

**Note from the Editor;** Hello everyone, I hope you are all keeping well in these tough times. I'm hearing good news about the vaccine roll out and how well it has been organised. You should receive a letter inviting you to attend a vaccination site which will have your NHS number on it so please take it with you when you go. I have listed the latest updates on the vaccination sites for you, as of time of print, so hopefully you are all aware of how and where to go to get yours done.

This months newsletter has information on groups offering free transportation to the vaccination sites as well as those offering support to people who are experiencing loneliness. I have a lovely article offering walks for the elderly, some history from 1881 and updates on current scams that are going around. We hope to see you all at our BOPAG meeting, details on the back page. Stay safe.....Paula. ☺

## THE CHILTERNS DIAL-A-RIDE VACCINATION TRANSPORT

With the arrival of the COVID-19 vaccines, and the vaccine programme rolling out, there are and will be those will have difficulty finding safe transport to clinics and designated points for vaccination. CDAR have extended their free service to help provide transport for COVID-19 vaccine appointments to the elderly and all adults who have mobility problems.

They are using their bespoke minibuses, driven by their trained, caring drivers. For patient transport, they are predominantly using their larger minibuses to enable the required distance between patient and driver to be maintained. With their smaller buses, Perspex screens have been installed between the driver and single passenger. Drivers will be using face masks, gloves and antibacterial wipes.

At least 3 days notice will be required to enable them to make arrangements. They may be in a position to help at shorter notice depending on availability. The number to ring for help is; **07923 591955** (30 miles outside the Chiltern, High Wycombe and South Bucks Districts excluding London). [www.chiltern-dial-a-ride.net/about-us/](http://www.chiltern-dial-a-ride.net/about-us/)





## COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

Number of vaccines given in our region **121,338** (as of 21 January)

The Government has announced that the top four priority groups in the Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) list will be completed by mid-February. These are:

Residents in a care home for older adults and their carers. All those 80 years of age and over and frontline health and social care workers. All those 75 years of age and over. All those 70 years of age and over and clinically extremely vulnerable individuals. This is around 120,000 people in Buckinghamshire.

There are a number of different ways you could be vaccinated: Local Vaccination Centres (run by Buckinghamshire GPs). GPs are also delivering the vaccine directly to care home residents and staff. Pharmacy Sites, National mass vaccination sites, Hospital sites for health and social care staff. All vaccination sites have parking on site or nearby.

**Buckinghamshire Local Vaccination Centres**, which are nine GP led sites, are now operating across the county. Residents in the top four priority groups will be offered a vaccination appointment locally. (in addition to National Vaccination Sites). Vaccinations are not delivered at GP surgeries but at the vaccination site they are linked to.

**Pharmacy Vaccination Sites;** If you have received a letter from the NHS you can book your vaccination at one of the Pharmacy Vaccination Sites using the National Booking System. 3 new pharmacy sites are, Odeon cinema in Aylesbury, one in Wycombe and another in Marlow.

There are two **Mass Vaccination Sites** planned to cover Buckinghamshire which you will be able to book through the National Booking System: These will be opening in early February. Sites currently closest to Buckinghamshire are: Salt Hill, Slough (South East), Epsom racecourse in Surrey (South East), Excel Centre in London (London), Wembley (London) Robertson House in Stevenage (East of England)

If you need to cancel your appointment for any reason please call **119**.  
[www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/community-hub/covid-19-vaccination-programme/](http://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/community-hub/covid-19-vaccination-programme/)





## Scammers prey on the vulnerable

Around the UK, there are reports of dangerous, fake NHS text messages circulating, telling people that they're eligible to apply for the COVID-19 vaccine.

The link takes you to an extremely convincing fake NHS website that asks for personal details including bank/card details. Buckinghamshire Council's Trading Standards team are also receiving information that cold calls regarding the vaccine are taking place, where scammers are asking people to pay for the vaccine over the phone. Most of these vaccine scams are targeting elderly residents who receive a cold call to advise that their vaccination would be carried out in their home, and that the caller requires their name, address and also financial details to pay for the vaccine.

