

Note from the Editor

I find that it's all too easy to be permanently angry with quite a lot of things these days so I try to focus on the positives and the Great Get Together on the 21st June in Chesham last month was one of those wonderful events that took place because of some amazing individuals in local voluntary groups came together and simply made things happen. It was a pleasure to pop my head round the door, hear the singing, see all the smiles and meet some of the guests, the lovely ladies who were from Old Amersham. You can see some of the photos on page 2.

Age UK continue their campaign to save free TV licences for the over 75's (page 4). Please call the Pension Credit hotline to see if you are eligible for financial support, there are other benefits that can be claimed and **1.3 million people who are eligible don't claim and some of those people will definitely be in Bucks—lets try to help find them.** Whilst the BBC make me angry for doing this (especially when I read that they are spending the equivalent of 20,000 licences on promotional mugs, hoodies and umbrellas) let's not forget that it is the Conservatives (George Osborn) who passed responsibility for funding the free TV licences to the BBC in 2015.

June finished on a sour note with news that Bucks NHS are closing (albeit it temporarily they say) one of their community wards at Amersham Hospital. The news is only a few days old and we are currently trying to understand the full impact and wading through the 100's of pages of the CQC report that appeared to trigger this sudden decision. If anyone is directly affected by this decision, please get in touch.

I'm ending on a positive note though. Open City (page 3) run some fascinating tours in London (a friend recently did the boat tour and was so impressed he's now booked a talk. Gracewell have some fun events that are free and open to everyone, as are the Street Association workshops (page 5) And Liz has given me all the 2019 dates for the Big Conversation Cafes in Thame & Marlow—perfect to pop in and ask those little questions that have been bothering you although I'm not sure they'll have the answer to the one that keeps popping into my head 'Has the world gone mad or is it just me?'

Andy

Amersham Hospital to close one of its community wards

One of the wards at Amersham Hospital will be closed for the foreseeable future in order due to a shortage of nurses and therapists. Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust have taken the decision to stop admitting new patients into the Chartridge Ward from July 1. Existing patients will remain on the ward until it is safe for them to be discharged and return home.

The decision has been taken following publication of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) review published in June which raised issues regarding staffing levels in community inpatient ward. As a result of a shortage of nurses and therapists, the Trust cannot meet the conditions set by the CQC. The decision to close the ward will be reviewed in November.

Staff who work on the Chartridge Ward will move into the other two inpatient wards at Amersham Hospital. Patients who require inpatient rehabilitation will be cared for either at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, the Buckingham Community Hospital or at Amersham Hospital's Waterside Ward.

The Trust have assured that no patients will be transferred to a hospital outside of Buckinghamshire as a result of the closure unless they request this. Neil Macdonald, CEO of Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust said: "We are disappointed that we need to temporarily close Chartridge Ward but the ongoing safety of our patients and staff is our main priority."

This is clearly a very disappointing development especially in light of the recent loss of beds at Marlow and Thame Community Hospitals. BOPAG will endeavor to find out more about this very recent announcement and keep our readers informed.



THE GREAT GET TOGETHER IN CHESHAM



"Great Get Togethers", inspired by the late Jo Cox MP, were organised nationwide over 21st, 22nd and 23rd June 2019 with communities nationwide getting together to celebrate kindness, respect and all we have in common.

One such Great Get Together took place in the Elgiva Theatre, Chesham. It was organised by The Chilterns Dial-a-Ride (CDAR), a charity providing transport for those with mobility problems in Chiltern and Wycombe districts - with particular support from Chiltern District Council (CDC). The event brought together over 40 people who cannot easily get out and about, and particularly those in the



formed in 1969 and is celebrating 50 years of service to the community. .

Over 40 guests, some in wheelchairs, some with walkers/rollators, arrived in time for the opening in the Elgiva at 11 a.m. Mimi introduced Bob Clift, President of The Amersham and Chesham Lions Club, who explained the history of the Lions and the great work they have been doing in the community over the years and David Ouvry, Chairman of



Compere Mimi Harker OBE, Vice-Chair, Chiltern District Council with Bob Clift, President of Amersham & Chesham Lions Club and David Ouvry, Chairman of Chilterns Dial-a-Ride

community in the Chesham/Amersham area or nearby. Transport was provided by The Chilterns Dial-a-Ride, with two of their special minibuses, and Contact the Elderly with their team of volunteer private car drivers. Working closely with the organisers were BOPAG (Bucks Old People's Action Group), Prevention Matters, The Street Association, CDC, Cromwell House (Paradigm Housing) and other local support groups.

