



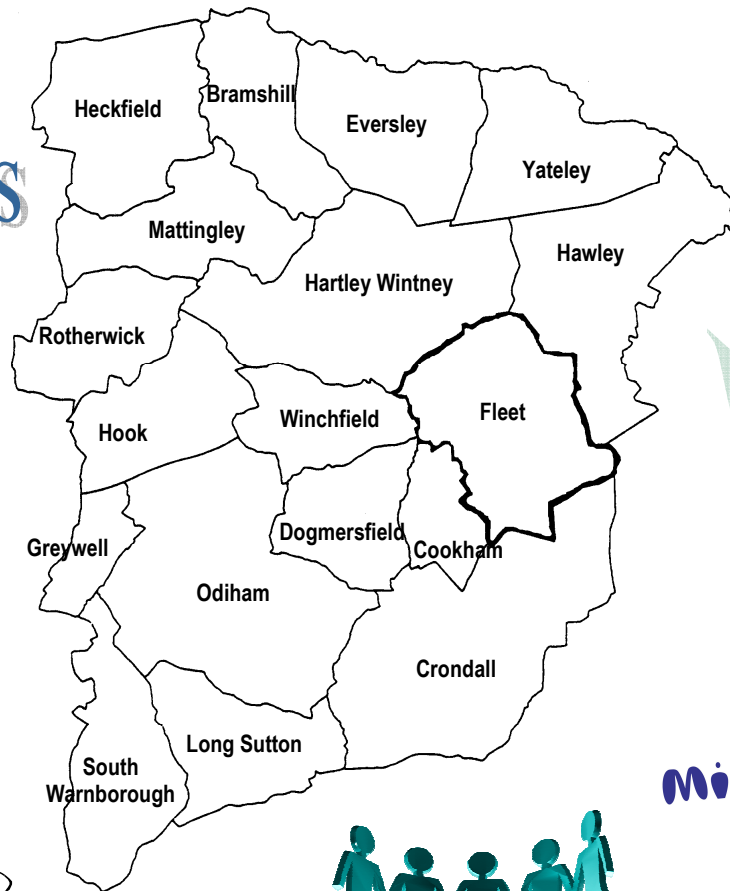
Hart Voluntary Action

Annual Report

2008 - 2009

“Building a stronger community through voluntary action”

Members



Travellers



Sunshine and Showers



BME Community Development Project



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Vice Chairman

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Appointed December 2008

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Appointed December 2008

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Facilitator - Sunshine & Showers

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Amanda Conlon

Minding the Garden Mentor Officer

Judi Page

Mental Health User Development Officer

Zoe Lee

MHUDS Support Time & Recovery Worker

Jilly Styles, Nicky Lankford

MHUDS Administrator

Hosted by HVA

Amanda Lee

Senior BME Community Development Officer (HCC)

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Auditor: AWM Accountancy & Taxation Limited, Old Chambers, 93-94 West Street, Farnham, Surrey GU9 7EB

Chairman's Report

This year has been an eventful one for Hart Voluntary Action. We have been able to consolidate the very good work done over previous years and to ensure that all our processes and procedures are in good order.

Evelyn Ball retired at the end of 2008. She had been Chief Executive Officer for the last three years and before that was our Development Officer. Her contribution to HVA has been enormous and many of her initiatives, particularly Sunshine and Showers, will remain and remind us of her. We wish her well in her retirement.

In her place as Chief Executive the trustees were delighted to appoint Steve English. Steve has come to us from the Army and, although having little knowledge of the voluntary sector, he has picked up the job with amazing speed and is proving to be an excellent leader.

The trustees have been anxious to increase our membership and improve our service to them. Caroline Winchurch has a new job description "Membership Support Officer" and is beginning to make great progress in this direction. We are hoping with volunteer support to progress even further.

The Volunteer Bureau has seen a significant increase in demand for its services, a reflection of the current economic situation and efforts to raise the profile of volunteering. The trustees decided to continue funding the pilot supported volunteer programme "Minding the Garden", offering a "first step" to volunteering for people with mental health issues whilst providing a vital gardening service to the elderly. Fortunately, HVA subsequently gained sufficient Ecominds funding to secure the project for three years. Sue Vincent and Guy Clayton are to be congratulated for their dedicated work on this project and achieving such a great result.

