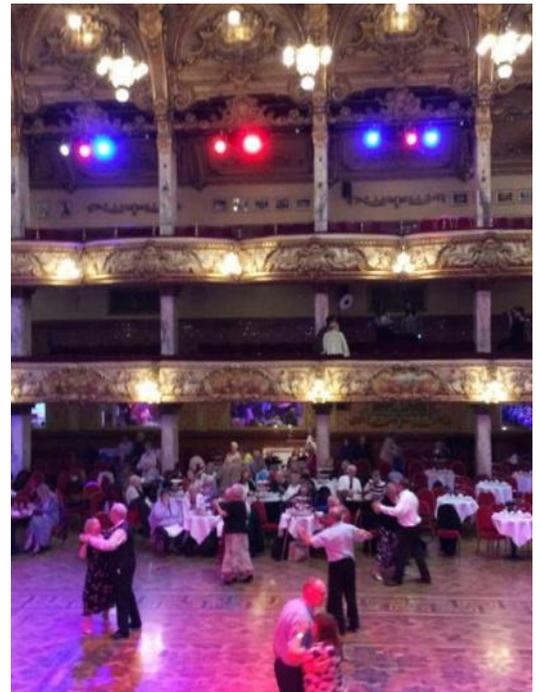


(Pupil from St. Cutherbert's presenting Kathleen with some flowers)

In October, 40 of us went to the Blackpool tower ballroom for afternoon tea and dancing. This outing was extremely popular, and we are hoping to repeat next year.



(Afternoon Tea and a shot of the dance floor)



In December we held a number of Christmas events, starting off with our annual Christmas Buffet. This year, we welcomed the Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, along with local councillors, local fireman, Volunteers, service users and trustees. Entertainment came in the form a raffle, carol singing from and service users received gifts from the fireman. On the 13th Tuesday Club met at the Hesketh Tavern in Cheadle for a Christmas Carvery, which was enjoyed by all, and as usual, we had a Christmas exercise class special with mince pies and cream for everyone.



(Exercise class goes enjoying mince pies)

Assist's Christmas dinner was held in the big hall, with all members welcome to share a lovely Christmas dinner cooked by Debbie.



(Tinsel, Christmas hats and crackers at the Christmas meal)



(Ruth's knitted dolls)



(Volunteers hard at work serving Debbie's delicious Christmas meals....)

Volunteers

We never underestimate the contribution of our volunteers to our service or take for granted their hard work, dedication and commitment. This year we had 42 active volunteers who provide befriending in the home, support for trips and outings, telephone befriending, assistance in the kitchen and serving meals, wheelchair pushing, mobility support, small errands, and help to make sure everyone is looked after at Tuesday Club, Film Club and Exercise Class.

Our aim has always been to reduce loneliness and isolation and we are proud to say that due to the activities we provide and the help of our volunteers we go some way towards achieving this.

It is a great honour to work with volunteers who give so generously of their time. For weekly support at Tuesday Club, thanks are due to John Crocker, Marlene McCarthy, Brenda Barnett, Peggy Lavelle, Ellen Tomany, Pattie O'Donovan, Joyce Murphy, Ray Lavelle, June Critchley, and Margaret Spiteri.

We are also very lucky to have 3 very dedicated volunteers who support about a dozen service users each, every week with their Telephone Befriending. We know this means a great deal to the recipients of their calls. Many thanks to our Telephone Volunteers, Elisabeth Diamant, Noreen Barlow and Dee Dee Vitty for their dedication and kindness.

Regular visits to service users in their own homes require great commitment and dedication from those volunteers who provide this wonderful service. Our grateful thanks, on behalf of those who benefit so much from their efforts, to Faith Escreet, Michelle Shiel, Dawn Yarwood, Marlene McCarthy, Barharak Jooshandeh, Humaira Qadir, Cal Lavelle and Jenny Courtney for their kindness and compassion.

