

Note from the Editor

It's that time of year that some love, some dread and others are utterly indifferent. This year, I've gone low key so you will only find the odd mention of the C word.

So onto day to day matters, Bucks County Council want to know your priorities for the coming year (below) but sadly their consultation is only on-line. With significant cuts likely, it seems harsh that the more vulnerable members of the community, and those less likely to be on-line, will therefore have no say. Perhaps you may feel like calling them instead so I have included their number.

There are two other reports again only available on line but fascinating reads. Healthwatch England have looked into the Discharge from hospital process (page 2) and an Age UK report on Later Life in the UK (page 8) which is jammed full of facts. If you would like a copy of either, please give me a call and I'll send one to you.

My 'I didn't know that' moment this month was discovering that UK Power Networks have a Priority Services Register. This is available to all elderly people (no age mentioned) as well as carers & those with medical equipment etc. You can register on line or by calling them (page 5)

We have been lucky with the weather so far although they are still predicting a harsh winter so please look after yourselves and take heed of some useful tips on page 5 on keeping well.

Andy

Consultation - Buckinghamshire County Council Budget 2016/17

Buckinghamshire County Council are currently running a consultation seeking your views to help them make decisions about the priorities for their budget for 2016/17.

This is an opportunity for residents to help shape the local authorities thinking and position on priorities for spending over the next two years. It is very important that to let them know what matters to you.

The link to the consultation is here <https://www.research.net/r/ResidentsBudgetConsultation2015>

The first page is an introduction to the consultation from Martin Tett - Leader of the Bucks County Council. The consultation is then broken down as follows:

- Tick 5 areas where you want spending to remain the same and 5 areas where there could be a reduction in spending.
- Opportunity to share your views about higher levels of Council Tax next year and the 2% specifically to help vulnerable adults and older people.
- A question about potential for new and higher charges for some services
- A question about local organisations working together with Buckinghamshire County Council to run some local services.

The questionnaire should take about 5 minutes to complete and the deadline for responses is the **17th December**

If you are not on the internet : Not good news I'm afraid! The council have decided that there is no money to provide print copies and if you would like to participate, they would encourage you to go to your local library where someone will assist you in completing the survey on line. Should you wish to speak to the council, they can be contacted on 01296 395 000



MEN IN SHEDS

AMERSHAM

Men in Sheds is a place where men of all ages can come along and take part in activities similar to what they would do at home or in their own garden shed but with the bonus of other like-minded men providing good company.

A typical 'Shed' provides materials, tools and equipment to enable members to develop interests and get involved in productive activities either using their existing skills or learning new ones, whilst enjoying the benefits of being part of a social group. This could be woodwork, electronics, metalwork or IT.

We look forward to welcoming new members and any new ideas for different products that we can make.

MARES COMMUNITY FARM,
Old Amersham Farm, High Street,
Old Amersham, HP7 0HR
Mondays - 1:00pm to 3:00pm

For details regarding our Shed; contact:
Samantha Hardy, Community Impact Bucks
01844 348831 / 07990 756742 or email:
samantha@communityimpactbucks.org.uk



Safely home: what happens when people leave hospital and care settings? **healthwatch**

Healthwatch England with the help of 101 local Healthwatch, heard from over 3,000 people who shared their stories about their experiences of the discharge process. The inquiry aimed to examine the human rather than the financial cost of poor experiences of the discharge process. It focused on the experiences of older people, homeless people, and people with mental health conditions, for whom the consequences of a failed discharge process were particularly detrimental

In a recent YouGov survey of 3,495 people across England: 18% of people who have been discharged from hospital in the last 3 years did not feel they received all the social care support they required after leaving hospital. 26% people felt their friend/relative who had been discharged from hospital in the last three years did not receive the social care support they needed.

They found that there are five core reasons people feel their departure was not handled properly:

1. People are experiencing delays and a lack of co-ordination between different services;
2. People are feeling left without the services and support they need after discharge;
3. They feel stigmatised & are not treated with respect because of their conditions or circumstances;
4. People feel they are not involved in decisions about their care or given the information they need;
5. People feel that their full range of needs is not considered.

Use of discharge checklists Responses received from 120 trusts indicate that:

- Almost all had a discharge checklist but less than half check whether people have a safe home/ place to go when discharged, or whether there is basic food, water, heating etc.
- 1 in 3 do not ensure notes about new medication are properly recorded and passed on to GPs or carers.
- 1 in 10 trusts do not routinely notify relatives and carers that someone has been discharged.
- They established that trusts used a variety of guidance from 57 different documents – creating huge variation

To read the full report, you can find it at www.healthwatch.co.uk/safely-home

Dickensian lung disease bronchiectasis on rise among pensioners

A Dickensian lung disease is on the rise among British pensioners, experts have warned.