Other reports relate to approaches made by text and from a recorded voice message on the telephone. In each case the recipient is required to respond by clicking a link in the text message or by pressing 1 when receiving the call. They are then asked to give personal information, as well as financial details to book their vaccination.

**The vaccine is free and only available from the NHS who will contact you when it is your turn. The NHS will NEVER ask you to press a button on your keypad or send a text to confirm you want to receive the vaccine, and NEVER ask for payment or for your bank details.**

Report all scams to Trading Standards via Citizens Advice Consumer Service on **0808 223 1133** or if a person feels threatening phone **999**.

To deter visits from cold callers, residents can display a no cold calling sticker by their front doors. To obtain a Stop Cold Calling Sticker Pack or to report an incident please contact Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards via the Citizens Advice Consumer Helpline on **0808 223 1133**.





## Scams & Frauds

### Pension pot scams

Criminals are continuing to target pension pots throughout the coronavirus outbreak. Be wary of free pension review offers. If you are contacted out of the blue about your pension, it's likely to be a scam

Check the FCA's Financial Services Register to make sure that anyone offering you advice or other financial services is authorised by the FCA. And only use the details provided on the FCA Register, not details a firm gives you, in case they are pretending to be an FCA authorised firm.

[www.fca.org.uk/firms/financial-services-register](http://www.fca.org.uk/firms/financial-services-register)

### Spoof HMRC phone calls

Action Fraud has experienced an increase in the reporting of malicious calls and voicemails, to members of the public purporting to be from Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC).

Fraudsters are spoofing genuine HMRC telephone numbers to deceive their victims over the phone. The fraudsters state that as a result of the victim's non-payment of tax or other duty, the victim is liable for prosecution or other legal proceedings in order to settle the balance. The fraudsters suggest victims can avoid this, by arranging payment to be made immediately by methods such as bank transfer or by purchasing iTunes gift cards. If the victim is hesitant or refuses to comply, the suspect makes a threat such as immediate arrest, sending bailiffs to the victim's address or, in some cases, deportation.

In genuine cases, HMRC will initially make direct contact with you via post/letter and potentially follow up that letter with a phone call at a later date.

If HMRC contact you via telephone they will quote the reference number on the initial letter you should have received. HMRC will not discuss something you are not already aware of, like a tax investigation, and will NOT demand immediate payment.

Please don't let these criminals fool you, hang up the phone if you are unsure and report it to Action Fraud at [actionfraud.police.uk](http://actionfraud.police.uk), or by calling **0300 123 2040**.



## **Wycombe Swan's Old Town Hall brings COVID battle centre stage as new vaccination centre**

Wycombe Swan Theatre's Old Town Hall venue opens its doors to bring the battle against coronavirus centre stage as it becomes the latest COVID vaccination site for High Wycombe, where GPs will be vaccinating patients aged 80 and over

This Old Town Hall, in Queen Victoria Road, joins the GP-led vaccination sites already operating at other locations across the county - in Chalfont St Peter, Princes Risborough, Winslow and Chesham, along with another site in the High Wycombe area.

As well as people aged 80 and over, care home staff are also being prioritised in this first phase of the national vaccination rollout.

All patients eligible to have the vaccine at this stage will be contacted by the NHS first. Patients are being asked not to contact their GP practice to try to arrange an appointment. Other age groups and vulnerable patients will be offered the vaccination over the coming weeks and months.



## **Impact of COVID-19 on older people's health and care Jan 2021**

### **Age UK COVID-19 survey**

Age UK are conducting research to understand more about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on older people's health and care. They are especially interested to hear how the new restrictions over winter have impacted on older people.

They are looking to hear from older people themselves but also from friends and family who want to share how the pandemic has impacted on the older people they care about.

To take part please click on the following link;  
[www.surveymonkey.com/r/28GSQTW](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/28GSQTW) or call 01296 431 911





## **Accompanied Walks at Chiltern Open Air Museum** Wednesdays and Fridays March – October 2021 (subject to health guidelines)

The team at Chiltern Open Air Museum (COAM) recognises that since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, difficulties for those members of the elderly community who were already experiencing social isolation, have been exacerbated. To promote and support the health and wellbeing of this sector of our community, COAM is inviting individuals to the museum for an accompanied walk with a friendly and knowledgeable COAM volunteer. You may bring a carer or companion and even your dog if you have one! This project, funded by the Sherling Trust, will give visitors the opportunity to enjoy a walk around the Chalfont St Giles-based museum and learn about its 37 heritage buildings which are set in 45 beautiful acres of gardens, park and woodland.