This year, John Crocker has raised over £450 from his gardening work, but also continue to set up the room each week for Tuesday Club, Exercise Class and special events. John also supports us in the office by running errands, helping with wheelchairs and posting flyers. Many thanks as always to John for all his help, his opera singing and his reliability. Another 30 years please John!

Many thanks also to the management committee, who give their valuable time, knowledge and expertise in ensuring Assist remains financially secure and on track to keep providing invaluable support to the community, just as it has for the last 48 years.

And finally, we must also say a big thank you to Richard Kirkby, Building Administrator at Withington Methodist Church, who is always a great help when we have our activities and deals very patiently with us and is charming and helpful to all our visitors.

Our Service Users

We had 120 Service Users this year. They come to us in a variety of ways, via Social Workers, health care professionals, friends, family, self-referrals or people using Withington Methodist Church services and activities. People usually stay with our group until the end of their life or until they move into a nursing home.

Remembering those we lost 2016-2017

Pepe Galan, Roger Polley, Hasomati Raval, Brian Hallows, Neville Fletcher, and Margaret Geharty

Action on Hearing Loss

Since 2012, our service users have enjoyed the convenience of a monthly visit from Diane Whitehead and her volunteer Pam Johnson, from Action on Hearing Loss. They attend lunch club on the third Tuesday of each month to deliver a hearing aid maintenance and advice, usually seeing around ten people who would ordinarily need a trip to the local hospital Audiology department. This is a free, convenient service, and we can also refer people to Diane so that if they are unable to attend our group Diane can visit them their own homes.

Exercise Classes

Ruby Usher continues as our NHS trained facilitator who has led the classes for the last seven years and has tailor made them to suit each group. The first class is for people who are more mobile so she puts them through their paces and gives them a really good workout accompanied by uplifting music. The second, chair assisted class has a slower pace but still works all parts of the body to build strength and maintain flexibility and helps with Falls Prevention. As well as helping with strength and mobility, the groups are also a great way to meet new people and spend time with familiar faces in a fun and accessible environment.



(Exercises with stretch bands)



(Group shot of second class...)

RNCM

Trips to the RNCM allow people who find it difficult to get into town due to frailty and mobility issues to get to a free music concert and enjoy a lunch out supported by Volunteers. The RNCM very kindly allow us to book accessible seats and reserve an accessible table in the canteen, the Ring and Ride service collect people from their homes and drop off at the entrance, and the trips have proved very popular.

Film Club

Thanks to continued sponsorship from the Greggs Foundation we can still run our monthly Film Club, complete with ice cream and popcorn. Amelia and Geraldine and they are doing well with increased attendance and very positive feedback from the service users. Well done to both of them. Keep up the good work.



Ramblers

Over a 17 week people Assist teamed up with volunteer ramblers from the ramblers group. This enabled some of our service users who find it difficult to go for a walk unaided to enjoy some fresh air and green scenery with the help of their partner. We intend to run the project again next year.



“Something to look forward to during the week and something else to talk about with family and friends.”

“Realising that one is unable to go to the places that one went to even just the year before, for fear of falling, is very disheartening. Having somebody who can go along with you makes such a big difference.”

“The less you do, the harder it is to do anything. It’s so nice to have someone who can drive you to somewhere that you can’t normally get to.”

Monitoring

We keep records of all our activities, and submit quarterly monitoring details to Manchester City Council under the conditions of our funding from the Wellbeing Grant. We also complete monitoring/evaluation/receipts/accounts to all our other funders.

We also try to ensure that the service is providing customer satisfaction by talking to people face to face or over the telephone to ensure the services we can provide are what people actually want. We also receive letters and cards from service users and their families showing appreciation for the organisations work and the efforts of the volunteers.

And Finally....

Thanks to all our service users, volunteers and supporters, both corporate and private for their support during this year. It means a great deal to all of us that you care so much about Assist and continue to give your time and energy to helping us provide these much loved activities and services.

Looking to the future, we aim to increase befriending, recruit more volunteer drivers and introduce more, regular activities to meet increasing demand.

Amelia King
Project Support Officer

A very big
Thank You
to everyone who has been
a part of Assist during this financial year.



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