The event was sponsored by the Amersham and Chesham Lions Club, which was



the Chilterns Dial-a-Ride explained how the idea for the event began, with the networking with local community support groups and all the help that had gone into making this pioneer event happen.

The entertainment began with a remarkable performance by 7 members of the Haddenham Hand Bell Ringers, whose repertoire included a rendering of the Alleluia chorus!

This was followed by over an hour's singing of old favourites by Chesham-born octogenarian Keith Hewitt (left), former band leader of 'The Pale Lights'. Keith's audience just didn't want him to stop! ...and joined in, with a little



Continued on page 8



Discover London

**O P E N
C I T Y**

Open City is a charity promoting people-centred cities with a year-round programme of events and initiatives serving the public, the education sector and the construction industry.

The team works with the Open City network - built environment professionals, educators, clients and politicians - to produce Open House for the public; and various events as well as Open City Learning for communities.

The events programme uses the city itself – buildings, infrastructure and the public realm - to learn and improve our knowledge of how the built environment works.

Architecture Tours A year-round programme of architecture tours by foot, bike or boat are led by specialist guides helping you look at the themes and issues shaping the capital today – from the design of homes, to infrastructure and urban landscapes.

Talks & Events Our events and debates cover pressing topics about our city, from discussing sustainable city making, to debating whether we should be building on the green belt.

The Thornton Lecture The annual Thornton Lecture, which takes place each November, has a simple premise: a guest speaker of international repute, addressing the topic of 'the open city'.

Open City are also responsible for the Open House event in September (see page 8) when normally closed historic houses and businesses open their doors to the public. You can find out more by going to open-city.org.uk or calling them on 020 3006 7008



BUCKS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

Southern Group (registered charity 290335)

Coroners' Inquests A Talk by Kathy Chater

The coroner holds an inquest if a death has been sudden and unexplained, when the cause is unknown, or the death is unnatural. The majority of post mid-18th century records of inquests are held at local archives and not The National Archives. But TNA does hold some inquest records dating back to the 12th century, although none of these are available to view online.

Tuesday July 9th

The Community Centre, Wakeman Road,
Bourne End SL8 5SX

Doors open 7.30 for a start at 7.45pm
Every one welcome, members £2.00

Events at Gracewell



Gracewell of High Wycombe have the following events in July and are all open to the community:

Monday 15th July 2.30 pm Keith Russell playing the piano accordion a hugely enjoyable eclectic journey of world music

Thursday 18th July 2.30pm Jean Claude Singer performing well known hits throughout the decades

Friday 26th July 2-4pm Our new weekly Café 'Forever Friday'. Bring, Buy or just socialise, there will be items to buy such as puzzles and books, bring any items you would like to donate, all proceeds to our chosen charity Alzheimer's Society, or just come along and enjoy complimentary tea/ coffee and cake.

Saturday 27th July 6.30-8.30pm Charity Fashion Show. Join us for complimentary wine and nibbles, view a selection of new and pre-loved clothes. All items will be available for purchase and all proceeds to Alzheimers Society.

Tuesday 30th July 3.15pm Zoolab - A great animal handling experience
Gracewell of High Wycombe, The Row, Lane End, High Wycombe, HP14 3JS



Switched Off: Save free TV for older people

You have probably seen in the considerable news coverage that the BBC have announced they plan to means test the free TV licence for over 75s from June next year. This means 3.7 million pensioners will lose out on the free TV licence. Means-testing may sound fair but in reality it means at least 650,000 of our poorest pensioners facing a big new annual bill they simply can't afford. This is because you will need to be in receipt of Pension Credit to get a free TV licence in future and this benefit is already known to have a poor uptake with many people eligible not applying for it.

Age UK maintain that it's the Government's job to look after older people, not the BBC's. They continue to campaign on your behalf and as a result of the BBC's decision, they have gained some very high profile supporters as well as most of the tabloid newspapers. The petition can still be signed at www.ageuk.org.uk and has almost 600,000 signatories.

The BBC claim that by making most over-75s pay the TV licence fee, they can avoid closing channels and making substantial cutbacks. Research from the House of Commons Library found that 3 million households would lose their free TV licence as a result of the decision. Age UK said that half of all over-75s have a limiting long-standing illness and so many are largely confined to home, meaning that TV "is their precious window on the world and constant companion".

Did you know Free TV licences will soon be linked to pension credit, but the 1.3m failing to claim may also miss out on £1,000s in council tax discounts, cold weather help, free dental care & more.

