

Note from the Editor

It's that time of year again that some love and others prefer to carry on, hoping that perhaps it might get cancelled this year. My dear old Dad was certainly in the latter camp. As children, he once told us that Christmas had actually been cancelled as one of Santa's reindeer had died. I know it sounds terrible but we have happy memories of the severe telling off he got when Mum found out.

Last month, Trading Standards ran a superb conference on Scams & Financial Abuse. Jane Osborn has kindly contributed a write up of the event on page 3. Thank you Jane.

I'd also like to thank Carol Aspinall, Carers Bucks, who came along to our meeting in November to talk about the work of the Carers Hub. They are based between wards 8&9 at Stoke Mandeville. If you happen to be there, pop in and see them, you will be amazed at what you learn and the help they can give!

We have turned our sights back to our website and are busy adding groups and activities. They are grouped by towns and villages so that it's easy to find things going on either where you live or can easily get to. We'd really like to get as many added as possible to help people find out what is going on so if you know or are involved in a group and are happy for us to include it, please get in touch. All details are on the back page.

So as 2016 draws to a close, I will leave you with my best wishes and thanks to you all for being part of our network.

Andy



County Council Budget Consultation



It's that time of year again when Bucks County Council are trying to figure out their spending priorities for next year.

Their objectives are to :

- Continue to provide quality services for the most vulnerable and in need
- Invest in the right technology and infrastructure to improve the lives of residents
- Look for new ways to generate income and different ways of providing services to offset higher demand and decreasing funds from central government.

They are currently running an online consultation to ask for your views on the budget for next year. They want to know what you think of their proposals

Taking part is quick and easy (if you have a computer!) You can take part in the consultation on the BCC website until Sunday 8 January. www.buckscc.gov.uk/about-your-council/finance/budget/budget-consultation/

If you are not online, and would like to find out more, please call BCC on 01296 395000

Familiar Faces on the Huxley & Howe, Wycombe Sound Radio Show



David Whittaker, Wye Valley Volunteers & Contact the Elderly, and Andy Chapman, Prevention Matters, appeared last week on the Huxley & Howe show with Tracey Huxley and Maddy Howe to talk about the work of the groups and the many wonderful volunteers running these and other voluntary groups. Together with terrific support from Carers Bucks, Prevention Matters and many other like minded organisations, we all make a huge difference in these very trying times of financial cutbacks to the elderly.



Christmas Coffee Morning

at

Hazlemere Library

Tuesday 13th December, 10:30—11:30

Please join us for coffee, mince pies and a special guest appearance by children from **Hazlemere Church of England Combined School** singing a collection of Christmas songs from their Nativity play.



Buckinghamshire Libraries

01296 382 415

library@buckscc.gov.uk



Christmas Party in Gerrards Cross

22nd December

We are holding a Christmas party for senior citizens living in the community around Gerrards Cross at the All Saints Church Hall on Oval Way, Gerrards Cross from 10:30 - 12:30.

Suggested donation is £5 per head.

We will be singing loads of Christmas favourites, playing bells, waving tinsel, drinking tea, coffee and eating mince pies.

We also have a guest singer coming to sing too. Please call Sally on 07740 679054 or 01494 261 455 to confirm your place.

We would also like to start a regular weekly singing and music session for the elderly in the community - starting in January.

Christmas Songs

Buckingham Library, Verney Close,
Buckingham, MK18 1JP

Thursday 15 December
10:45am to 11:15am



Enjoy Christmas Songs at Buckingham Library performed by Buckingham Primary School Choir
Free coffee & mince pies

Cost: Free

No booking required, just turn up on the day

Hearing loop available

Wheelchair access

Parking nearby

For more information please call 01296 382415

We welcome Text Relay calls prefix

18001 or email: lib-

buc@buckscc.gov.uk



Do you know someone who will be alone on Christmas Day?

Chesham & Amersham Christmas Day Party for the Elderly

December 25th

11am to 3pm

At the Douglas McMinn Centre, Chesham

Party is free for guests

Open to older residents from Chesham, Little Chalfont and Amersham

Register your interest at your local Town or Parish Council (Chesham, Amersham or Little Chalfont) or contact Cllr Noel Brown on 077408 649 11 or email nbrown@buckscc.gov.uk

Supported by Chesham & Amersham Town Councils, Little Chalfont Parish Council, local businesses, voluntary and community groups and volunteers



Don't be a sucker!

What is a scam and how do you recognize one? Scams come in all shapes and sizes and here are three examples.

“You won't believe it....but read this letter anyway which is worth its weight in gold”.

“In spite of her doubts, Mrs Bloggs requested the [offer] and became very rich shortly after”.

“Hurry....such an opportunity will probably never come around a second time and you would regret it for the rest of your life”.

