

The Volunteer

Summer 2024



Farewell from Suzanne Hilton

A reflection on ten years as Chief Executive

It is with a real mix of emotions that I sit down to pen what will be my last message to you all. So, I hope you will forgive me a little self-indulgence as I reflect on what has made the last 10 years plus so special for me and so hard to say goodbye even though I am looking forward very much to my next chapter. Now many of you know how much I love a quote and I have been thinking of some of the best quotes about impending retirement...The one that really sums up where I am now is “how lucky am I to have had something so good that makes saying goodbye so hard even when the future is so inviting”. I feel very privileged to have spent the last decade with you all in Bolton at our wonderful, diamond of a charity.

We have achieved so much together in that time. Reflecting on these ten years, I am proud of the incredible journey we have shared. What we have achieved in that time is only possible because of what each of you give and do. Volunteers are the beating heart of Age UK Bolton, and I am constantly inspired and humbled by your dedication, generosity, warmth, and friendship. Age UK Bolton is a vibrant and dynamic charity but it is most importantly a family and it is this sense of family which makes the difference.

There have been a few challenges along the way, most significantly COVID, but we came together and found new ways of supporting the most vulnerable. Speaking of generosity, I cannot help but reflect on the spirit of Boltonians. The kindness, warmth and friendship that abound in this town are truly remarkable and it will always have a special place in my heart. From the simple acts of kindness to the grand gestures of support, Bolton's big-heartedness has never ceased to amaze me. It's a testament to the strength and unity of its people.

It is now time for me to hang up my hat and try to put into practice everything that I have preached about ageing well. It is not the academic data that I will turn to however but what I learned from so many of you and our clients about living and ageing with grace, humour, and vitality. So much more powerful than any research paper ever could be, you've shown me that ageing well is about connection, purpose, resilience and maintaining a positive spirit – lessons I plan to embrace wholeheartedly in this next chapter of my life.

As I head into retirement, I carry with me countless wonderful memories. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for being the inspirational, dedicated, and warm-hearted individuals that you are. Age UK Bolton would not be the same without you, and I am deeply grateful for the honour and privilege of having worked alongside you all these years.

With all my best wishes and a heart full of gratitude, it is now my pleasure to introduce to you our new Chief Executive, Lauren McKechnie, who I know will work with our trustees, staff team and all of you to take our fantastic charity onto even bigger and better things for older people in Bolton.



Hello from Lauren McKechnie Age UK Bolton welcomes new Chief Executive

Dear Volunteers, hello! I have had the pleasure of meeting a number of you over the last few weeks however, for those I have not yet had the privilege to... I'm Lauren.

Having worked in and around Bolton's incredible charity sector for a number of years, I know first hand the invaluable contribution individuals such as yourselves make. Your passion, dedication and sense of community is second to none and it is truly an honour to work shoulder to shoulder with you.

Needless to say I have some big shoes to fill in terms of Suzanne's work and legacy, though please know I am very much up for that challenge! Time will allow us to better connect and get to know each other – something I very much look forward to. Until then, please do not think twice about getting in touch, pulling me aside and sharing your thoughts, reflections and ideas!

Age UK Bolton would be a shell of itself without you. The direct, positive impact you individually and collectively have on the older people of Bolton is both inspiring and humbling. Frankly, I think you rock! Thank you for all you do.

Lauren McKechnie

A final message from Tara Volunteer Co-Ordinator prepares for new role



Hello Volunteers!

I hope you are all enjoying the longer days, however I do wish someone would let the weather know that it is summer time. We are happy to share with you updates from across the charity and throughout Bolton that our wonderful staff and you yourselves as volunteers are continuing to provide. A highlight for myself was visiting The Wright Place Lunch club earlier this month with our new CEO Lauren to present Ann Pike with her 25 years' service award, what an amazing achievement! Well done Ann.

On a personal note, this newsletter marks a bittersweet moment for me as it will be my last as Volunteer Coordinator. After 2 fabulous years here at Age UK Bolton I am moving on to a new role at another charity within Bolton, it has been a pleasure to get to know and work with you all. Thank you for all the hard work, dedication and passion you have for your volunteering and making the lives of the older people of that much better.

I will miss you all!
Tara x

Big Summer Thank You

Celebration marks Volunteer Week 2024

The first week of June marks Volunteers Week, and this year Age UK celebrated by throwing a Big Summer Thank You party for our volunteers.

The celebrations included afternoon tea, a performance from the Age UK Bolton Guitar Group, a raffle and a tea-themed quiz - as well as lots of friendly chats, laughter and celebration.

One Age UK Bolton client said: "Thank you so very much to the volunteers to add so much to [what] Age UK offers from being on the reception desk, befriending, helping with providing refreshments a afternoon tea, delivering fabulous classes...all of this enriches the lives of the people you support."

Another client added: "I feel like part of the family at the lunch club...I certainly won't be giving up my seat at the table any time soon!"

If you know anyone who would be interested in becoming a volunteer, they can call Age UK Bolton on 01204 382411 to enquire about available volunteering roles.



Ironman victory for Niall

Strength and Balance Manager raises over £1000



Age UK Bolton's Strength and Balance Manager, Niall Bradley, has raised over £1000 for the charity by completing the Ironman 70.3 in Bolton.