Many of our mental health groups have been consolidated under the Mental Health User Development Service under the supervision of Judi Page and Zoe Lee. Operating as part of the Wellbeing Centre, Chaired by John Evans, this is a very highly regarded service with a lead role in developing best practice in the provision of community based mental health support. They are to be congratulated on the part they played in the Well Being Centre winning the award for "Partnership Working" at the 2009 regional Best of Health Awards.

The Midweek Club and Sunshine and Showers, continue to operate as separate groups under the guidance of Gillian McCorry. Reacting to demand, Sunshine & Showers has increased the number of depression support groups from three to six.

Diana Stevens, ably assisted by Cobie Andrews, has continued to work hard at reducing the isolation and alienation of the Traveller community and increasing their uptake of statutory services. They have been particularly active in helping integrate children into mainstream education.

In January our Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Community Development Officer, Amanda Lee, was transferred to HCC Adult Services but continues to be hosted by HVA and works closely with our staff in all areas.

None of this work would be achieved without the superb backup of our Administrator, Karen Harrie, and our Finance Officer, Jo Cater, and I would like to express my thanks to them and all the staff.

The trustees have continued to give their time and energy to help HVA. We were delighted to welcome David Newey and Alison Sellars to the Board. I am enormously grateful to all the trustees for their support.

One of the aims of HVA is to get projects up and running. We were proud that the Hart Neighbourhood Centre has been able to become a charity in its own right and is continuing to do an excellent job. As Chairman of HVA I have become a trustee of HNC so I am pleased to be able to watch its progress from close at hand and to ensure that both HNC and HVA work in close cooperation.

Sarah Wallis
Chairman

Chief Executive

Having only joined Hart Voluntary Action in January this is my first annual report and, with no previous experience of the Voluntary Sector, I was a little concerned that it might prove to be a “little thin”. However, with an excellent team of staff and volunteers providing continuity whilst I found my feet there is, in fact, a lot of ongoing good work to report. Much of this has been headlined in our Chairman’s report with the details contained in the individual reports.

HVA has undergone some internal reorganisation in order to refocus on its core activities, particularly support to its members. Part of this initiative was the introduction of a quarterly Volunteer Sector Forum which has proved popular with our members and the creation of an in-house focus for funding issues with as much emphasis being placed on core funding as on projects and members.

We continue to work closely with Hart District Council and our other key strategic partners. We contribute toward the Local Strategic Partnership and The Community Safety Partnership and sit on many of their subsidiary working groups. We also represent the voluntary sector on many other forums including the Harlington Centre Joint Advisory Committee and NHS Stakeholder Groups.

Working closely with the Hampshire network of Community Voluntary Councils (CVS) we are contributing to an Infrastructure Modernisation Programme looking at ways of improving the delivery of support to the Voluntary Sector across the county. This is looking at all CVS’ in Hampshire working collaboratively in the areas of training and development; marketing and communications, volunteer centres; and partnerships.

Looking forward, the coming year will bring new challenges for the voluntary sector with the uncertain economic climate and changes in the political landscape creating threats and opportunities in equal measure. Acting as much on behalf of its members as in its own right, HVA must be ready to counter the threats and exploit the opportunities as they arise. We will therefore continue to review and revise our structure and our policies and procedures, developing both to meet emerging needs. We seek to better equip our membership through more focused workshops and enhancing our already well developed communications strategy. We will also look at the future of our existing projects seeking ways of making them more self-sustaining whilst seeking innovative new projects that add value to the community of Hart. Finally, we will continue to develop our strategic partnerships and identify relevant new ones that strengthen the voluntary sector in Hart and increase its influence.

Steve English
Chief Executive

Membership Support

Providing support to the local voluntary and community sector is a principal function of a Council for Voluntary Service. In order to increase the level of direct services provided by HVA to its membership, Caroline Winchurch has been reassigned as the Membership Support Officer.

Our overall aim is to increase the capacity of groups throughout Hart to deliver their services as effectively as possible, with the necessary resources in place, and at the same time to promote good practice. Key areas where we provide support are; information and guidance on issues such as policies and procedures; funding and governance; group promotion/ development; and representation of the local voluntary sector, particularly at district and county level.