Bronchiectasis occurs when the airways of the lungs become abnormally widened, leading to a build-up of excess mucus.

People can become more vulnerable to infection and symptoms include a persistent cough that usually brings up phlegm, and breathlessness.

The disease is incurable and although infections can be treated with antibiotics, there are concerns that the bacteria is becoming resistant to drugs.

Experts agree that bronchiectasis may occur in people who suffered an infection in childhood such as pneumonia or whooping cough, which damage the lung.

Underlying problems with the immune system and allergies are also thought to play a role.

NHS data shows that more than 12,000 people were admitted to hospital in England during 2013/14 with bronchiectasis. Most of these were aged over 60.

Now new research has found that bronchiectasis - often labelled a disease of the past - is becoming more common, especially among older people.

Cases of bronchiectasis have doubled in just under a decade among those aged 70 and over, it found.

The disease affected approximately 0.6% of people aged 70 or over in 2004, but this increased to 1.2% in 2013.

The new research was carried out by experts at University College London (UCL), University College London Hospitals (UCLH) NHS Foundation Trust, Imperial College London and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Published in the European Respiratory Journal, the team used GP records from 14 million patients from across the UK to identify those with bronchiectasis.

The results showed the condition particularly common in women and those in more affluent groups.

Jeremy Brown, professor of respiratory infection at UCL, said: "Bronchiectasis is historically associated with untreated chest infections when antibiotics were not readily available.

"We found that the disease has had a resurgence in recent years, particularly among more well-off members of society. This could be partly down to improved diagnosis in these groups but, whatever the reason, we need better treatment options for patients."

The study found that 42% of people with bronchiectasis also had asthma and 36% had chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

"The high prevalence of bronchiectasis in people with asthma and COPD is an important finding," said Dr Jennifer Quint, who carried out the study while at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and UCLH, and now works at Imperial College London.

"Whether the diagnosis of bronchiectasis precedes or follows the diagnosis of asthma or COPD is important to investigate next as it may help to guide longer-term management in these patients."

What are the symptoms?

The most common symptom of bronchiectasis is coughing up phlegm, often in large amounts, every day. People often feel very tired and find it difficult to concentrate. Some people experience shortness of breath or wheeze and may also have problems with their sinuses.

The build-up of mucus in your airways makes your lungs more vulnerable to infection, which can make these symptoms worse. Less common symptoms include coughing up blood, chest pain and joint pain.

Electrical safety at Christmas

Christmas Lights



After 12 months packed away in the loft, Christmas lights can easily become electrically unsafe.

To help prevent the most common electrical problems with Christmas lights, and to enjoy a safe and happy festive season, Electrical Safety First recommend the following simple precautions and checks.

ALWAYS:

- read and follow the manufacturers' instructions
- check your Christmas lights are not damaged or broken before use and look out for loose wires
- use only replacement bulbs of the same type and rating as those originally supplied with the lights
- ensure all outdoor lights are connected via a 30mA RCD protected socket
- replace failed lamps immediately to prevent overheating
- ensure plugs and transformers are plugged in indoors, even if the lighting is suitable for outdoor use
- switch your lights off and unplug them before you go to bed or go out
- keep lights away from flammable decorations and materials that can burn easily

NEVER:

- use lights outdoors unless they are specially designed for such use
- connect different lighting sets together
- connect lights to the supply whilst still in the packaging
- remove or insert lamps while the chain is connected to the supply
- overload sockets - try to avoid the use of extension leads or adaptors
- attempt to repair faulty lights - replace them
- use lights that are damaged or faulty

Source www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk

County Council Website

It's taken a while but the website link to all BCC Partnership Board minutes and agendas is now operational. www.buckscc.gov.uk/social-care/care-for-adults/partnership-boards/.

It also contains some information about dates of meetings going forward.

You can either:

- Go to the main BCC website and access by clicking "about my council" then clicking "committees" the link is under the Joint Committees section
- Go to the main BCC website and access by clicking "health and social care" then clicking "care for adults" the link is under Partnership Boards.

Bucks CC are working on uploading historical minutes and agendas



Community Christmas believes that no elderly person in the UK should be alone on Christmas Day unless they want to be.

Communities are encouraged to provide companionship to older people on Christmas Day by running a community lunch event.

If you are interested in attending an event, in Bucks there are Christmas lunches being offered in Wycombe, Buckingham, Gt Missenden, Aylesbury and Haddenham. Details can be found at

Www.communitychristmas.org.uk

but if you don't have access to the internet, please contact Andy (phone number on the back)

Winter Safety



UK Power Networks keep the lights on in your area regardless of your chosen energy supplier (the company that you pay your electricity bills to). They own and maintain the electricity lines and cables in London, the East and South East of England

Power cuts can be worrying and offer extra support during a power cut. Their services are free to customers who need support

Power cuts don't happen very often but if the electricity network is damaged or develops a fault it's their job to get your power back on.

