

Spring 2022

Health & Happiness

Ways to **feel good**
and **meet up** in
Reigate & Banstead



Discover the joy
of volunteering
Page 3



Keeping fit –
mind and body
Page 5



Meeting
new people
Page 6



Support for
mental health
Page 9

Dear resident

The arrival of spring brings with it a welcome opportunity for many of us to make new plans and maybe try new activities – while still keeping a watchful eye on the latest Covid-19 guidance.

As a Council, we work closely with local organisations to offer a wide range of activities and this magazine gives us an opportunity to share information with you about events and groups you can join and classes you can take up.

The last two years have been a difficult time, but I'm really hoping now could be the right time to try something new, to make new friends or to discover a new passion.

The Council's new-look community centres are featured on page 6 and aim to offer something for everyone, from classes to interest groups. Or if you prefer getting outside, why not take a look at the information about allotments on page 4. I know only too well the difficulties faced by carers and so I'm pleased to be able to include details of activities and support available locally to carers on page 8.

The directory we've included on the back cover has contact details for support organisations ranging from befriending services to bereavement support and practical help.

I hope you will enjoy reading this magazine and you find something inside that appeals to you.

Rod Ashford



Cllr Rod Ashford

Executive Member for Community Partnerships at Reigate & Banstead Borough Council

Contents

Volunteering: a great way to meet new people	3
Getting outside: a great way to support wellbeing	4
Keeping fit: great for mind and body	5
Meeting new people: finding new activities	6-7
Support for carers: Dementia First	8
Support for Mental Health: a great way to get creative	9-10
Support for older people	11



If you would like to access an audio version of this magazine or a Word version that is suitable for screen readers, please visit www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/healthandhappiness or call our Customer Contact team on **01737 276000** if you need this information in another format.



We always have a wide range of volunteering opportunities to choose from. There really is something to suit everyone.

Nina Porter,
Chief Officer at VARB



Volunteering

a great way to meet new people

Voluntary Action Reigate & Banstead (VARB) can help you get the most out of your volunteering.

We humans are social creatures. While some of us may have enjoyed the relative quiet and solitude that the recent lockdowns brought, many others found it hard being cut off from friends, family and community.

Research shows that the key factors that make a difference to our wellbeing include connecting with, and giving to, others. Volunteering can be a great way to do this.

At VARB, our volunteer surveys have shown that 82 per cent of volunteers say volunteering has improved their wellbeing. Being part of a team, meeting other people – sometimes people who may be quite different to your social circle – and just seeing a friendly face and having a chat all contribute to that increase in wellbeing.

People's reasons for volunteering are many and varied. Volunteers tell us that it gives them a sense of belonging and greater insight into their local communities.

The key to finding the right volunteer role is to pick something you like. Nina Porter, Chief Officer at VARB, says, "We always have a wide range of volunteering opportunities to choose from. There really is something to suit everyone and we're here to support you to find the right role for you".



Find out more

If you're interested in finding out more about volunteering, visit www.varb.org.uk/i-want-to-volunteer/ or call **01737 763156**.

▶ Lois's story

Lois, a busy mother and grandmother, started volunteering when she took early retirement, saying she "wanted to give back". Lois now volunteers for local baby bank charity Stripey Stork and at the drop-in run by Renewed Hope in Redhill, where homeless and vulnerable people can come for a free meal and friendly company.

At the drop-in, Lois usually helps in the kitchen, but also takes time to talk to the guests who, she says, "like to have a bit of banter." Lois adds, "I do get pleasure from helping other people. And I have made friends through my time at Stripey Stork."



Lois

Getting Outside

a great way to support wellbeing

Fresh air and friendship at the Gateway Allotment Project can help you to blossom again.

The Gateway Allotment Project is a thriving community garden project for people who are unemployed, suffering from ill-health, or struggling with depression or a lack of confidence.