Sadly, we live in an increasingly cynical world. How many of us have received telephone calls, emails, letters or doorstep calls – the four most common type of scams - offering fantastic special deals, super expectations and fabulously cheap offers which are too good to be true?

I suspect we all have and I also suspect that some of us have fallen for the 'deal' and we are just too proud to either admit it or tell anyone else about it AND THAT IS WHAT THE SCAMMERS RELY ON.

It will never happen to me –I'm far too street savvy! I wouldn't allow it! I would see straight through it! At my age, I've seen it all before. Really? Have a look at a few statistics

- Consumers lose £5-10 billions to scams each year.
- The average age of those targeted by scams is 75 – with only 5% of these being reported to the authorities
- 53% of the over 65s will be targeted

So how do your details get on what is known as a 'suckers list' – one way would be via a perfectly legitimate purchase – such as a knee support disability aid advertised in the national press – and then your details are 'sold on' to others. This happened to the relative of a senior Trading Standards Officer who specializes in scams so it can happen to anyone.

Don't get caught out by a scam; protect yourself against fraud (which is what a scam is) and follow these simple rules:

- Never ever disclose your security details – bank account numbers, sort codes, social security number etc
- Don't assume anything is genuine – be cynical!
- Don't be rushed – scammers rely on 'pressurising' you to make a decision.
- Listen to your instincts – if it sounds too good to be true – it probably is

Stay in control.

Stop – think – have a cuppa – sleep on it and if unsure – go with your instinct OR talk to the Citizens Advice Bureau or go on-line and visit the Friends Against Scams website – www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk



December Events at Stowe House

Stowe
arts

7 December: Christmas Gothic 8pm, Roxburgh Hall

We resurrect a Victorian tradition of telling ghost stories for the dark winter nights. Be transported by a spectral woman as she tells haunting tales of the festive season.

8 December, 8pm: Winter Baroque Carnival, Uglund Auditorium

Musical mavericks Red Priest present a cheering feast of music for winter performed in their own inimitable, high-octane style. Programme includes Albinoni's Adagio and Vivaldi's Winter from the Four Seasons.

11 December, 7pm A Festive Winter's Evening with Brackley Chamber Music Club,

Enjoy an evening at Stowe House, State Music Room listening to music performed by Brackley Chamber Music Club. Interspersed with festive readings and wonderful music, the perfect start to the Festive Season.

Sunday 18 December, 7:30pm Choir of Clare College Cambridge: Christmas Music by Candlelight.

Stowe Chapel is the perfect setting for music for Advent and Christmas.

Join us for a mulled wine from 6.30pm.

Box Office: 01280 825710

Enquiries: 01280 818012

www.artsatstowe.co.uk



Yoga

Very gentle for less
mobile people



ADULT LEARNING
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

New course starting in Beaconsfield

At Beaconsfield Adult Learning Centre,
Wattleton Road, HP9 1RN

Ideally suited to those who are returning to exercise after a break, those who have had injuries which have limited their mobility or more mature adults who wish to improve their mobility.

Starting Friday 13th January 2017

2.15pm - 3.15pm

Fee - £61 - for 11 weeks (£5.50 per session)

Course code - D5SF11AHM

Contact us now to book your place or for more details 01296 382403

FOR MORE COURSES AND INFORMATION
VISIT www.adultlearningbcc.ac.uk

Events for Seniors at the Emmanuel Church, Chesham

On the 2nd Tuesdays throughout the year we hold a lunch for people who live alone. This is held at Emmanuel Church at 12.30. A delicious meal cooked on the premises, for only £2.50 incl. tea or coffee. We call this event 'Lunch in Company'.

We have a special Christmas Lunch on **Tuesday 13th December** with all the trimmings and raffle.

We also have a Seniors' meeting on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Thursday afternoons at 2.30pm. We call this RiPE - Retired 'interesting' People of Emmanuel. It has been suggested that the 'i' represents 'interesting' or even 'inspirational'! During which we have a time of worship and prayer, plus visiting speakers etc. followed by homemade cake and tea. This is open to anyone, members of churches or not.

To find out more, contact Evelyn on 01494 784372.

Emmanuel Church, Broad St,
Chesham, HP5 3EF





Voices and Choices is a new Community Interest Company (CIC) based in Chesham. It has been set up to provide information and advice to help people living alone to remain in their homes with the help and support of community services and other agencies.

Safe and Sound at Home

It is often the little things that go wrong which affect whether we feel in control of our lives. It could be the cobwebs, the garden, our hair, or the family insisting we can't cope. Whatever matters to you, we will help by offering friendly, impartial information, advice or advocacy which helps you stay safe and sound in your own home.

Need our help?

