

Chatty Café Scheme

As we are all aware, the pandemic has had a significant impact on people's mental health and has shown us all how important simply talking with other people is and how it enables us to feel connected with others. Horsham District Council's Community Services Officers, together with Horsham District Older Persons Forum and West Sussex Brighton and Hove Age UK, are working together to promote a scheme which they hope will get people talking again.

The Chatty Café scheme (www.thechattycafescheme.co.uk) was founded in Manchester and now has over 900 cafés and pubs across the UK registered as Chatty Café venues. The scheme is very simple: a 'This is a Chatter and Natter table' card is placed on a designated table in the venue which makes it clear that anyone sitting there is happy to engage in conversation. The aim is to get people of all ages back socialising, chatting, and to reduce loneliness and isolation.

A letter has been sent out to cafes across the district and the organisations are looking to encourage as many as possible to join. So far the following have signed up:

- The Bridge Leisure Centre, Broadbridge Heath
- Chanctonbury Leisure Centre, Storrington
- Halcyon Days Café, Storrington
- Southwater Country Park Café, Southwater
- Holbrook Heart Café, St Marks Lane, Horsham
- Muffin Break, Horsham
- The Pavilions Leisure Centre, Horsham

Horsham District Council is keen to get more chatty cafés, particularly in the rural areas of the district. If any café would like to find out more, please contact Claire.Shepherd@horsham.gov.uk.