We're a local charity, the Surrey Care Trust, and we help people to make positive changes to help them to feel better about themselves.

During the weekly sessions at our allotment at New Pond Farm Allotments near Earlswood Lakes, you can learn new practical skills, improve your confidence and make friends too. If you need it, you may be able to have one-to-one support with one of our trained volunteer mentors. They can help you to work through your personal problems so that you can manage difficult times better.

People of all ages and abilities can take part in the activities on the allotment. These have included; assembling a polytunnel and shed, creating a lavender swirl, removing turf for vegetable beds and decorative painting and crafting. But you can do as much or as little as you choose on the allotment – just coming along, being with other people and getting out in the fresh air can make you feel much better.

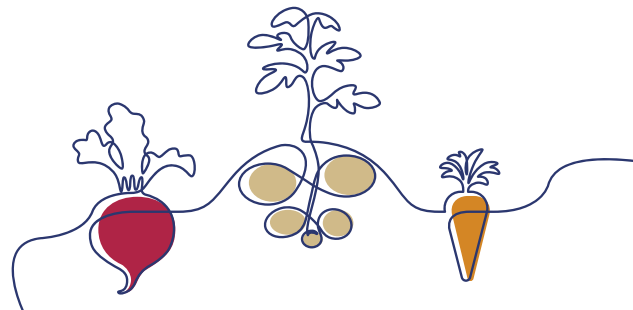
We also run regular family days with a range of free activities for everyone to enjoy too.



Volunteering at Surrey allotments

Find out more

Sessions take place every Monday 10am to 2pm, Tuesday 10am to 2pm and Wednesday 10am to 1pm. If you would like to find out more, please email gemma.seldon@surreycaretrust.org.uk



▶ Sarah's* story

Sarah suffers from depression and finds it hard to leave the house. Sarah's wellbeing nurse suggested that she came along to the Gateway Community Allotment. Now she is learning a lot about plants and is building new friendships with the other people at the allotment.

Sarah says: "I have missed out on so much; five years of my life passed by me when I just stayed at home, unable to leave the house. Being here makes me feel better about myself; I feel I have really come alive again because working on the allotment means I can get away from the problems in my head for a few hours.

"And it's so peaceful and everyone is very friendly and supportive; being able to talk to someone other than my family is so helpful, it's like a kind of therapy. I'm just so glad there is something like this otherwise I would still be sitting at home every day in my pyjamas."

*Name has been changed



Everyone is very friendly and supportive; being able to talk to someone other than my family is so helpful, it's like a kind of therapy.

Sarah*

Keeping Fit

great for mind and body



Rediscover a healthy lifestyle that is great for mind and body with YMCA East Surrey

We want to help people gain the physical and emotional benefits of being active; and exercise is the perfect way to boost wellbeing, gain a sense of achievement and improve your self-confidence.

From the healthy weight management programme to group classes and gym membership, there's something for everyone at all levels.

Our newly refurbished, air-conditioned and fully staffed fitness gym in Redhill offers a wide range of the latest equipment. Friendly, qualified instructors can discuss fitness goals and create a personalised workout programme for new members.

A YMCA fitness membership also helps to support work in the community, such as disability projects, supported housing and youth work.

For those who like to take their exercise outdoors, YMCA East Surrey works in partnership with Ramblers Wellbeing Walks to provide a full programme of volunteer-led guided walks in the beautiful local countryside.

Find out more

For more information about activities and memberships visit www.ymcaeast Surrey.org.uk

▶ Emma's story

Emma, 25, was diagnosed with anxiety and depression just two weeks before the country went into lockdown in March 2020. She says: "I didn't know how to deal with my thoughts and feelings, lost all motivation and spent much of my time in bed, eating junk food. The more weight I gained, the worse I felt about myself."

Encouraged by her mother, Emma signed up for the YMCA's 10-week Healthy Measures course, which aims to help participants develop the skills, motivation and confidence they need to manage their weight and increase activity.