Whatever you need: a trusted tradesman, access to a leisure or social activity, advocacy to talk to a health provider, or any other impartial information, advice and support, we can help you find safe services to maintain your independence in your home. If you are elderly, or have a physical or learning disability, a mental health problem, or you are living alone, and you live in Amersham, Chesham, Gt Missenden or Prestwood and surrounding parishes, we are here to help.

We need you

Will you join us today to help us provide a service that will touch a need in the lives of most families at some point? Could you volunteer a couple of hours of your time to visit people in their own homes, answer telephone queries, or help populate our info hub?

Long Term Conditions Impacting Independence

In the Chiltern area there are 15,000 people over 65 and nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of them have a long-term condition. More than 10,000 of them are single pensioners. Over 1,000 people have a learning difficulty and many more of them are now living independently in the community. Over 7,000 people have some kind of mental health problem and the number of people with dementia is increasing, leaving many of their carers coping with additional problems of everyday life.

What We Do

Voices and Choices is a voluntary organisation working in Bucks. Our aim is to develop the capacity and skills of adults who, irrespective of their circumstances, require assistance to improve their quality of life and their choices over where they live and the services they receive.

The key focus of our work is to support people to remain in their own homes while receiving the help and services they require to do so. This service will be launched under the brand Stay in Your Home. The service will be delivered by managing a group of volunteers who will provide a service directly in people's homes or through a web-based hub and other communication routes

To get in touch with Voices & Choices, you can:

- write to them at Voices and Choices CIC, The White Hill Centre, White Hill, Chesham HP5 1AG
- Or call them on 07872 600565 (mobile phone) or 01494 784566 (landline)
Currently this phone is not monitored 24/7. Please leave a detailed message including your number so we can call you back.
- Or visit their website at www.voicesandchoices.org.uk



Winter Safety



Age UK Advice

As we get older, our bodies respond differently to the cold and this can leave us more vulnerable in winter. Keeping warm can help reduce the risk of serious health problems that are more common in the colder months, such as chest infections, heart attacks and strokes. Here are Age UK's top tips to help stay healthy, safe and comfortable.

- Ensure your heating system is safe & efficient by getting it serviced annually by a qualified engineer .
- Never block air vents and ensure adequate ventilation if you use wood or coal or gas.
- If water pipes freeze they can burst. Know where your main stopcock is. .
- Have your electric blanket serviced at least every three years.
- Make sure your smoke alarm is working. You can ask your local fire service to do a free check on your home for fire safety.
- Install an audible carbon monoxide alarm in each room that has a gas appliance.
- Make sure you claim all the financial help you can to help with heating bills.
- Dress in layers and make sure you have warm shoes or boots with non-slip soles.
- Keep a mixture of salt and sand handy to put on steps or paths in icy weather.
- Keep simple cold, flu and sore throat remedies in the house and have a flu jab
- Order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time, particularly if bad weather is forecast.
- Ask your local pharmacy if they offer a prescription pick-up and delivery service.
- Keep basic food items in the cupboard or freezer in case it's too cold to go shopping.
- Ask your family, neighbours or friends if they could call or visit you more often.
- Keep a torch handy in case you lose power and keep your devices fully charged. If there is a power cut, you can call 105 for free to get help and advice.
- Keep a list of emergency numbers, such as your utility companies, by your phone.



Christmas Safety

There's lots to think about in December - but Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service hopes fire safety is top of your Christmas list.

Decorations, cards, wrapping and Christmas trees can all act as extra fuel for a fire sparked by candles, overheated sockets, faulty fairy lights or cigarettes. The risks increase when you add cooking, drinking, parties and guests into the mix.

Here's some seasonal advice to help you celebrate in safety:

- Ensure you have a working smoke alarm installed on all levels of your home. Test them weekly and never remove batteries to power presents. Bucks Fire & Rescue Service will carry out a free home safety check, fitting free smoke alarms where needed. Book one by ringing 01296 744477 or emailing cs@bucksfire.gov.uk
- Never leave cooking unattended. The majority of fires start in the kitchen, so this is a high risk area. Avoid cooking while under the influence of alcohol, and always turn off kitchen appliances when you have finished cooking.
- Never leave candles unattended. Keep candles out of the reach of children, and away from decorations, cards, wrapping paper, fires, lights and heaters.
- If you smoke, make sure cigarettes are fully extinguished, and take extra care if you are tired or have had a drink.
- Don't block exits with Christmas trees and presents.
- Don't overload sockets – ensure only one plug per socket. Always turn off plugs when they are not in use, except those that are designed to be left on, such as freezers.
- Switch off Christmas lights and unplug them before you go out or go to bed.
- Always use an RCD on outdoor equipment. It instantly switches off power if there is a fault (found in DIY stores).
- Never use heaters to dry clothes.
- In the event of a fire, get out, stay out and call 999. Make sure everyone staying with you over Christmas knows what to do in an emergency.



