

**ANNUAL STATEMENT OF THE MENTAL HEALTH COUNCILLOR CHAMPION
2024/25**

**Councillor Darren Talbot
Mental Health Councillor Champion**

Over the past 12 months, my initial time has been focussed on Love Me, Love my Mind a local mental health charity.

Love Me Love My Mind are doing amazing things in the borough running a number of weekly sessions for people of all ages. The charity is run by a local volunteer who previously had been a direct beneficiary of the charity and, sadly since the founder died two years ago, he has had to step in. The sudden loss of the previous founder has meant that all the personal contacts she had have had to be recreated and they are playing catch up a bit.

The charity is based at St. Barnabas Church, but their costs have shot up in recent years due to the electricity bill challenges and it's gone from a free venue to £6,000 a year, a lot of money for a small group. I met with Serena Powis one of the Council's Community Development Officers, recently to see if there was anything we could do to help them funding wise, but unfortunately that was not possible. I also advised the charity about working with the Central Surrey Voluntary Action around help with fundraising, but they are already in touch with them.

During Mental Health Week this year I attended an event at the Old Moat Garden Centre, run by another charitable organisation, and met the people involved.

More recently, I have been in touch with Chris Waller from We Power On, a walking group set up over lockdown for men's mental health & fitness. I am looking forward to meeting Chris in person soon and would encourage anyone struggling with poor mental health to reach out to groups like We Power On and Love Me Love My Mind, which both offer great support.

In the New Year I will be meeting with our Community Development team and looking to reach out to other groups in the borough. Any suggestions would be welcome.