All community, voluntary and charitable groups operating in, or serving residents in Hart are eligible to become members of HVA. Our membership currently stands at 196 organisations; a full list of members is available on our website, www.hartvolaction.org.uk.

The main platform for the provision of information remains **Hart Matters** our quarterly newsletter. Over the past year, we have endeavoured to include a variety of information reflecting the diversity of our membership and also to give space to our members to promote their activities and services. This has been supplemented by targeted **e-mail alerts** on issues of specific interest and the recent introduction of an **e-bulletin**.

In January, we held our first **Hart Voluntary Sector Forum**, which was very well attended and demonstrated that there is real enthusiasm amongst local voluntary and community groups to have a chance to meet, exchange information and learn from each other, as well as have the opportunity to listen to speakers about key services available to support the sector.

We have been able to increase the amount of time spent on **one-to-one advice** to groups with over 35 organisations having received such advice over the year. Funding remains the key area of interest. We are pleased to be the local link organisation with the Hampshire & IOW Community Foundation for **Grassroots Grants**, which was launched during the year. To date we have helped 5 groups to access a total of £24,850 through Grassroots.

We have been helping local groups promote themselves by managing their data for the **e.VOLve** web-site, and also building up the information we have about the sector on our own **Merlin** database, which we created this year. This provides greater insight into the spread of the sector, and helps us produce information to support our networking on behalf of Hart's voluntary sector and representing it in partnership meetings such as the Hart Local Strategic Partnership and the Loddon & Eversley Leader Project.

Looking forward, over the coming year we plan to, work jointly with the Hampshire CVS network to promote support to community development across the county; represent Hart on a new Hampshire-wide Funding Advisers' Network; help and encourage groups bring more financial resources, skills and knowledge into Hart for the benefit of the local community; develop new collaborative working eg Fleet Festivities Partnership; plan and conduct bespoke seminars/workshops for members; and start work on the NAVCA Quality Accreditation award for CVS's.

Acknowledgments of Support: Age Concern Hampshire, Employee Volunteering, Community Action Hampshire (speakers at the first Voluntary Sector Forum). Hart District Council and Hampshire County Council (funding of Membership Support services). Basingstoke Voluntary Services (for Merlin).

Volunteers: Special thanks to John Gribble for all the help he has given in the office.

Caroline Winchurch
Membership Support Officer

Volunteer Bureau

The Volunteer Bureau provides support throughout Hart for individual volunteers and volunteer involving organisations. Our core function is to match those wishing to volunteer with suitable opportunities in the locality. We also aim to raise the profile of volunteering in Hart and work with groups to develop new and exciting opportunities. We provide information and training on volunteer recruitment and management, whilst working strategically to represent the local volunteering community at regional and national levels.

The last 12 months have seen huge developments and some notable achievements for the Volunteer Bureau. We have been the busiest since records began, back in 2003, with 415 enquiries, 127 interviews and a referral rate to organisations of 80% delivering valuable volunteering resources to some of the 281 organisations registered with the Bureau.

Developing 'high visibility' marketing literature specifically branded for Hart residents, the bureau has sought to proactively raise the profile of volunteering throughout Hart. This literature has been used throughout the district, most notably during Volunteer Week (1st week in June) resulting in a 50% increase in enquiries. Becoming a more pro-active member of the Hampshire Volunteer Centre Network has also enabled us to play a part in the development of new policies and procedures affecting volunteering across the county.

'Minding the Garden' was set up as a pilot in April 2008 to provide a 'first step' to volunteering for individuals with mental health concerns or learning difficulties who made up around 30% of people seeking volunteering opportunities. The project provides a platform for the development of 'supported volunteering' through the delivery of a vital gardening service to Hart's elderly and disabled residents. As at the end of March 2009, the Project, had visited 45 sites and delivered 750hrs of gardening services across the community and been accessed by 19 supported volunteers. Considerable resources were allocated to successfully sourcing funding to secure the future of the project for at least the next 3 years.

After advertising our 'Green Challenge' in celebration of Volunteer Week 2008, the task of building a new 20m footpath at Fleet Pond was undertaken by local volunteers, Bureau staff, Hart Rangers and both civilian and military personnel from the Army Presentation Team. Great fun and a special thanks to the residents of Pondtail who kept us going with refreshments!