Accompanied Walks are free of charge for over 65s and finish with a free cuppa or cold drink on the Museum's village green. For those without transport, taxis may be arranged at a pre-agreed cost. Government guidelines on social distancing will be followed and a carer or friend can come along for support, if needed.



Benefits include: A dose of 'vitamin green' from being outdoors in a rural setting. The security of being in a supervised setting (as opposed to a public park) with clean and attended toilets. Social interaction and the knock-on well-being benefits associated with the above, such as an increase in confidence, a greater ability to manage existing health conditions, and a diversion from negative thoughts.

If you are interested in an Accompanied Walk at COAM, please contact Jacqui Gellman, COAM Outreach, [outreach@coam.org.uk](mailto:outreach@coam.org.uk)

Or call **01494 871117**.

For fun quiz's about the museum follow this link;  
[www.coam.org.uk/museum-buckinghamshire/historic-buildings/](http://www.coam.org.uk/museum-buckinghamshire/historic-buildings/)





## REDUCING LONELINESS

Voices and Choices is a voluntary organisation working in Buckinghamshire. Their 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.



Their Community Companionship Project is aimed at reducing loneliness in our community. There are 1.4 million lonely older people in the UK\* (Age UK ) and their experience has been made worse by the COVID 19 pandemic.

Voices and Choices look to identify these people and assign them a volunteer to assist with finding them an activity which would alleviate their loneliness. Once social distancing measures have been eased this may be finding them a local group, such as a coffee morning, knit and natter or dancing group and accompanying them on their first few visits if required. It may also involve identifying remote activities, such as online coffee mornings and supporting them with learning to use their mobile phone or laptop to access the group.

If you know someone who would benefit from this service please call; **01494 784566**

Email; [info@voicesandchoices.org.uk](mailto:info@voicesandchoices.org.uk)

## University Of Oxford Research Study

A couple of months ago we asked you to take part in a study about loneliness. It involved participating in a phone call and we received the following feedback from Jessica who was involved in the project:

**“The people who participated have fed back that they've really enjoyed taking part and answering the different questions. People have not reported it to be upsetting, difficult or lasting too long. Participants have been pleased that they felt able to contribute to such an important area of research. Myself and my research team are immensely grateful of everyone's time and contributions.**

**I can personally say it's been a real privilege to hear people's views and experiences on the subject. I thank everyone who has considered taking part, taken part, or let somebody know about the study.”**



## Staying connected and well when you're staying at home

Staying at home during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic may increase feelings of loneliness and affect your health and wellbeing. You may have to make more effort to stay in touch with people and find ways to keep your mind and body active. If you're finding it difficult, there are helplines and support organisations to help you.

Keep in touch with your friends, family and neighbours. If you're able to, call them regularly to see how they are and tell them how you're feeling. Hearing someone's voice can make a big difference to how you feel.

If there's someone you've been meaning to get in touch with for a while, now may be a good time - it doesn't matter how long it's been. They may be very pleased to hear from you. If you're not sure what to talk about, you could compare notes on how you're coping with isolation or tell them about books, films or TV programmes you've enjoyed, for example.

There are many other ways to stay in touch. You could write a letter if you can safely get to a post box or ask someone to post it for you. Bear in mind that post is taking a bit longer at the moment. If you have a smartphone or computer, use email and social media, such as Facebook. You could set up group chats on applications such as Whatsapp and use FaceTime, Skype or Zoom to make free video calls. If you don't know how to do these things but would like to try, see below for where you can get help.

If you have a religion, stay in touch with your faith community. While you can't go to your usual place of worship, you could join prayers and services online, or listen to religious or spiritual podcasts, such as BBC Sounds. The Church of England has a free phoneline called Daily Hope **0800 804 8044** for those who aren't online. If it feels strange to observe your religion alone, you might like to connect with a friend online or over the phone and celebrate together.

