

Rural Age Concern Darent Valley (RACDV) is a wholly independent and autonomous organisation and was formed in 1951 as the Dartford Rural District Old Peoples Welfare Committee. The name Age Concern Dartford Rural was adopted in March 1973, with the current name adopted in June 1996. The Charities Governing Instrument, a written Constitution, was first adopted in March 1973, with the current Constitution adopted in June 1996. RACDV registered with the Charity Commission in May 1973 as a Charity and Service Provider with Registration Number 265562, and is registered with the HMRC as a Charity under Reference No 844/30521. In 2006, for tax and liability reasons, the charity began to change to a Charity within a Company limited by guarantee.

The organisation currently consists of 70 voting members and 4 non-voting observers, drawn primarily from the voluntary and statutory groups representing the local community. These are listed in the Membership Schedule to the Constitution. Members are elected each year and remain in membership until the conclusion of the following Annual General Meeting, at which they are eligible for re-election. Members may attend, speak and vote at a General Meeting of RACDV. Observers may attend and speak at General Meetings. At each Annual General Meeting the membership elects / re-elects a Management Committee who are charged under the constitution with the general control and management of RACDV and who form the body of Charity Trustees as defined in the Charities Act 1993. The sole executive officer is the Chief Officer, who is the appointed Secretary to both the Membership and the Management Committee. The Annual General Meeting of Members is held each year in June and an Ordinary General Meeting is held as required. The Management Committee Members meet typically about every three months or as necessary. Meetings are called by the Chairman or by a minimum number of members. Notice of meetings, containing agendas, minutes and any relevant papers, are normally sent to all appropriate members by the Secretary 14 to 21 days prior to the meeting date. Most meetings are held in the Swanley area with all meetings fully minuted.

The Management Committee consist of an elected President, Chairman, Vice Chairman, Honorary Treasurer and six committee members with the management Committee having the power to co-opt additional persons with special knowledge, skills or experience. Officers and Members may be contacted through the Age Concern office or Secretary.

The objective of the Charity, defined in Clause 2 of the constitution, is “to promote the welfare of the aged in any manner which now is or hereafter may be deemed by law to be charitable within the area of RACDV as defined in Clause I”. Clause I defines the RACDV area of benefit as the six southern parishes of Dartford Borough Council and the ten northern parishes of Sevenoaks District Council, an area previously that of the old Dartford Rural Council which, since the demise of that Council in 1974, is not an area easily identified. The area of benefit is about 110 square miles of predominantly rural area, containing an estimated population of 24,000 residents of retirement age. With the agreement of the Age Concern groups in Dartford and Bexley, RACDV cover the whole of the Dartford Borough Council area and a small part of the Crayford area in regard to the Dartford Minibus Service and for geographical convenience we offer our full range of services to clients in the western part of the Joydens Wood area that is located within the London Borough of Bexley.

The Registered office of RACDV is: 27-37 High Street, Swanley, Kent, BR8 8AE, Tel: 01322 668106 or 666118, Out of Hours Tel. 07889 133633, Fax. 01322 615071. This office is normally open 9 - 4 Monday to Friday except on Bank Holidays, and is the main administration and advice office for the organisation. A location map is available on request. RACDV also operate from sites at The Cottage Day Centre, Scratchers Lane, Fawkham, Kent, DA3 8PU, which is open 8.30 - 4.30 Monday to Friday; a Day Centre in the Youth Centre, Ash Road, New Ash Green, DA3 8JY, which is open 8.30 - 3.00. Wednesdays and Fridays; a Day Care Centre at Meeting Point I, 37 High St, Swanley, BR8 8AE, which is open 8.30 – 4.00 Monday to Friday. (Uniquely, the freehold to The Cottage Day Centre was purchased in June 2006.) Day Centres typically provide transport, freshly cooked meals, bathing, chiropody, impaired hearing clinics, advice & information services, social interaction and various social or craft pastimes. All Age Concern sites have disabled access, disabled facilities and both able and disabled parking. On a typical day, RACDV provides services to approximately 550 frail, elderly and disabled clients.

