



**ANNUAL REPORT  
2009**

## ANNUAL REPORT OF VINTAGE BLACON 2009

### BRIEF HISTORY

The UK now has more people aged 65 than there are children under the age of 16 and within 20 years half of the adult UK population will be over 50. The implications of this for Blacon are enhanced by the findings of the 2001 census which stated that 22% of Blacon residents aged over 60 who lived alone were affected by income deprivation. This was 10% higher than the Chester District average. Health data showed that Blacon scored highest in the region for cases of acute respiratory, cardiovascular and coronary heart disease, lung and cervical cancer and diabetes. The 2001 census also indicated that the standard mortality rate for Blacon was 438 per 100,000 as compared with 297 for the West Cheshire Primary Health Care Trust.

In response to these findings three of the mainline Churches in Blacon took the initiative to address these issues amongst older people and by joining with a number of community agencies working in Blacon formed the Blacon Church and community mission with older people. After securing funding from the Tudor Trust, Church Urban Fund and Church and Community Fund, our Project was able to begin employing a part-time worker.

### ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT WORKER

The year began with my appointment on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009 as the part-time development worker (20 hours per week) with the task of researching the needs and wants of older people, the voluntary infrastructure, identifying what services are currently being provided, the potential expansion of services and any barriers to older people accessing them. This resulted in my

- Meeting with representatives from the Project's partner agencies
- Visiting the two older people social clubs – Silver threads and Evergreens
- Joining Church Groups in their visits to the three local care homes for worship
- Meeting with the manager of one of the care homes
- Joining the Blacon Community Trust Health Partnership committee
- Attending the monthly community forum – One Voice for Blacon
- Visiting one of the Tenants' Committees
- Being part of, and promoting, the Blacon Health Week older people's day
- Meeting with Age Concern Cheshire's staff and volunteers in their day care
- Attending the Churches Older People's Network (OPN) and the Cheshire OPN
- Meeting with local Church leaders not currently connected with the Project
- Meeting with local councillors to ascertain their awareness of local need/provision
- Attending the launch of the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme (IAPT) – with specific reference to older people's access
- Attending the Blacon Partnership planning day

Issues that I felt were worthy of special note were:

1. On some days events clashed, on other days nothing was happening for older people in Blacon. A joined up approach was needed and I set about creating a composite timetable of events that could be circulated to service providers and users.
2. Transport to the Day Care was limited by the free bus not being designed for seniors, its availability being restricted to certain hours in the day and its unavailability at all during school holidays. Research was carried out by one of our partners regarding the use of alternative methods of transport but Age Concern Cheshire deemed the current service as sufficient for the time being
3. The age and limited numbers of voluntary workers at the Day Care Centre restricts their availability resulting in added pressure upon the coordinators, leading to the risk of burn-out being high. As a response I made this need known through general conversation, included it in my presentations to Churches and forums and highlighted it within the training course as one way of applying the theory.

4. Whilst there is potential for replacement leaders, the older people clubs (Silver Threads and Evergreens) appear to not be recruiting many new members and therefore will not be sustainable for many more years. In response, I have advertised their meetings within my presentations, included them in the timetable of events and made regular visits to Silver Threads, in particular, to pass on information and show support. My attendance at Evergreens has been limited by the fact that I am often unable to be in Blacon on the day they meet due to only being employed for 20 hours a week.
5. Many of the active contributors within the community forums were over 65. This is a positive observation to build on when considering the establishing of an older people forum.

After collating documentation of services provided for older people in the area through agencies such as Age Concern Cheshire, Social Services and the Churches I produced the timetable of events currently taking place in Blacon suitable for older people. I invited the community, via feedback leaflets, community magazine and word of mouth, to provide suggestions of any additional services and events that they would like to see taking place. One community suggestion was for a gentle exercise group, therefore, I utilised the voluntary skills and enthusiasm of a local resident and started a weekly group for over 55's in September 2009. This quickly achieved a regular attendance of 12-15 local people.

Throughout 2009 I also presented the work and aspirations of the Project to four of the Churches in Blacon, the Community Forum and the Chester Area Committee, produced and taught a six week course to representatives of the three Churches on how they can be part of a mission shaped Church for older people, (using Church Army material) established the Blacon Silver Screen, a monthly film club for over 55's and provided information to older Blacon residents concerning the Digital Switchover.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

### 1. NAME OF PROJECT

In order to improve the identity of the Project, I surveyed 50 older people during the year to identify a more suitable name. The most popular one chosen was 'Vintage Blacon'. We therefore adopted this together with the additional strap line 'a faith based partnership' and a logo designed by one of employees of a partnering organisation.

### 2. EXTRA-CARE HOUSING RESEARCH

During 2009 one of the partnering agencies, BCT ReGenesis, carried out research concerning older people needs in Blacon in preparation for the proposed building of a 70 bed-roomed extra care housing development in Blacon. Representatives from Vintage Blacon joined other Stakeholders to receive the findings of the research and begin to identify core elements for an older people's strategy. The research revealed that the number of residents in Blacon over 65 was expected to increase by 500 in the next 6 years to over 900 by 2026. It also provided us with a visual map of where the highest levels of health deprivation and income poverty amongst over 60's in Blacon were, which included the region immediately surrounding the three partnering Churches within Vintage Blacon.

### 3. PARTNERSHIP

Under the Pathfinder programme in Blacon, older people's issues had been placed within the Heath Partnership. We however argued that issues concerning older people do not only concern health but also include such areas as housing, employment, volunteering, Spirituality, education, social interaction, carers support and transport. With this in mind, throughout 2009 we increased our committee to ensure there was representation from not only local Churches, Blacon Community Trust and The Hope Centre but also Age Concern Cheshire, Chester and District Housing Trust, Cheshire West and Chester Council, Social Services and Western Cheshire PCT.