1.3m of society's poorest miss out on the pension credit benefit, which can top up their income by £1,000s - many don't claim due to a lack of info, or due to pride. Now the BBC has decided to link free TV licences for over-75s to those who get pension credit (just being eligible isn't enough)

1.3m miss out on pension credit worth £3,000 per year on average.

Who's entitled to it? If you're over state pension age and earn less than £167.25 per week as a single person or £255.25 per week for couples (including pension, savings income or work) then pension credit tops up your income. If you've some savings, you could get an additional top-up (as if not, it would've been pointless to save).



Pension credit is also a gateway for other benefits. In addition to the free TV licence for over-75s from June 2020 you may also get the following benefits:

- **Council tax reduction** - worth around £1k/yr typically.
- **Housing benefit** - could be worth £1,000s/yr.
- **Cold weather payments** - worth £25/wk when it's really cold.
- **Warm home discount** - worth £140/yr.
- **Free dental care** - worth £100s/yr for some.
- **Voucher for glasses/contact lenses** - worth £39-£215 a time depending on your prescription.

How to apply for pension credit. You can't apply online, so the simplest way is to phone the Pension Service on 0800 99 1234. They can fill in the form for you, though you can also request it to be posted to you, whether for yourself or someone else. There is nothing to lose—call the help line and ask!



Useful Workshops across the county



Residents in Buckinghamshire are the eyes and ears on our streets. More often than not, it's a neighbour who notices something amiss. To strengthen and support our communities, the Street Association would like to offer residents a variety of workshops highlighting some of the issues affecting our neighbours as part of the countywide roadshow. For more information or to book a place, please contact communities@buckscc.gov.uk or call 01296 382345

Dementia Friends



The Street Association is offering residents free Dementia Friends workshops.

Many people living with dementia feel that society fails to understand the condition they live with. Dementia Friends can help by raising awareness to help you understand dementia in your community.

The workshops run for an hour and are open to all residents. If you're interested in one of the sessions, please call 01296 382345 or email communities@buckscc.gov.uk

11am 9th July, Harding Room, Chesham Library, Elgiva Lane, Chesham

10am 17th July, Large Meeting Room, Aylesbury Library, Walton Street, Aylesbury

2pm 9th Oct, Room 2, Burnham Park Hall, Windsor Road, Burnham

10.30am 7th Nov The Harrow, Warrendene Road, Hughenden Valley

Scam Aware



The Street Association and Trading Standards are offering residents a free workshop to help identify the types of scams & harm that can happen behind closed doors, in your street, to you and your neighbours.

You'll learn how to spot the signs of doorstep, postal, cyber and telephone fraud to keep you and your neighbours safe.

The workshops run for 90 minutes and are

open to all residents. If you're interested in one of the sessions, please RSVP communities@buckscc.gov.uk or call 01296 382345

2pm 15th July, Princes Risborough Library, Bell Lane, Princes Risborough

10.30am 10th Sept, Large Meeting Room, Aylesbury Library, Walton Street, Aylesbury

2pm 10th Oct, Naphill Village Hall, Main Rd, Naphill, High Wycombe

10.30am 11th Nov, Harding Room, Chesham Library, Elgiva Ln, Chesham

Behind Closed Doors



The Street Association is offering residents a free workshop to help identify the types of exploitation & harm that can happen behind closed doors, in your street.

You'll learn how to spot the signs of exploitation including modern slavery, extremism, county lines drugs, cuckooing and other forms of abuse to help you understand what you can do to help.

The workshops run for 90 minutes and are open to all residents. If you're interested in one of the sessions, please RSVP communities@buckscc.gov.uk or call 01296 382345

2.30pm 24th September, 2nd Floor High Wycombe Library, 5 Eden Place, High Wycombe

2.30pm 29th October, Room 2, Burnham Park Hall, Windsor Lane, Burnham

2.30pm 14th November, Large Meeting Room, Aylesbury Library, Walton Street, Aylesbury

Editor— I had to look up the definition of cuckooing which I now know to be a form of crime in which drug dealers take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for drug dealing.



Staying Safe

Fire and Wellness Visits

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service deliver domestic fire safety advice in a Fire and Wellness Visit which addresses the common causes of fires and practical ways to reduce risk, along with signposting or making onward referrals for health and wellbeing advice.

