

## **Diamond Club Holy Cross**

The Diamond Club was set up 23 years ago in response to Holy Cross having a new community centre Hartley Hall built with the priority of providing activities for older adults which were inclusive and accessible. The group built up numbers quickly and over the years has delivered a program of stimulating activities designed to keep minds and bodies active for those over 60 years of age.

There are 70 members with approximately 50 attending weekly on a Tuesday usually in term time.

The activities are designed to promote health and well-being and reduce isolation and loneliness.

The group meets on Tuesdays from 11-2 pm with a charge of £5 weekly

### **Activities include**

Exercise sessions, digital inclusion opportunities, weekly massage, relaxation and breathing sessions, entertainment, arts and crafts, Reminiscence, workshops, talks and opportunities to go on supported outings to the theatre, museums, cinema and seaside or places of historical or community interest as well as occasional short holidays. The group signposts people to areas of assistance and connects people to community initiatives. The group supports parish life at Holy Cross and attends masses, concerts and remembrance services. The group fundraises for charitable initiatives and needy causes and supports the work of Holy Cross SVP. Intergenerational working is integral to the success of the club and it has strong links with Holy Cross Primary School and Christ the King Sixth Form College.

The Diamond club is coordinated by a paid worker from the parish who is a retired general and mental health nurse with 38 years' experience of working with older adults. They received a British

Citizens award for their outreach during and following the Covid pandemic. The coordinator applies for grants to help fund the group as well as planning and overseeing the program. It is supported by a team of dedicated volunteers some of which are older people from the group. The Diamond Club is Dementia friendly and all activities are open to those living with Dementia and their carers. Several residents from local care homes attend with staff.

Attendees are predominately from the parish or other catholic churches as well as from the local community, most attendees are catholic but some are from various Christian denominations or have no faith although the club has a Catholic ethos and a prayer is said at each session. Priority for new members is given to Holy Cross parish.

Due to the capacity and limited space in the hall, the group reached out ecumenically 6 years ago and commenced a larger scale program of monthly events called Bring Me Sunshine which older adults are welcome to attend which takes place in different church halls and community centres reaching approx 100 older adults at each event. The organisation is part of Lewisham Churches Cares charity.

To find out more about the Diamond Club and Bring Me Sunshine Lesley Allen the Coordinator can be emailed at [lesleyaallen@btopenworld.com](mailto:lesleyaallen@btopenworld.com)