When the Pathfinder was replaced by the Blacon Alliance, we were pleased that Vintage Blacon was successfully recognised as a Partnership group for Older People in its own right.

#### 4. SUBGROUPS

In order to preserve the Spiritual side of the Project without imposing it upon all partners, we established a Spiritual Focus Group within Vintage Blacon to deal with the Churches involvement in meeting the Spiritual needs of older people. We have also been recognised as the local subgroup of the West Cheshire Older People Network.

#### 5. FUNDRAISING

I was successful in acquiring a grant for £265 from Age Concern to purchase a projector and screen to be used to advertise the support available to older people during the Digital Switch Over. I have also been able to use this equipment for the training course and the Blacon Silver Screen.

During the year efforts have been made to seek match funding but in the present financial climate this has proved to be more difficult than anticipated. There are currently two applications being considered and it remains a top priority to obtain sufficient funds to make the Development Worker post full time'.

#### 6. STRATEGIC FOCUS

At the end of November, we took on the responsibility of following up the findings and suggested action plans from the Extra Care Housing research and identified key areas that will be part of Vintage Blacon's strategy for older people. These include:

- i) Health
- ii) Housing provision
- iii) Intergenerational work
- iv) Volunteers / social activity
- v) Carer needs
- vi) Elder Abuse
- vii) Whole person / Spirituality
- viii) Development of a Senior Centre at the Blacon URC site
- ix) Transportation
- x) Enterprise development
- xi) Poverty and deprivation / links to LAA
- xii) Learning / personal development
- xiii) Development of a programme of activities by the voluntary sector

#### 7. CONSTITUTION

For the past 2 years we have been managed by a steering group, Chaired by Rev Susan Flynn. This has met 4-8 weeks depending on the progress being made in terms of setting up the organisation and acquiring funding. At our inaugural AGM on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2009 our constitution was agreed and Officers were appointed:

Chair: Brendan Doyle  
Vice Chair: Rev. Susan Flynn  
Secretary: Judith Sellwood  
Treasurer: Paulette Thomas  
Chair of Spiritual Focus Group: Rev John Stone

We were constituted as a faith based Partnership committed to valuing older people living in Blacon and promoting their good quality of life through challenging disadvantage and enhancing their physical and spiritual well being. We agreed that the objects of Vintage Blacon were to

- Discover the needs and wants of older people living in Blacon through research and other methods.
- Identify gaps in service provision and take steps to secure the resources/support necessary to meet them from both the community/voluntary & faith sector and the public and private sectors.
- Provide a range of spiritual and pastoral services for older people, equipping the churches for their pastoral outreach.
- Establish ongoing ways of involving older people to ensure their views continue to be heard and responded to appropriately.
- Value and realise the potential for older people in Blacon to participate as active volunteers within the community.
- Create leisure, employment, training and volunteering opportunities.
- Promote partnership between the various agencies which provide services for older people.

We agreed to meet 10 meetings a year.

## 8. FUTURE PLANS

Plans are underway for 2010 to see the establishing of

- A carpet bowls group
- After a training day on January 25<sup>th</sup>, to reintroduce healthy walks for older people in Blacon
- As well as encouraging younger older people to become volunteers and to support activities for older people, we also hope to develop:
  - i. An intergenerational healthy eating project based around creating allotments for older and younger people to grow vegetables and fruit together and to cook meals together
  - ii. A Good Neighbours befriending service,
  - iii. A Silver Surfing drop in facility
  - iv. A Creative Glass Mosaic course
  - v. Carers' Self Help Group(s)
  - vi. An Older people's forum
  - vii. A drop-in and information service for older people and their carers
  - viii. An older people's choir

We also plan to build on previous inter-faith work between all the 6 primary schools and the High School, 4 of the Christian churches, the Mosque, and Bah'ai Faith by re-instating a programme of children visiting places of worship and faith leaders visiting schools so that the children can learn about other faiths and understand what happens in these places of worship.

## CONCLUSION

In 2009 having researched current provision, developed new initiatives, identified future focus and become constituted as a recognised new faith-based Partnership within Blacon Alliance, we believe that Vintage Blacon is now in a stronger and more healthy position of being a key contributor to improving and valuing the quality of life for the older members of Blacon.

Glyn Thomas  
Vintage Blacon Development Worker  
January 2010

APPENDIX  
Vintage Blacon Management Group 2009

Chair:	Brendan Doyle
Vice Chair:	Rev. Susan Flynn (Blacon URC)
Secretary:	Judith Sellwood (Blacon Community Trust (BCT))
Treasurer:	Paulette Thomas (Holy Trinity)
Chair ( <i>Spiritual Focus Group</i> )	Rev John Stone (Holy Trinity)

***Representatives from local Churches***

Blacon URC	Carol Pengelly
Blacon URC	Graham Hough
Holy Trinity C of E	Paulette Thomas
Holy Trinity C of E	Vacancy
St Therasas RC	Mavis Doyle
St Therasas RC	Vacancy

Vacancies exist for another representative from both Holy Trinity & St Therasas

***Representatives from community agencies***

Vintage Blacon:	Glyn Thomas (in attendance)
The Hope Centre	Frank Collins
BCT (Staff)	Judith Sellwood / John Every
BCT (Board)	Gordon 'Gus' Cairns
Age Concern Cheshire	Alex Major
One Voice for Blacon	Brendan Doyle
Cheshire West and Chester Chester & District Housing Trust	Councillor Alex Tate
Western Cheshire PCT	Sue Kennaugh
Social Services	Dave Cotterell
Extra Care Housing Project	Charlotte Walton
	Louise Gibson



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