Areas covered in a Fire and Wellness Visit include:

- smoke detection
- bedtime checks
- escape plans
- fire safety
- electrical safety including registering appliances
- safe smoking practices and referral to smoking cessation services
- falls awareness and referral to relevant services
- social isolation with signposting to ways to address this

Things to consider are:

- Are there working smoke alarms? How do you know they work – have you checked them?
 - If a smoke alarm went off, would the householder/resident respond to it knowing what to do? – Could they get out if needed? Is their ability to respond affected by a health need, medication, drugs, alcohol, mobility, frailty?
 - Is there anything which places the home at increased risk of fire? Hoarded materials, clutter from overcrowded living arrangements, multiple electrical devices plugged into extension leads, burn marks or signs of previous minor fires.

If the answer to any of the above questions is no, you can, with the person's consent, refer them to Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service for a Fire and Wellness Visit. Referral forms can be obtained from Joanne Cook, Community Safety & Safeguarding Manager
01296 744416 / 07736 922266

Thames Valley Police Summer Advice

The summer is a time when there is an increase in burglary. This is due to opportunist thieves taking advantage of doors and windows being left open in hot weather, and properties not being left secure while residents are away on holiday.

It only takes seconds to steal valuables that are within easy reach. Window opening restrictors can be fitted to ground floor windows to allow ventilation while preventing burglars from being able to climb through. If going out, even just in the garden, you should always close and lock your windows and doors.

If leaving your car at home when you go on holiday, remember to remove any valuables and check the windows are closed and doors are locked.

Avoid checking-in on social networks at the airport and wait to post your holiday photos until you get home. Some home insurance policies become invalidated if you post that you are away from home.

Holiday Checklist:

- Lock all windows and doors.
- Check side gates, sheds and garages are locked and tools and ladders are not accessible for burglars to break into your home.
- Store all keys out of sight and away from your letterbox.
- Use a RFID pouch to store fobs for keyless entry vehicles.
- Make your home look occupied by using a timer switch to turn on lights at night.
- Ask a trusted friend to look after your home while you are away.
- Invite a neighbour to park their vehicle on your drive while you are away.
- Don't post details of your holiday on social media until you return home.

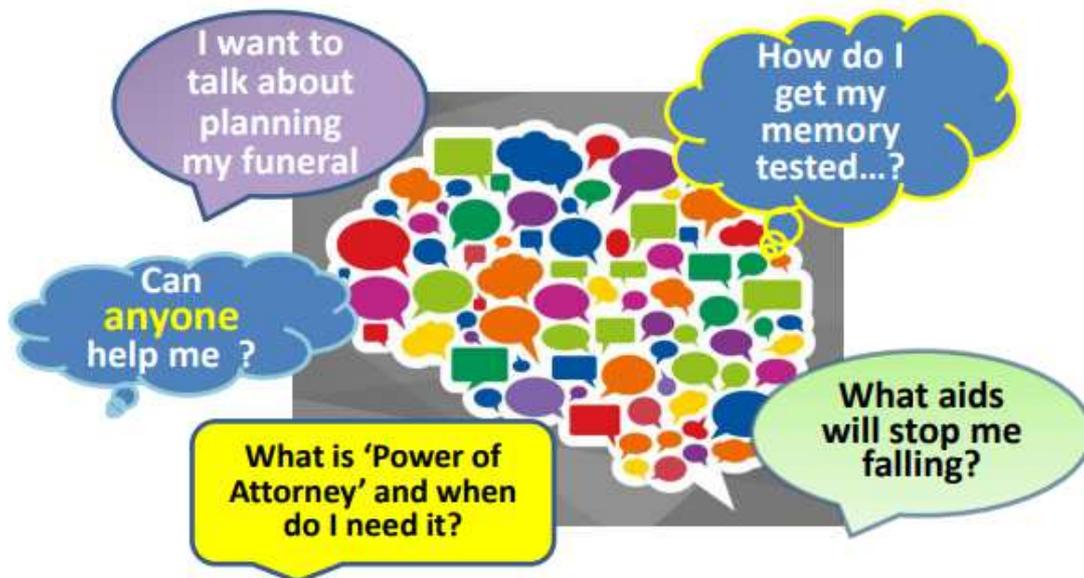
For more burglary prevention advice, download your free Home Security Guide from the Thames Valley Police website www.thamesvalley.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/thames-valley/advice/home-security-guide.pdf



Health News

NHS
Buckinghamshire Healthcare
NHS Trust

Big Conversation Cafes



Big Conversation Cafés are a safe place to have a cup of tea/ coffee and to meet professionals who might be able to direct you to the right place to start the conversation. Come along and say: “ I was just wondering about...” If we feel there’s a need for a more detailed physical assessment we can refer you to one of our services.

