

# Age UK Bexley

## Community Grant Programme



**Age UK Bexley is an independent, local charity working in the London Borough of Bexley to support older people, their families and carers.**

**Organisation:** Age UK Bexley

**Project:** Expand Befriending Cafes

**Beneficiaries:** 280 individuals, 250 are over 65

**Location:** Bexley

**Region:** Greater London

**Impact:** London Power Tunnels. This is a project to rewire South London via deep underground tunnels. This vital work will help keep Londoners connected to safe and reliable electricity supplies.

## £11,000

Awarded to support older people in the community through Befriending Cafes

**For further information please visit:**

[www.nationalgrid.com/responsibility/community/community-grant-programme](http://www.nationalgrid.com/responsibility/community/community-grant-programme)

**Community Helpline**  
0800 279 3408

In September 2023, Age UK Bexley was awarded a grant of £11,000 to expand their Befriending Cafes project.

The Cafes aim to combat loneliness and isolation among older adults by fostering a sense of community and connection. Through this, Age UK Bexley have been able to support older people in the community through providing a welcoming and supportive environment to socialise, make new friends, and engage in various activities.

Activities include games, quizzes, bingo, speakers on subject of interest, as well as exercise classes such as yoga and chair-based exercise.

The grant successfully enabled Age UK Bexley to recruit 9 additional volunteers to support the Cafe expansions and introduce digital services at one in Bexleyheath, which has been crucial in helping older people who struggle with technology to learn new skills.

In a survey conducted by Age UK, of the older people who have benefitted from the Cafes:

- 95% of respondents said their sense of wellbeing had improved since they started attending.
- 74% said they felt less isolated.
- 79% said they felt less lonely.
- 86% said that the project had helped them maintain their independence.

Cathy, started feeling lonely after her husband's death but through the encouragement from existing members of the Befriending Cafes project, she found the courage to attend.

*'Age UK Bexley has saved my life.'* – Cathy, 78

She has since made valuable friendships and attends 3 Cafes per week as well as their weekly walking groups to maintain her fitness.