The course is unique as it includes guided exercise sessions and free access to the YMCA's gym and classes in Redhill, as well as nutritional advice.

"It's been the best thing I've ever done!" says Emma. "The advice was clear and inspiring. I learned to make better food choices and to be brave about giving exercise a try. The changes I've made to my lifestyle are sustainable because the process is a gradual one.

"YMCA East Surrey has a fitness class for everyone, and the gym is welcoming rather than intimidating. No one judges you. I've lost over a stone in weight and the improvement to my mental health has been phenomenal."



Emma



YMCA sports hall

Meeting New People

great for building communities

There's something for all ages in one of the Council's warm and friendly community centres.

At our lively community centres in Banstead, Horley and Woodhatch we welcome everyone to come and try activities focused on improving your wellbeing.

As well as a sociable chat over coffee or lunch, each of our centres has their own programme of activities, classes and events – including for children under five. There's a chance to develop your passion in art or craft, get fitter through exercise or have fun with bingo and card games!



Fitness and exercise

Our centres offer a range of classes and indoor sports for all ages and abilities. Perhaps you've always wanted to try yoga or pilates with a welcoming group for all levels? Or maybe indoor bowls or table tennis are more your thing?



Arts & leisure

Music and art can have an incredibly positive impact on our mental health. Whether you enjoy singing or art with a tutor or an informal group, our centres have lots of options.



Help with technology

If you want to improve your skills on a computer or an iPad or just get help with video conferencing, our friendly, knowledgeable volunteers will be able to help you out.



Activities for under fives

Would your child enjoy baby ballet or maybe learning phonics with Robot Reg? Or perhaps you are a grandparent who looks after your grandchildren on some days and might enjoy our grandparent stay and play groups?



I like to get out and about and give something back to the community, and volunteering helps me do that. It helps me keep motivated, gives me a reason to get up in the morning and I'm happy to help with anything and everything!

Zoe – a volunteer at one of our centres



Enjoying community centre activities



Find out more

To see each centre's timetable visit www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/communitycentres or call to book a class or hire flexible spaces for an event, course or party:

- The Banstead Centre – **01737 361712**
- Regent House, Horley – **01293 772240**
- The Woodhatch Centre – **01737 221030**



You can be part of a great community with big ambitions at Merstham Hub.

The Hub is a place for people at the heart of Merstham. We play a small role in what makes Merstham so great – community, compassion and the power of change.

So, what do we do? We support, connect and empower local people to take control over their wellbeing, their environment and their future by working with the community to create projects and services which speak directly to what people ask for and deserve.

Some of our projects and services



Our Repair Café is fighting climate change by using local skills to give second lives to household appliances which would normally end up as landfill.



Our Parks and Greens team is ensuring our wildlife and greenspaces thrive for future generations.



Our allotment project, community fridge, and mental health and wellbeing workshops all make sure no one goes it alone.

We're here to help build confidence and share expertise, so everyone has the knowledge and skills they need to influence the future of their community.



Merstham community fridge

Plenty of ways to get support and join in

We run a variety of projects at the Hub to help residents improve and maintain their physical and mental wellbeing.

On Mondays we run Rendezvous, a community led support group, helping connect and empower vulnerable people at risk of social isolation. Each Wednesday we host Merstham Meet up, an informal drop in for residents to socialise and also get advice and support from local health care professionals.

Our wellbeing champions team, a group of lead volunteers, also assist and reach out to members of the community who are sometimes harder to contact, through advice, support and intervention.

Helping the community to engage proactively with local green spaces is another key focus. This enables everyone to positively enjoy the outdoors, encouraging sustainability, conservation and a holistic approach to mental and physical health and wellbeing.



Group session at Merstham Community Hub

Find out more

Visit Merstham Community Facility, 2b Portland Drive, Merstham, RH1 3JB. For more information email info@mcft.org.uk, call **01737 333 461** or visit www.mcft.org.uk

Support for Carers

Local independent charity, Dementia First, offers a range of services for both the carer and the person with dementia.

