

## **YOUR CALL ANNUAL REPORT**

The latest report for the Your Call programme has been published. The report sets out how successful Your Call has been over the last 12 months and how it keeps on going from strength to strength.

The report highlights a tremendous year for Your Call and that since the last reporting period there have been double the number of volunteers and ten times more events with 1,964 Your Call events taking place involving 17,161 volunteers.

The reports gives several examples of case studies where community volunteers and the Council have worked together to improve the lives of residents of the Borough.

Key highlights include:

- Good Neighbours Awards, which has received local, regional and national support. The awards are being run again this year
- Support to the borough's First World War Commemorations, which saw small grants distributed to community groups to put their own events on
- Work with young people including developing a new skate park in the borough
- Events for young people to meet and talk directly to businesses. Several young people have EBD secured jobs and work experience on the back of these events
- A Big clean-up of Blackburn town centre in readiness for the Queen to visit Residents and businesses have really embraced the Your Call ethos.

Comments from residents include: "My project has received excellent support from Your Call" – Harry Blackwell, a Darwen residents who has worked the Council to transform the old Moorland School cricket fields into a community sports facility.

"It's thanks to initiatives such as Your Call that the people of Blackburn with Darwen are able to organise [events] and bring people together" Laurence Fox, a member of the Wensley and French Road Friends who installed a plaque at Bank Top community centre to commemorate those who died in the First World War.

"Your Call has been a good thing and helped us a great deal. Our Circle of Friends is increasing all the time. It helps us to take people who can't get out to get out. We have now 30 members." Beth Gregory, from the Guide Circle of Friends, which helps to tackle loneliness and social isolation in older people.

I want to thank all those residents and businesses that continue to contribute to the Your Call scheme.

I look forward to another successful year for Your Call.

## **JUST GOOD FRIENDS EVENTS**

I was delighted to attend the latest Your Call Just Good Friends event in Darwen.

Nearly hundred people gathered at Derwent Hall for an afternoon of entertainment but also to receive information about relevant services to older people.

Age UK and the Public Health funded 'Fall Stop' campaign, which aims to reduce slips and falls, had information stalls at the venue as did the Council's assistive technology team.

The event was sponsored by local businesses and public organisations such as Age UK and Darwen Town Council.

Staff and several residents also volunteered their time to make the event a success.

This was the fourth Just good Friends event to take place in the borough. Two have been held in Blackburn and two have been held in Darwen.

One of the big issues this borough faces is social isolation and loneliness.

These events are a fun way for older people to meet old friends, meet new people, have a brilliant time and learn about services that may be helpful to them.

## **STICKY HANDS**

Sticky Hands is a new Public Health funded Your Call campaign to encourage parents and carers to hold their young children's hands on the routes to and from school.

Every children's centre and primary school in the borough will be able to get access to a Sticky Hands pack, featuring 'Let's stick together' wrist bands for children and message-reinforcing playground games. The pack also includes posters which allow schools to set their own 'Sticky Hand Zones.'

The project is a key part of the borough's multi-agency accident prevention strategy developed to prevent the harms caused by accidents in Blackburn with Darwen.

The campaign is being driven by the Council's borough road safety champion Councillor Stephanie Brookfield and supported by the Regeneration, Children's Services and Health and Adult Social Care portfolios.

### **FOOD BANK OPENING**

In March the new premises of the Blackburn Food Bank opened by Carl Fogarty, the four-times superbike racing champion.

The new base in Oakenhurst Road is four times bigger than the organisation's previous location and includes a community kitchen, private rooms to discuss budgeting and debt management, and a computer room for people to access council and job services.

It is very encouraging the service has developed to include new services but it is very sad that there are even food banks are needed in this day and age.