Niall completed the challenge - consisting of a 1.2-mile swim, a 56-mile bike ride, and a 13.1-mile run - in an impressive 6 hours 26 minutes.

He took on the Ironman 70.3 in memory of colleague and friend Jeannete Macmurry, who sadly passed away in November 2023.

You can still donate to Niall by visiting this webpage: <https://shorturl.at/6CB7Z> or by leaving a donation at the Age UK Bolton office.

Awards season at Age UK

Dedicated volunteer receives 25 Years of Service Award

Two awards have been given out by Age UK Bolton this summer: The Dominoes Trophy and the 25 Years of Service Award.

Ann Pike was awarded the 25 Years of Service Award at the beginning of July, for her hard work and dedication in running The Wright Place Lunch Club in Horwich.

Chief Executive Lauren McKechnie headed to the lunch club to thank Ann for an incredible 25 years of service.

Ann is well-known in the community and at Age UK Bolton. One ex-staff member, Jim Bailey, commented:

“Absolute Legend! The Lunch Clubs are amazing, [I] had the privilege to do a video on them back in the day and getting stuck into the amazing role they play for local people was truly humbling.”

The Dominoes Trophy was also awarded in June to Ray, who has been the Dominoes Champion for two years running.

Ray donned his bow tie for the occasion as Volunteer Co-Ordinator Tara Barker presented the trophy to an applauding audience.

On behalf of everyone at Age UK Bolton - a huge congratulations to both Ann and Ray!





Spotlight on Staff

Vicky Urmston, Ageing Well Co-ordinator

What does the Ageing Well Co-ordinator do?

My main role is managing the Befriending service, which includes taking referrals from people wanting a Befriender - someone who will visit them at home, one day a week for approximately one hour. I induct and support the Befriending volunteers, checking in regularly offering any support they require and answering their questions or concerns. I also support volunteering out in the community, from Knit and Natters to card making groups and art workshops.

What do you love about being part of the Age UK Bolton team?

We all work together with the same aim of providing support and services for people over 50 who live in Bolton - that's a lot of people! In the three years I have been with Age UK Bolton I have had constant support from everyone. The services we offer overlap, so we are always checking in with each other. It's such a privilege to work not only with a great team but with amazing, dedicated volunteers and the people who really appreciate the work we do.

Tell us about yourself outside of work.

I have a cat called Sigrid, my son brought her with him when he moved back home. My son has come and gone but Sigrid has stayed. I love walking, yoga, reading, gardening and visiting new places. A fun fact about me is that I have just completed my highest academic qualification at the age of 62.

What is your favourite...



Anything vegetarian, I love vegetables, the fresher the better, though my favourite quick meal is jacket potato with cheese and beans.



Coffee, especially early in the day. I like to spend a leisurely hour reading and drinking coffee before getting on with my day.



Possibly 'Woman on the Edge of Time' by Marge Piercy. It was written in 1976 but is still as fresh today as it was then. I love books and like to read both fiction and non-fiction.



I don't have a favourite song and have phases of listening to different artists. I'm currently enjoying Portuguese Fado music by artist Mariza.



Spoon racing - haha! No, I don't take part in or watch any sports.

Leaps for Little Lever

Local project supported by Age UK Bolton proves successful

A project based in Little Lever has been working to support local older people with the help of Age UK Bolton.

The Ageing in Place Pathfinder - delivered in partnership with Bolton at Home and Bolton Council - has worked with over 200 residents in the area to create thirteen different social activities and seven community groups.



One group which has proved to be successful is the Little Lever Men's Fellowship, led by Keith Carter, Ageing Well Co-ordinator for Little Lever.

The Men's Fellowship has proved so popular that it has received a new round of funding to allow the group to take on new members.

Keith said: "It's really important to create groups for older men, as often there isn't much out there which caters to their interests."

The project has also seen the opening of Lever Gardens, Bolton's first retirement village, which includes a newly-opened bistro.

For more information on what's on in Little Lever, call Keith on 07592423721.



Eileen's Cooking Corner

Summery Crab or Salmon Cakes

These delicious fishcakes are the perfect summer evening meal, served with a little mixed salad and crusty bread.

Ingredients

- 180g of crab / salmon meat (fresh is best, but tinned will do)
- 300g of peeled chopped potato
- 3 spring onions, sliced lengthways and finely chopped
- 60g of sweetcorn
- 1 egg
- Salt and pepper to season
- Little zest of a lemon
- 20g of breadcrumbs

Method

1. Steam potatoes over water until soft (this ensures they don't absorb too much moisture and makes the crab / salmon cakes hold together better)
2. Roughly mash with a fork and allow to cool.
3. In a bowl, mix together potato, spring onion, lemon zest and sweetcorn, salt, black pepper and egg.
4. Add the crab / salmon and gently fold in, being careful not to break up the lumps of crab / salmon too much.
5. Form into four equal-sized crab and potato cakes.
6. Preheat oven to 180°C / 350°F (gas mark 4)
7. Add the breadcrumbs to a shallow dish and, one by one, add the crab / salmon cakes until evenly covered.
8. Place a frying pan over a medium high heat and spray lightly with some cooking oil. Cook each side of the cakes on a medium heat until lightly golden, then place on a parchment lined baking tray and spray over the top with cooking oil spray and bake for approx. 15 minutes.