Many carers and people with dementia report feeling abandoned once a formal diagnosis of dementia has been made, and this was exacerbated by the pandemic.

We resumed our lunch clubs in March 2021, shortly followed by face-to-face carer support groups where we encourage carers to bring their relative with them as they will be entertained in a separate area. It is an opportunity for carers to receive information, support and to learn from each other's experiences in a relaxed environment over a cup of tea.

Our lunch clubs are held at various locations and are open from 10am until 4pm giving the carer a full day of respite to pursue their own interests, catch up with chores or simply to rest and recharge their batteries. All centres provide refreshments throughout the day, including a two-course meal at lunchtime, very much a social event that often results in an improved appetite.



The staff have been great helping Anne to settle. When she is having a bad day, once the staff appear she cannot get in fast enough!

Mandy

Day care helps to delay the often-inevitable move into permanent care as the carer is less stressed and the person with dementia is occupied with activities, often aiding a better night's sleep, in a safe, friendly environment that becomes one of their comfort zones.

Wellbeing singing groups offering an opportunity for carers and people with dementia to socialise together are provided at Horley and Lingfield.

Mandy's story

"I am carer for my sister Anne and we were jogging along nicely until the pandemic arrived when Anne rapidly deteriorated. Few resources were open, but I found Dementia First on Surrey Information Point and I reluctantly viewed The Byre with Anne who was happy to do a taster session. Much to my surprise Anne settled very quickly and soon increased to two days a week, thus increasing 'me time' and companionship and stimulation for Anne.

The staff have been great helping Anne to settle. When she is having a bad day, once the staff appear she cannot get in fast enough!"



Clients getting a little exercise at The Byre



A day at the lunch club



Find out more

For full details please visit
www.dementiafirst.org.uk
or call **01883 818310**

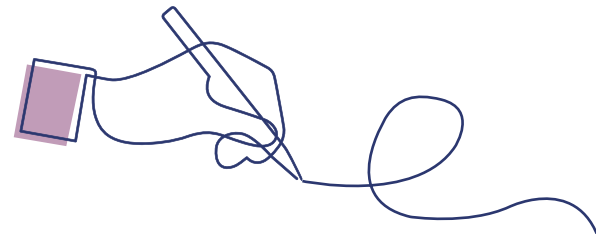


It is a place that doesn't judge you and makes you feel so welcome. You can meet new people and learn about art.



The Art Matters studio in Earlswood Road

Support for Mental Health



Art Matters is promoting wellbeing through creativity.

Based in Earlswood, Redhill, Art Matters is a community arts studio offering a safe and supportive environment to people living with mental ill health. Our artists are encouraged to explore their creativity and to build on personal strengths.

Morning or afternoon sessions take place fortnightly and current activities include painting, printing, mosaics, textiles, wood, and soapstone carving. Group sizes are small and self-learning is encouraged. In addition to the fortnightly sessions we run Peer Tutor workshops on Mondays.

Art Matters is part of the mental health charity, Richmond Fellowship. The service is open to adults living in East Surrey who experience mental health symptoms and are interested in exploring their creativity. A residency of two years is offered.

Referrals can be made by health professionals and individuals

themselves – referral forms are available on our website or can be posted. We encourage anyone interested in attending the studio to contact us first to arrange an informal visit.

We work closely with other Surrey community health and arts groups. In January 2022 we were part of an exhibition at the Riverhouse Gallery in Twickenham and in June we will open to the public as part of Surrey Artists Open Studios.

A huge collection of artworks from the studio can be found on Instagram at [art.matters.rf](https://www.instagram.com/art.matters.rf)

B's story

"I was in a dark place with my mental health. My asthma nurse Carol told me about a place called Art Matters. I had a look around. It is a place that doesn't judge you and makes you feel so welcome. You can meet new people and learn about art. I go to Art Matters to improve my mental health and help me get out of my dark place and out of the house."