Briefly looking forward; the Bureau will work in conjunction with Hart's secondary schools to develop volunteer opportunities to enable 'Student Outreach' within our community and encouraging intergenerational projects and the development of youth volunteering.

As a result of the award of Big Lottery Ecominds award of £141,872 'Minding the Garden' will be able to increase its activities from 1 to 3 days a week with. Our team of staff, buddy volunteers and supported volunteers will attend 60 sites per year allowing in the region of 65 supported volunteers to access the service. Each will have a personalised development plan aimed at helping them progress to either mainstream volunteering or paid employment.

Acknowledgments of Support:

Rushmoor Voluntary Services, Hampshire Volunteer Network, Ecominds, Fleet Pond Society, Hart Countryside Services, HCC County Councillor grants, Hart Lions, Waitrose, Hart Strategic Partnership, and Timebank.

Volunteers:

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all the volunteers who have contributed to the success of both the Bureau and 'Minding the Garden'. Special thanks go to Don Anderson, Pat Bedford, Janet Buckley, Marion Donovan, John Gribble, Corinne Henderson and Cathy Wheeler.

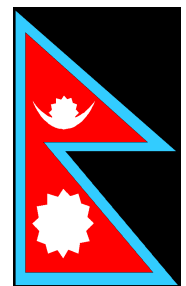
Sue Vincent
Volunteer Bureau Development Officer

Black & Minority Ethnic (BME) Community Development Mental Health

My role as Senior BME Community Development Officer supporting members of ethnic minority communities to access appropriate services has been transferred to HCC Adult Services but continue to be hosted by HVA.

In reality this change in management has had little operational impact and I continue to work in close partnership with HVA staff, particularly the Traveller project where joint action has helped improve Traveller families to access housing and general and mental health services.

The Nepalese group continues to grow with over 60 members, some of whom are now directly accessing services and becoming more independent. "Simply Ask" the interpreting service for the Nepalese community has proved particularly popular with demand for its services is at a very high level and a newly introduced Conversational English programme is proving equally popular. The feasibility of starting a support group for former Ghurkha soldiers suffering from PTSD is being looked at along with local health providers. It is hoped that the group will be developed through HVA's MHUDS. Similar initiatives focusing on the real needs of the community are being examined especially in light of recent changes to the residency rules for former Ghurkha soldiers.



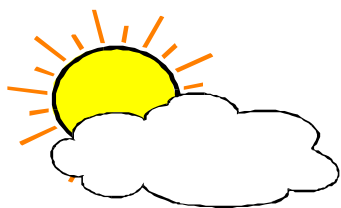
I am also working closely with Seeds of Africa, a recently formed group to provide support to the African community and raising awareness of issues such as HIV/AIDS. The group has well established connections throughout the community and its events are always well attended, however, it needs help in establishing itself as a formal and, most importantly, sustainable group.

Over the next 12 months it is hoped to set up a Hart BME forum to encourage greater community involvement and expression, while providing a forum for various BME communities to discuss and address common issues.

Volunteers: Special thanks to Rosalyn Horton

Amanda Lee
BME Community Development Officer

Sunshine & Shower & Mid-Week Club



Sunshine and Showers

Information is also shared about other support services, local events and opportunities. The past 12 months has seen an increase in demand which resulted in a total of 936 attendances over all six groups. In the coming year we will seek to work more closely with the Depression Alliance, with a view to some of the groups becoming self-supporting.

The Midweek Club is a support group for people living in the community with severe and enduring mental health issues. Over the past 12 months there have been 833 attendances. The Club provides a secure, welcoming environment where people can meet friends and receive support from HVA staff and volunteers. Members of the group have the chance to take part in a variety of activities aimed at maintaining and developing their existing life skills whilst providing an opportunity to participate in new activities. One such activity is our small drama group, sponsored by Yateley's Community Learning, which successfully encourages personal creativity and the development of social confidence through drama. Over the coming 12 months we aim to expand the number of courses available through Yateley's Community Learning. We also aim to develop existing links with Aldershot library and explore community education opportunities for club members.