You can literally ask anything that is on your mind but were worried about troubling someone.

Currently the pop up cafes are held at the Thame and Marlow Community Hospitals although the team are looking at setting up others. They are open from 1:30 to 3pm and you can pop in at any time. The dates are

Monday 29 July – Thame Community Hub (Hospital)

Tuesday 30 July – Marlow Community Hub (Hospital)

Tuesday 27 August – Marlow

Monday 23 September – Thame

Tuesday 24 September – Marlow

Monday 28 October – Thame

Tuesday 29 October – Marlow

Monday 25 November – Thame

Tuesday 26 November – Marlow

Monday 30 December – Thame

Tuesday 31 December – Marlow

Dementia Cases at record highs

The number of older people living with dementia hit a record high last month, new figures show. A total of 453,881 over-65s were living with the condition in May, NHS England said.

This number has increased by 7% since the data was first recorded in June 2016, from 424,390 diagnoses.

You are never too old to start suffering from hayfever

Hay fever (also known as seasonal allergic rhinitis) is a common condition in the UK and usually occurs during the spring or summer and you can develop hay fever at any age. Common symptoms can be treated by over the counter antihistamine tablets, steroid nose sprays and eye drops but check with the pharmacist especially if you take other medications.



2019

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

2019 Dates

July 17th Trading Standards, Frauds & Scams

Sept 18th tbc

November 20th Safety in the Home

All are welcome. Meetings run 10-12.30 and are currently held at Christ the Servant King, Sycamore Road, High Wycombe, HP12 4TJ

Please contact Andy Trueman on 01296 622122 for further information

The Great Get Together in Chesham

Continued from page 2

encouragement from Mimi!

Then it was time for lunch, with visiting magician Jared Gale going round the tables mesmerising everyone!

When it was time to go, with final words from Mimi, the faithful drivers took a lot of happy people safely home.

David summed it up. "Everyone enjoyed themselves. Many thanks to all our supporters who together enabled this to happen. Feedback from the drivers on the home run was very positive and lots said 'I hope there will be another one'. This shows how much those who cannot get out very much, for whatever reason, really appreciate doing so. This event has been a great demonstration of what can be done with collaboration between community support organisations, both in getting in touch with those who most appreciate getting out and about (including those who may be 'below the radar') and finding the means to do so - via The Chilterns Dial-a-Ride and Contact the Elderly. Our thanks to the Elgiva and the noble Lions, celebrating half a century of support and service"

Dates for your diary

12 July Bledlow Manor Open Garden, HP27 9PB Over 10 Acres. Sculptures, Walled Kitchen Garden. Tickets £5 each in advance or £6 at the gate. Tickets available from scannap-peal.org.uk/events or by calling 01494 734 161

18 July Hoarder Support Group 5.30-7.30 pm Haddenham Fire Station. Peer support group that provides a safe place to speak to others with similar issues and get information and advice. The group meets monthly and light buffet provided. No need to book, just pop in. Open to individuals, family members and carers. For more information call Elaine on 01296 585364. or email ehas-sall@aylesburyvaldc.gov.uk

23rd July, Healthwatch Bucks Annual Report Launch 5.30pm – 7.30pm, Stoke Mandeville Stadium – Sydney Suite. Guest speakers: Imelda Redmond CBE, National Director Healthwatch England, Sian Roberts, Bucks Mental Health and learning Disability Clinical Director Carole Knight, Community Nurse of the Year 2018
21 & 22 September Open House London is the world's largest architecture festival, giving free public access to 800+ buildings, walks, talks and tours over one weekend in September each year. Find out more at open-city.org.uk

Bucks Health Trust Board Meetings

Wed 31 July 9am Education Suite, Florence Nightingale Hospice Charity, Unit 2, Walton Lodge, Walton St, Aylesbury, HP21 7QY

Wed 25 Sept & Wed 27 Nov 9am Hampden Lecture Theatre, Wycombe Hospital

Wed 27 Nov 9am Hampden Lecture Theatre, Wycombe Hospital

Buckinghamshire CCG Board Meetings

12 Sept 2019 Meetings take place 10.30-12.30. Jubilee Room, Aylesbury Vale District Council, the Gateway, Gatehouse Rd, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF

Future Dates **14 Nov 2019, 12 March 2020**

Newsletter info

If you know anyone who would like to receive our newsletters, please get in touch. We can email or post them to recipients.

Also, we are looking at sponsors and/or advertisers to help us cover our newsletter costs so please contact us if you can help