

This Sunday is Silver Sunday. It was set up three years ago and in such a short time has become an annual event to celebrate older people in our communities as well as combating loneliness and isolation.

The initial spark for this event was the shocking statistic about the number of people over the age of 75 who said they felt lonely. However it has since evolved into not just a community outreach event but into a celebration of what older people can contribute to society.

People can often assume that once people reach a certain age they no longer bring any value to society. It is quite the opposite. For starters, the vast majority of our volunteers and carers are from the older age groups saving the nation a fortune! The clubs and societies are bustling with older members who want to continue to enjoy an active and sociable lifestyle but at a pace suitable to them.

Yet we must also remember that not everyone is blessed with good health or a family to lean on in times of loneliness, often leading to severe isolation. It is thought that the impact of loneliness on one's health is the equivalent of smoking a packet of cigarettes each day. It is heart breaking that many people cite their TV as their only form of company.

That is why events like this, along with support phone lines and good community programmes from statutory organisations and charities, can really help. This Sunday is only one project trying to combat a serious problem for a worryingly large group of people. You may know someone who will benefit or you may just wish to knock on your elderly neighbour's door. Ultimately we should celebrate and support our Silver members of society. God willing, we'll all be one someday.