Age UK digital support - contact **01296 438410**

[www.independentage.org/get-advice/personal-life/loneliness/staying-connected-and-well-when-youre-staying-at-home](http://www.independentage.org/get-advice/personal-life/loneliness/staying-connected-and-well-when-youre-staying-at-home)

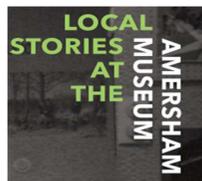


**Independent  
Age**



## **THE GREAT BLIZZARD OF 1881**

### **JANUARY 2021 MARKS THE 140TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WORST BLIZZARD IN RECENT BRITISH HISTORY.**



In mid January 1881 there was bitterly cold weather throughout Wales and southern England below the Humber. On the evening of Friday, January 14, temperatures reached minus 1° Fahrenheit (-18°C) in South Bucks. During Saturday 15 to Monday 17 there were heavy frosts, and water froze.

On Saturday, January 15 there were thousands of skaters on the London lakes. There were also skaters on the River Chess and Skottowes Pond in Chesham, on the Grand Union Canal and the Thames at Marlow. The frost continued during Sunday, followed by a thaw. Then on Sunday night there was a bitter east wind. All through the night of Monday, January 17, and into the early morning of Tuesday, a violent gale blew, varying from north-east to south-east, which could be heard roaring amongst houses during the night.

All through the night of Monday, January 17, and into the early morning of Tuesday, a violent gale blew, varying from north-east to south-east, which could be heard roaring amongst houses during the night. Then on Tuesday morning it seemed a little brighter, but between 9 and 10 in the morning it began to snow. A hurricane came from the north-east, which pushed the snow into drifts many feet deep. Some people who had left their houses earlier, came home and found themselves unable to get back in because their house was blocked by a snowdrift. About four o'clock the storm was almost blinding and the wind came in great gusts. By nightfall the drifts had become formidable, and in some places caused ridges up to 12 feet deep.

At the time, the oldest inhabitants could not remember anything as severe in all their lives. The frost was said to be the worst since 1861, but the snow was the worst since the 1770s. Conditions were described as Arctic or Siberian. Such was the unusual weather than the northern lights were widely seen across Bucks about 7 p.m. on January 31, and as far south as London. The 1881 Blizzard became a benchmark for comparing later blizzards.

**By Neil Rees**



## Road to Recovery

The Red Cross Assisted Discharge Team can offer you transport home from hospital and support at home for up to 6 weeks. They help you to settle in back home providing the time and space for you to rest and recover following a hospital stay.

Their team of dedicated people support you by helping with shopping, light housework, and getting in touch with other organisations who can encourage you to feel part of your community again. All of this could help you regain your independence, confidence and wellbeing ensuring that you participate in your own recovery preventing future hospital visits.

The wonderful NHS based at Stoke Mandeville and Wexham Park Hospitals will refer you to them if they believe you could benefit from their services.

Call free and confidentially, everyday 10am to 6pm

**0808 196 3651**

## **Renew your driving licence free of charge, if you're 70 or over..**

You can use the online service to renew your British driving licence if you're 70 or over, or will be 70 in the next 90 days, and your British licence has expired, or it's going to expire within 90 days, you're a resident of Great Britain, you meet the minimum eyesight requirement and you aren't prevented from driving for any reason

Once you reach 70, you must renew every 3 years. You can change the licence photo at the same time as renewing your licence. Find out more by clicking on the following link;

[www.gov.uk/renew-driving-licence-at-70#more-information](https://www.gov.uk/renew-driving-licence-at-70#more-information)

You can apply by post using the D46P application form. DVLA will automatically send you this form 90 days before your 70th birthday. Use the D1 application for a driving licence form if you haven't got the D46P form. You can pick one up at most Post Offices.

It may take longer than 3 weeks for you to get your new licence because of coronavirus (COVID-19).

**RESOURCES**

**Bucks Online Directory for Buckinghamshire (BOD);** Find activities, groups and services near you; a helpful resource based on your postcode to find what you need quickly and easily. Please visit: <https://directory.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/>

**Age UK;** 01296 431911 for help with loneliness or help with household chores, befriending, computer training and general advice.