Hart Mental Health Forum provides an opportunity for mental health services users, professionals and voluntary service providers to meet and discuss issues of common concern and share information about local mental health service provision. It has met quarterly over the past year with increasing attendance from service providers and users. Speakers from a variety of organisations including Depression Alliance, Raise Mental Health Ltd., Shaw Trust and the Mental Health Advisors from Borders Practice, Aldershot, have covered a variety of topics connected with mental health issues. Over the coming 12 months we will develop contacts with other potential speakers for the Mental Health Forum in order to deliver even more relevant and focused information.

Acknowledgments of Support:

Staff involved with the administration and preparation of rooms at The Church of the Good Shepherd, Farnborough; Church on the Heath, Elvetham Heath; St. Joseph's church hall, Queens Road, Aldershot; Livingstone's Bookshop, Fleet Road, Fleet ; Hanover Housing Association, Hanover Court, Yateley; Hart Neighbourhood Centre, Hook and Wellbeing Centre, Frimley.

Special thanks to the following volunteers:

Sue Clarke, Emma Cosham, Sue Mills, Jeanette Scott, Katie Ship, Jean Baker, Margaret Oakes, Paul Doughty, Jo Potz-Rayner, Anna Boyce, Sylvia Whitaker, Linda Carter, James Keenan, Christine Sell

Gillian McCorry
Mental Health Projects Officer

Mental Health User Development Service

In April 2008 various pilot/interim groups run by HVA were consolidated within a single focus, The Mental Health User Development Service (MHUDS). Operating out of the Wellbeing Centre at Beech House, Frimley, MHUDS aims to increase the choices available to service users, involving them more in the design and delivery of services. It is also designed to compliment primary and secondary care services thus providing a more comprehensive, inclusive and integrated mental health service. It does so in partnership with Surrey and Borders NHS Day Treatment Service and Heathlands CAB, with whom they share the Wellbeing Centre, and service users.

MHUDS offers a community based safe and supportive therapeutic service promoting independence, opportunity and recovery. It encourages individuals to progress from service user to volunteer as part of their development and recovery process. As volunteers they are given appropriate training and are encouraged to undertake NVQ qualifications. The ultimate aim is for all groups established under the auspices of MHUDS to become self sustaining and self run with ongoing mentoring through MHUDS.

In its first year of operation MHUDS has had some notable successes:

- * A Support, Time and Recovery (STR) worker has been recruited to provide more flexible community based support and promote recovery.
- * A part-time Administrator has been appointed to support the Mental Health Development Officer
- * Six therapeutic groups facilitated by service user volunteers have been established within the Well Being Centre
- * Three community based groups set up and facilitated by MHUDS have seen a significant rise in numbers
- * From 126 registered service users, attendances averaged 290 per month equating to a delivery of 866 therapeutic hours per month
- * Three service users moved on to part-time employment and one to full-time employment. Five moved on to volunteering roles
- * Seven volunteers enrolled for an NVQ in health and social care. Various other training courses were held including training in group facilitation, WRAP (Wellness Recovery Action Plan) and Basic Food Hygiene
- * SE Johnson provided a number of employee volunteers and materials to secure and refurbish the garden used by our Gardening Group
- * The "Express Yourself Players" drama group put on two sell out performances at the West-End Centre, Aldershot



Looking forward, over the next twelve months MHUDS will: develop a website to promote its services and activities, especially to service users and mental health professionals; seek funding for the development of further service user led groups in the community; use the skills of Express Yourself Players to produce DVD's to support facilitator training and the reduction of the stigma attached to mental health; and work more collaboratively with GP surgeries and the Hart and Rushmoor BME worker.

Acknowledgments of Support:

Hampshire County Council, Hart District Council, Hampshire Primary Care Trust, Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, Rushmoor Rotary Club, SE Johnson, the West-End Centre, St Josephs Church, Rushmoor Healthy Living, Heathlands CAB, RVS supported volunteering, HVA Volunteer Bureau, Farnborough College of Technology.

Judi Page
Mental Health User Development Officer

Traveller Project



The Traveller Project aims at reducing the isolation and alienation of an estimated 350 traveller families resident in Hart and increasing their uptake of public and statutory services. Particular emphasis is placed on the integration of children into mainstream education and over the past 12 months the project has directly supported 48 children aged from 3 to 18. A second member of staff has been recruited to help with the work of integrating children into mainstream education.