They operate a **Priority Services Register** to ensure you will receive extra support if you experience a power cut.

Who can register to receive extra support?

The elderly, those dependent on medical equipment or who have a disability or young children.

What help should I expect to get during a power cut?

- A priority number that you can call 24 hours a day if you have a power cut
- Regular text messages or phone updates during a power cut
- Extra support from their partners, such as the British Red Cross, to visit your home during an emergency (they check with you first)

To register go to www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/internet/en/power-cuts

Or you can email PSR@ukpowernetworks.co.uk

Or call: **0800 169 9970**

STAY WELL THIS WINTER

Here are some simple things you can do to help yourself stay well this winter.

Keep warm – this may help prevent colds, flu or more serious health conditions such as heart attacks, strokes and pneumonia.

Eat well – food gives you energy, which helps to keep you warm. So, try to have regular hot meals and drinks throughout the day.

Get a flu jab – flu vaccination is offered free to people who are at risk and carers to help protect against flu & developing complications.

Colds – to ease the symptoms of a cold, drink plenty of fluids and try to rest. Steam inhalation and vapour rubs can help. Prevent colds from spreading by washing hands, sneeze and cough into tissues & throwing them away.

Sore throats – a sore throat is usually caused by a viral infection, such as a cold. Avoid anything that's too hot, as this can irritate your throat; cool or warm drinks and cool, soft foods should go down easier.

Asthma – Winter weather can set off asthma symptoms. Covering your nose and mouth with a warm scarf when you're out can help.

Norovirus (winter vomiting bug) although it can cause diarrhoea too. Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration. You can also take paracetamol for any aches, pains or fever.

Getting help

111 Unsure which NHS service you need, call 111. An adviser will ask questions to assess symptoms and give you the advice you need

Pharmacists can offer advice on a wide range of long-term conditions and illnesses such as coughs, colds and stomach upsets

See your GP

A walk-in centre, minor injuries unit or urgent care centre for a minor illness (infections, vomiting and stomach aches) that can't wait until your GP surgery is open. You don't need an appointment and they are open outside office hours

A&E provides vital care for life-threatening emergencies, such as loss of consciousness, suspected heart attacks, breathing difficulties

Know your energy rights for winter with this free guide

It seems nearly a million older people are not complaining when they get poor service from their energy supplier. According to Ombudsman Services and Age UK, a third of older people put up with poor service because they simply don't want to make a fuss, and it seems most of us don't have much of a clue about our consumer rights.

Ombudsman Services: Energy is the body that handles unresolved complaints about energy companies, and when they did a survey recently they found that not only too many of them hate making a fuss, but also feel intimidated when they do complain.

Billing was the main complaint, usually relating to disputed charges, inaccurate invoices and backdated billing. Poor customer service and supply problems also factored heavily in the list of complaints.

Lewis Shand Smith, Chief Ombudsman commented on the results of the survey, saying: "Compared to the general population, those in later life are likely to rely more heavily on their energy provision so it's worrying that so few take a complaint further when they have one. It's concerning that nearly a million older people in the UK prefer to grin and bear it when they have a problem with their energy because they don't want to make a fuss or feel intimidated. It's also worrying that so few know their consumer rights, which could leave many vulnerable."

To help resolve this situation, Ombudsman Services have issued a new "Know Your Energy Rights," guide to give older people the information and advice they need to solve their energy complaints. To download this free guide visit www.ombudsman-services.org/later-in-life.html

The general advice is that those who have a problem with a goods or service should follow the steps below in order to complain effectively:

- Firstly identify what you want to achieve, have a clear idea of what it is you want to achieve from complaining.
- Make notes beforehand so you remember everything you want to say.
- Remember it's your right to complain if you're not satisfied.
- Admit your part in the problem if you have any fault.
- Address one complaint at a time, ensure what you say is clear and fair.
- Keep records of all correspondence, including phone calls, paperwork, bills and receipts, if asked to send them anywhere make sure you send photocopies and keep originals.
- If you're not getting results complaining directly to the company, identify the person or organisation that has the power to make changes and help.
- If your complaint has not been resolved quickly (normally within eight weeks), you can take your complaint to an organisation like Ombudsman Services.

To contact the Ombudsman Services

Email: osenquiries@os-energy.org

Phone: 0330 440 1624 **Monday to Friday 9am until 5pm**

Fax: 0330 440 1625

Textphone: 0330 440 1600

Health News

Let's Talk Health Buck-



Stroke services in Buckinghamshire

You can now participate in the Stroke services in Buckinghamshire consultation. This consultation is open until the 31st Dec 2015 at 23:59.