**Mind Buckinghamshire;** are continuing to create and develop innovative ways of delivering mental wellbeing support that focuses on tackling social isolation and promoting positive emotional wellbeing. Call on 01494 463364

**Red Cross Buckinghamshire;** For help during the coronavirus pandemic call: 0808 196 3651

**Gentle Years & Chair Yoga** offered by experienced British Wheel of Yoga teacher currently teaching to University of the Third Age (U3A). Classes are currently on zoom and hoping to recommence face to face after Easter. If you are not familiar with Zoom and would like to give it a try Jan would be happy to give a short zoom lesson by telephone. Contact Jan Baker 07969 779222, email [janbakeryoga@gmail.com](mailto:janbakeryoga@gmail.com), website; [www.janbakeryoga.com](http://www.janbakeryoga.com).

**Chiltern Open Air Museum;** For days out and guided walks [www.coam.org.uk](http://www.coam.org.uk) or call 01494 871117 For short videos and quiz's click on; [www.coam.org.uk/museum-buckinghamshire/historic-buildings/](http://www.coam.org.uk/museum-buckinghamshire/historic-buildings/)

**FREE TAXI SERVICE AYLESBURY AREA** Falcon Taxi's are offering free taxi service for Aylesbury and the surrounding areas such as Tring, Wendover and Berkhamsted. Give them a call on the number below to book your free transportation. **FREE CAB TO GET YOUR JAB FOR OVER 80'S** Call 01296 247247, email [OFFICE@FALCONTAXIS.CO.UK](mailto:OFFICE@FALCONTAXIS.CO.UK) [WWW.FALCONTAXIS.CO.UK](http://WWW.FALCONTAXIS.CO.UK)

**Wye Valley Volunteers** offers a service in which volunteers use their own cars to drive clients to medical appointments. Area covered; Bourne End, The Wooburns, Flackwell Heath and Little Marlow. They ask for a small donation (the suggested amount based on mileage) to be paid directly to the driver towards his or her petrol expenses. call on 01628 521 027 or email [enquiries@wyevalleyvolunteers.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@wyevalleyvolunteers.org.uk)



**2021**

Contact Details for the Bucks Older People's Action Group  
Paula can be contacted on 07753 987973 or paulawatts.bopag@btinternet.com

Andy can be contacted on 01296 622122

E-mail : info@bopag.org.uk  
BOPAG, c/o Hunter Hill Cottage,  
Blind Lane, Bourne End  
SL8 5LF

**Road access work to new Aylesbury Sainsbury's store begins;**

Construction work begins on Monday 25 January to build the access junction to serve a brand new Sainsbury's store being constructed on the corner of Bicester Road and Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury.

**Car thefts;** I am seeing a lot of posts on social media about local car thefts. Make sure you lock up and don't leave valuables inside your cars overnight.



For daily updates on local news and events please follow and like our Facebook page;  
[www.facebook.com/bopag.org/](http://www.facebook.com/bopag.org/)  
Visit our website:  
<https://bopag.org.uk/>



**BOPAG meeting**  
**February 17th 2021 at 2pm**  
Via zoom

All are welcome to attend, a link for the meeting will be sent out via email so do let me know if you would like to attend by emailing me; paulawatts.bopag@btinternet.com or call 07753 987973

**Popup Business School;**

FREE start-up course for people living in the Wycombe District, An intensive two-week course from **8th March– 19th March 2021**, 10am to 3pm mon to Friday Visit- [www.popupbusinessschool.co.uk/hi gh-wycombe](http://www.popupbusinessschool.co.uk/hi gh-wycombe) to book your place.

**Community Heartbeat Trust charity;**

An interactive zoom session on **Sunday 7th February** at 5pm to cover basic lifesaving techniques.

This FREE online session, organised especially for the local community, will serve as an introduction to lifesaving so that as many people as possible can be aware of the basic skills to help save a life. It will include:

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), Choking, Recovery position and the use of a Defibrillator.

Book now;

[www.form.jotform.com/comheartbeat/minutestosavealife](http://www.form.jotform.com/comheartbeat/minutestosavealife)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHadaoQFaLs&feature=youtu.be>