Health News

Pride Comes Before a Fall!

1 in 3 people over the age of 65 and half of those over the age of 80 fall at least once a year.

To learn more about Falls Prevention come along to an informative talk taking place at 2 venues in the new year

High Wycombe

Friday 27th January 11:30—13:30 at Downley Community Centre, School Close, **High Wycombe** HP13 5TR

Speakers :

Dr Raj Thakker, GP & Clinical Commissioning Director for planned Care, Chiltern CCG
Kate Lord, Falls Specialist, Occupational Therapist, Wycombe Hospital
Bucs Fire & Rescue, Lions Club and Alzheimers Society will also be there

Everyone Welcome, Free Refreshments and local transport available

Limited Spaces available, Please call Cathy Price on 07580 953 181 to book

Old Amersham

Friday 10th February 14:30-15:30 at Old Amersham Seniors in Society (OASIS), Community Hall, (End of Whielden Close), **Old Amersham**, HP7 0HZ

Speaker :

Dr Raj Thakker, GP & Clinical Commissioning Director for planned Care, Chiltern CCG

Everyone Welcome,

If you can't make either date, remember to

1. Keep your home safe and
2. See a GP if you are concerned about falls

Consultation on future specification

The current contract for Local Healthwatch Bucks services ends on the 31 August 2017 and Bucks County Council plan for the new contract to start in September 2017. It is anticipated that organisations will be invited to bid for the contract in February 2017.

If you would like to give feedback on the proposed specification and what Local Healthwatch services in Buckinghamshire should look like you can do so by visiting <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/about-your-council/have-your-say/>

The consultation closes at midnight, Tuesday 13 December 2016 .

If you are not on the email, and wish to feedback, please contact Bucks County Council on 01296 395 000.

Wycombe MIIU to be inspected by the Care Quality Commission

CQC will visit both the Out of Hours and Minor Injury and Illness Unit (MIIU) run by Care UK at Wycombe General Hospital on the 13th December.

Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust is not involved in the inspection of Wycombe MIIU.

The CQC monitors, inspects and regulates services to make sure they meet fundamental standards. They publish their findings, including performance ratings to help people choose care

Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP)

Reading Borough Council took the decision in November to publish the STP for Berkshire West, Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire due to their serious concerns about transparency of the draft document, drawn up by the NHS.

Whilst Buckinghamshire is ahead in terms of cuts as we have been receiving less funding for some time. However, this does not mean that there are more to come. Campaigners are still trying to unpick what it all means.

The STP can be accessed at <https://consult.reading.gov.uk/css/stp/>



2016

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

2017 Dates

Wednesday 18th January 2017

Wednesday 22nd March 2017

Wednesday 17th May 2017

Wednesday 19th July 2017

Wednesday 20th September 2017

Wednesday 22nd November 2017

All are welcome. Meetings run 10-12.30 Please contact Andy Trueman on 01296 622122 for further information



Chiltern Music Therapy Carol Singing

Chiltern Music Therapy will be out and about this Christmas, singing carols and generally getting into the Christmas spirit.

If you would like to come and hear us in full swing, you'll find us at :

Carol Singing with South Bucks Choral Society on Wednesday 14th December
We are delighted to be Carol Singing once again with South Bucks Choral Society at **Gerrards Cross Station on Wednesday 14th December at 6.30pm!**

Chess Valley Male Voice Choir
Saturday December 17th
Our final event of the year, we are really looking forward to attending the Chess Valley Male Voice Choir - **Saturday December 17th. 7.30pm - Broadway Baptist Church, Chesham!**



Christmas Market

Wednesday 7th December

12pm - 2pm

At

Windsor Court

Kingsmead Business Park

Frederick Place

High Wycombe

HP11 1JU

Fabulous local businesses that will be here ranging from cheese products to handmade Christmas cards and hand knitted children's goods, so come and have a browse and purchase in time for Christmas.



Defrosting Vehicles Reminder

Neighbourhood Policing Teams are reminding residents not to give opportunist criminals easy access to your vehicle in cold weather.

It is tempting to start your vehicle and leave it unattended while it is defrosting. When it is cold outside it might seem attractive to wait in the warm, maybe while you finish your breakfast, drink your coffee or pick up forgotten items before heading to work.

This can be the ideal time for thieves to steal your vehicle and it only takes a moment

Even if you have locked your car it only takes seconds for someone to break a window and get in. It is also highly unlikely that your insurance company would pay out under these circumstances.

Be on your guard if you pop back into the house. Don't leave doors insecure while you pick up last minute items and don't leave vehicle keys where they could easily be picked up by someone reaching inside the door.

If you see anyone acting suspiciously around parked vehicles please call in through to the police on the 24 hour number 101. If you suspect a crime is actually happening at that moment please dial on 999