Find out more

If you feel that your mental health would benefit through attending Art Matters, please contact the studio for more information.

Call **01737 766212** or **07786 191153** or visit www.artmatters-richmondfellowship.org.uk

Support for Mental Health



The Mary Frances Trust is a charity supporting Surrey residents to improve and maintain their mental and emotional wellbeing.



Enjoying the Surrey outdoors

If you've felt low, anxious or isolated lately, but unsure what to do about it or where to begin, the Mary Frances Trust is here to help.

We offer one-to-one support as well as wellbeing activities, groups and courses, where you will learn to become experts at managing your own wellbeing.

You'll also meet others to share tips, build friendships and support each other on your journey.

You don't need to have a diagnosed condition to join a group or activity, only the desire to improve your mental health and emotional wellbeing.

No issues are too big or too small, there is no waiting list, you can use us as often as you need and for as long as you want. But more importantly, our services (for those aged 16+) are entirely free for Surrey residents.



I am so grateful to the entire Mary Frances Trust Team. Without their help and support we wouldn't have been able to get through these last few months.

Sam



What's on



Peer support groups

For young people, bipolar disorder, hoarding, LGBTQ+, women and general ones too.



Wellbeing courses

Stress and anxiety management, resilience building, goal setting and decluttering, positive thinking and more.



Physical activities

Yoga, meditation, Zumba, football, Qigong, walking groups.



Art & craft classes

Watercolour, themed craft, creative writing.



Interest groups

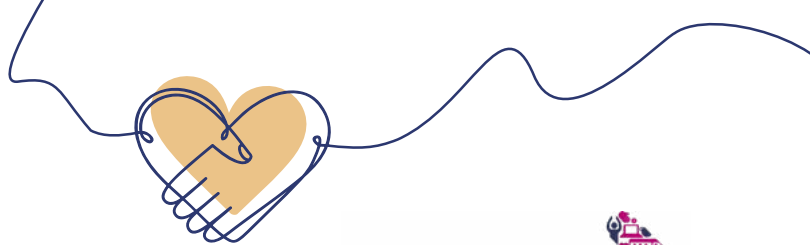
Choir, quiz group and book club.

Find out more

Register online at www.maryfrancestrust.org.uk and you'll be contacted to discuss your needs and the support available.

For more information, contact the team on **01372 375 400**, text **07929 024722** (SMS service only) or email info@maryfrancestrust.org.uk

Support for Older People



Age Concern
Merstham • Redhill • Reigate



From befriending to the Men's Shed, Age Concern Merstham Redhill Reigate has been supporting people in the local area for over 60 years.

Founded to help older people living alone to cope after the war years, one of the first services offered by the charity was chopping wood for the fire and getting the coal in. Whilst the services have moved on since then, the primary purpose of promoting independence and assisting people to remain living in their own homes remains the same.

Age Concern MRR is based at the Merstham Centre, which is the hub of all our activities; there is a day centre four days per week, affectionately referred to as 'The Club' with a traditional hot meal available every day.

There is a wide variety of activities on offer, including Men's Shed, and a befriending service. Apart from the many activities available, people mainly come to stay connected with their friends and community. As one of our newer members said "I started coming with my friend and we didn't really know what to expect, but everyone has been so friendly, and we love coming every week."

There are so many reasons to attend the centre, it has a really friendly, homely feel, we always celebrate high days and holidays and never miss a birthday or the chance to have cake!



I started coming with my friend and we didn't really know what to expect, but everyone has been so friendly, and we love coming every week.

Our befriending service

We introduced the befriending service to support people who prefer not to attend the day centre for a variety of reasons. We carefully match our volunteer befrienders with older people who would like some company.

We have seen some wonderful friendships develop, to the point that the clients forget that it started as a formal service which began because they were lonely.