The project continues to develop in other areas; the IT and reading skills programmes, some of which run in collaboration with the Hart Neighbourhood Centre, are well attended with a change of emphasis from adult to family learning; new programmes have been introduced such as Lads and Dads Boxing which brings fathers and sons together in an area of shared interest; free blood pressure tests delivered on site help promote family awareness of healthy living; and, in collaboration with the Community Development Worker, travellers with mental health issues are being helped access appropriate services.

There have also been a number of notable successes:

One of the 14 attending the adult reading group successfully passed their National Certificate for Further Education (NCFE) exam in English Language.

Traveller children from Yateley School working on the production of a DVD to raise awareness of traveller culture and to tackle issues of bullying were the first to undertake a media training project for young travellers. They received training in film-making, editing, and social networking and used their newfound skills to set up a new networking site dedicated to young travellers (www.savvychavvy.com). The site achieved a membership of 1500 within the first 5 months of operation, won the 2009 Catalyst Communities Award and two young travellers who help administer it were presented with the Award by Prime Minister, Gordon Brown.

The Travellers Times, a magazine dedicated to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller issues has invited the traveller children of Yateley school to be the editors of The Young Traveller Times pages. At the time of writing this new editorial team were busy sifting through a mountain of articles from across the country trying to decide which should make it into the next issue.

More than 200 travellers and service providers including local schools attended an open day organised through the project and aimed at providing travellers with an opportunity to promote their culture and raise awareness of traveller issues amongst statutory bodies and the wider community. The day was considered a resounding success by all participants.

On the negative side, following a petition from the residents of the Star Hill caravan site we had to reluctantly cancel all services provided through the Hart Community Outreach (HCO) bus. The bus which facilitates a number of services including Mothers and Toddlers and Family Health continues to serve the Penny hill site whilst we continue to work on its restoration to Star Hill.

Acknowledgments of Support:

Hampshire County Council (Clare Cheung, Sam Wilson, Barry Jordan-Davis), Hampshire Library Service (Sharon Rhymes and Paula Wood), Yateley's Community (Julia Walker), Hart Community Outreach (Nigel Pool), Rural Media Company, On Road Media, UnLtd, Yateley Town Council, Gordon Boswell-Romany Museum. All Travellers and Gypsies who helped at the Traveller Open Day, and other events.

Volunteers:

Tania Stevens, Mrs D Stevens, John Stevens, Mary Kinghorn, Jimmy King, Marie Collins, Johnny Gregory

Diana Stevens
Traveller Project Officer

HVA Partnership / Group involvement

Health

Basingstoke & Deane, Rushmoor & Hart Learning Disabilities LIG (Local Implementation Group)
Mental Health Local Implementation Team
NE Hants & Surrey Heath Stakeholder Group

Local Authority

Children's & Young Persons Partnership
Economic Prosperity Group
Hart Community Safety Partnership
Local Strategic Partnership

Community

Big Lottery South East Helper Agency Network
County Funding Advisors Group (Hampshire)
Council of Voluntary Services (CVS) Network Hampshire
Fleet Festivities Partnership
Hampshire CVS Development Workers' Network
Hampshire CVS Finance Network
Hampshire Families
Hart & Rushmoor Transport Forum
Loddon & Eversley Leader - Local Action Group
Rushmoor & Hart Young Carers

Volunteer Bureau

Court Moor School, Fleet
Farnborough 6th Form College
Farnborough Technical College
Job Centre Plus
Hampshire Garden Initiative
Hampshire Local Area Agreement
Hants Volunteer Network
Hart Allotments Society
Surrey Volunteer Centre Network
Volunteering England

Hart Voluntary Action organises the following Forums :

Hart Mental Health Forum	4 times a year
Voluntary Sector Forum	4 times a year
Volunteer Managers' Forum	2 times a year

Hart Voluntary Action manages the following Services :

BME Community Development Project (hosted by HVA on behalf of HCC)
Mental Health User Development Service
Midweek Club
Minding The Garden Project
Rushmoor & Hart Young Carers Group
Sunshine & Showers Depression Groups
Travellers Project