If you or someone you care for has had a stroke, they would like to hear your views about the support you received at home, once you left hospital.

This consultation is being run in partnership between Buckinghamshire County Council and Aylesbury Vale and Chiltern Clinical Commissioning Groups. If you have any queries regarding stroke services in Bucks please call 01296 387821.

To help shape future services you can find the consultation at

www.letstalkhealthbucks.nhs.uk

A website has been launched to help you find the most appropriate local health service for common symptoms in Buckinghamshire.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information within Health Help Now is accurate.

It is not a diagnostic tool and does not intend to offer specific advice on treatments or diagnostic tests that may be needed.

If you have changing or persistent problems, you should seek medical advice. If you need urgent health advice but it's less urgent than 999, call 111.

You can find this website at <http://bucks.healthhelpnow-nhs.net/>



SAFE HAVEN
DEMENTIA CENTRE

Workshop For Carers Of People With Dementia

Monday, January 18, 2016 – 2pm to 5pm

2pm – Refreshments on arrival

2.15pm – Tips on how to provide the best personal care to a person with dementia

2.45pm – The Top 10 Techniques: Ideal Ways To Approach A Person With Dementia

3.10pm – Discussion on various dementia therapies, including doll therapy and animal therapy

3.45pm – Refreshments, with time to chat with other carers and staff members

4.05pm – Advice on how to deal with someone with dementia who wanders

4.15pm – Holistic therapies and their benefits for people with dementia, with practical demonstrations on how to perform simple therapies at home

5pm – “Poem of the Day” to end the workshop

£20.00 per person. To book a place on the workshop, please call Safe Haven Dementia Centre on 01494 854 399

To find out more about the work that the Safe Haven Dementia Centre do, including some free workshops on Pet and Art Therapy, go to www.safehavendementiacentre.co.uk or call on the number above

2015

Contact Details for the Bucks Older People's Action Group

Andy can be contacted on

Tel : 01296 622122

E-mail : info@bopag.org.uk

BOPAG, c/o The Hale Farmhouse, Hale Lane,
Wendover HP22 6QR

Bucks Older People's Action Group Meetings

2016 Dates

20th January

16th March

18th May

20th July

21st September

16th November

Venue of the next meeting to be confirmed

All are welcome. Please contact Andy Trueman on 01296 622122 for further information



Don't forget

GALAXY Hot Chocolate Fund are looking to help small, local community projects and community minded people .

From November 2nd 2015 for 17 weeks, we are seeking to award 85 **£300 donations** to help volunteer groups and people

Also to celebrate the fifth Birthday of the **GALAXY Hot Chocolate Fund** they are throwing five **GALAXY Hot Chocolate Tea Parties!** If you know a charity that deserves a party with GALAXY then send a message to galaxyteaparty@escapadepr.com. Be sure to include a quick line about the chosen charity, along with your contact details.

For more information:

galaxyhotchocolate.com

Dates for your diary

11th December 10am – 2pm **Event: Advice and Demonstration Stand:** Friars Square Shopping Centre, Aylesbury

12th December 7.30pm Arts at Stowe Jingle BellJazz with Rance's Rockin' Chair . A selection of jazzy Christmas favourites. Tickets £10 / Free for accompanied U16s All proceeds go towards Stowe Church Water Project and Children's Air Ambulance. Ends approx. 9.30PM Tickets can be booked by calling 0845 680 1926 or go to www.oxboffice.com

5th February 2016 Nominations close for the Dignity in Care Awards To nominate someone for an award you can go to the website www.careadvicebuckinghamshire.org/dignity and do it on-line or contact **Elaine Kelly**, Quality in Care Team, BCC on 01296 387567

15th April 2016 Dignity in Care Awards will be held at the Oculus, The Gateway Aylesbury at 10.00-13.00.



Later Life in the United Kingdom

This factsheet, which is updated on a monthly basis, is the most up-to-date source of publicly available, general information on people in later life in the UK. Wherever possible, figures for the whole UK are quoted. For ease of reading and unless otherwise stated, the term "older" is used here for people aged 65 and over.

It covers over 40 different topics under the broad headings of

- Health & Wellbeing
- Home & Care
- Money Matters
- Travel & Lifestyle
- Work & Learning

It is a fascinating read full of facts such as *Two thirds of NHS clients are aged 65 and over but they receive only two fifths of total expenditure*

The full report can be found at ageuk.org.uk/Documents/EN-GB/Factsheets/Later_Life_UK_factsheet.pdf?dtrk=t