In addition, RACDV provide many other services for the benefit of the elderly and disabled including; an Advice & Information Centre including free home visits, extensive Disabled Access Transport, Chiropody, Optical Services, Audiology Services, Assisted Bathing, Hairdressing, Safety & Security Services, Support of over 30 OAP / Luncheon Clubs / Pop In Centres, low cost / free items via Charity Shop, low cost Will Writing Service, Shop Mobility, an extensive and unique free Disabled Equipment Loans Service, Gardening and Home Maintenance Schemes, a recommended service for Holidays & Respite Care, Continence Care products by mail order, a Befriending Scheme, an Age Resource Desk, Internet / E-mail facility with tuition, and other services as indicated in more detail in RACDV Information Sheet No 1, available on request, or on our Web site – see address above. In addition, RACDV compile and publish a set of 32 free Information Sheets on a variety of matters of interest to the elderly and disabled which are available from the office or upon request and an extensive range of updated and very detailed Fact Sheets. RACDV campaigns and lobbies at both local and national level in an endeavour to improve the quality of life for the aged and disabled in any manner.

RACDV employ an average of 22 paid staff, 3 full time and 19 part time, located at our five sites, an average of 60 unpaid volunteers, and an average 11 persons managed or under contract. Conditions of Service are contained within individual Contracts of Employment and a RACDV Employees Handbook, given to all staff, and individual written Job Descriptions exist. The 32-page RACDV Health & Safety Policy document is available at all work places. RACDV comply with all current employment legislation, endeavours to comply with all standards of good employment practice, and staff salaries and conditions of employment are considered in March each year by a salary sub-committee of the Management Committee and all comply or exceed the statutory minimum wage.

RACDV are one of the five Age Concern groups covering the Dartford & Gravesham area, with RACDV larger geographically than the other four groups combined. From 1998 we are one of eleven Age Concern groups in the new West Kent Social Services area, and one of 33 Age Concern groups in the County of Kent. We are a member of the Age Concern in Kent Group. RACDV are members of various committees and forums that have an interest in the aged, We meet regularly with other Age Concern groups, Social Services, Councils, and voluntary and statutory groups at Local, County & National level.

Owing to the large geographical area, predominantly rural, RACDV has traditionally responded to identified demand within available resources and concentrated services to the many low population rural areas, such rural services being more difficult and more expensive to provide than in more compact urban areas with higher populations.

Average Annual Income (including nominal value of the provision of SDC Buses) is around one third of a million pounds sourced approximately 38% (excluding transport provision) from KCC Social Services via three Service Agency Agreements, 28% from Local Authorities (inclusive of transport provision) and 34 % from our own Fund Raising, income generation schemes and donations, etc, including our own Charity Shop in Swanley. Contingency funds are maintained with six months operating costs held as reserves. RACDV Bankers are the Dartford Group of Branches of Barclays Bank Plc, and our Auditors are Gary Sergeant & Co. of Swanley. Each year a comprehensive Annual Trustees Report and Certified Audited Accounts are produced, and distributed to Members, Social Services, Charity Commission and HMRC, with copies available from the Office. Financial year is from April to March. RACDV is not registered for VAT with HMRC granting limited exemption from Corporation Tax.

The Age Concern Charity Shop, located at our office complex at 37 High Street, Swanley is staffed entirely by unpaid volunteers and has the lowest overheads of any Charity Shop in the County, ensuring that around 98% of all money received goes directly into our services for the elderly and disabled. The shop is always pleased to receive gifts of clothing, bric-a-brac and other household items.

The Chief Officer, John Arnold, would be pleased to provide any other information you may require on the organisation upon request. Accompanied visits to Day Centres and other services may be arranged on request.