Find out more

To find out more about any of these services or to arrange a 'taster session' please call **01737 645636**
email enquiries@ageconcernmrr.org.uk
visit www.ageconcernmrr.org.uk

Get involved

Below is a list of venues and organisations where you can get involved with your local community, try out new activities, meet people or find volunteering opportunities. Why not give some of them a go?

► Support for older people

Providing support for vulnerable older residents and helping to reduce social isolation in the over 55s.

- **Age Concern Banstead**, Banstead Centre, The Horseshoe, Bolters Lane, Banstead, SM7 2BG, call **01737 352156**
- **Age Concern, Merstham, Redhill and Reigate, Age Concern MRR**, Weldon Waym, Merstham, Surrey, RH1 3QB, call **01737 645 636** or email enquiries@ageconcernmrr.org.uk
- **Dementia 1st**, The Byre, Pendell Road, Bletchingley, Redhill RH1 4QH, call **01883 818310** or email info@dementiafirst.org.uk
- **MHA Communities East Surrey**, Redhill Methodist Church, Gloucester Road, Redhill, RH1 1BP, call **01737 780610**
- **YMCA Sports & Community Centre**, Princes Road, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 6JJ, call **01737 779979** Textphone users add prefix 18001 to access BT Text Relay or email Gym and fitness reception@ymcaeastssurrey.org.uk After school, holiday club & children's activities children@ymcaeastssurrey.org.uk Challenge events challenge@ymcaeastssurrey.org.uk General queries admin@ymcaeastssurrey.org.uk

► Interest groups

Providing a range of groups where people can share their interests, learn new things, and make friends.

- **U3A Banstead** visit www.u3asites.org.uk/banstead
- **U3A Horley** visit www.u3asites.org.uk/horley
- **U3A Reigate & Redhill**, visit www.RRU3A.org.uk or call **01737 929001**

► Minority groups

Providing support for people who identify as being from a minority group

- **Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum** representing the needs and aspirations of the local ethnic minority population. Local contact: Tuke Sonaiké, email tukes@smef.org.uk
- **LGBTQ+ groups in Reigate** visit www.meetup.com/cities/gb/n7/reigate/lgbtq/ each group has a different organiser with contact details.

► Support groups for people with a disability or life limiting condition and their carers

- **Sight for Surrey** offers support to people living in Surrey who are blind, partially sighted, deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing. Call **01372 377701** or email info@sightforsurrey.org.uk
- **Brigitte Trust**, offers a free service of emotional support and practical help for adults and their carers living in every Surrey borough and facing the challenges of life-limiting conditions. Call Sarah Pattenden on **07469 932192** or email sarah.pattenden@brigitte-trust.com
- **Crossroads Care Surrey** provides respite breaks to the unpaid carers of the young, disabled, unwell and frail. Call **01372 869970** or email enquiries@crossroadscaresurrey.org.uk
- **Include Choir** is an inclusive choir that anyone can join. Members include people with and without understanding or speaking difficulties. Email info@include.org
- **Bereavement Support** – BASRRA is a new voluntary, community-based organisation focussed on assisting those needing help to handle their grief and bereavement. Call **01444 391183** or email admin@basrra.org

► Support for Mental Health activity groups

- **Richmond Fellowship Trust**, Art Matters, Parochial Hall, Earlswood Road, Redhill, Surrey RH1 6HE
- **Mary Frances Trust**, 23 The Crescent, Leatherhead, KT22 8DY, call **01737 766212, 01372 375400, 07929 024722** (SMS Only) or email info@maryfrancestrust.org.uk
- **Surrey Care Trust**, The Surrey Care Trust Office, FF12 Astolat, Coniers Way, Guildford, Surrey, GU4 7HL, call **01483 426990**
- **Voluntary Action (VARB)**, Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 8EF, call **01737 763 156** or email info@varb.org.uk