

## Note from the Chairman

Dear Readers,

*I hope that you have all found the Special Editions of our newsletter both useful and interesting, I am still going through some of the links to things to do and look at them from home.*

*When Andy Truman recently said she wanted to stand down after 13 years as our Administrator we were initially shocked and then very worried as to how we would cope without her efforts not just on the newsletter but also all the support work she does for our committee and the meetings. We were then delighted that we found Paula Watts who is endeavouring to take over the job soon and is already entering into the task with great gusto. Between the two girls they are doing a fantastic job researching and collating and distributing a mass of information for us in these exceedingly difficult times, many thanks to you both. If only you had known sooner Andy!!*

*I hope you are all able to look at the new Facebook page that Paula has produced and is posting items on every day, this is a new venture for BOPAG which we hope will keep you even better informed as to what is going on and you can of course also post your own comments. Thanks to e-mail the Committee are keeping in close touch to try to continue BOPAG's work without having the opportunity to meet face to face so that the organisation will come back even stronger after this difficult period is over. If you have any item, story or comment you might think will interest everyone please do contact Paula or Andy, they would love to hear from you, In the meantime please look after yourselves and try to stay healthy. With very best wishes,*

*Alan Barnard, Chairman, BOPAG*



## Medi-SOS Grab-Bags COVID Edition.

South Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) contacted local charity Medi-SOS to produce an emergency (COVID) version of their grab-bag to post out to seniors in Buckinghamshire. This in turn will help emergency responders with their call outs.

A COVID leaflet has been produced by Medi-SOS on behalf of SCAS and they have made up 500 packs from stock ready for posting.

They are of course free of charge to elderly residents in the county, and you can get sent one by filling in a simple form on their website at <https://www.medi-sos.com/sponsors> or to use the QR code below) and they will post out the packs ASAP.



## Buckinghamshire's Coronavirus Community Support Hub.

In response to the many elderly or vulnerable people who are being advised to self-isolate our online community support hub has now been launched. This will help people to find ways to get involved or find support. The page can be found here;

<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/>

We know people are going to need support with practical things like getting medicines, grocery shopping, or caring for beloved pets as well as dealing with the potentially difficult mental effects of isolation. And we also know many people will want to help and support them if they possibly can. The hub will make it easier for people to get help or volunteer. It will be a place where people can go if they need help or support; and also a place where people who want to volunteer can find out how they can best assist vulnerable people. The website will aim to link those in need with those who are able to support them.



## Things to do

### [Take a soothing virtual trip to the Great Barrier Reef with Sir David Attenborough](#)

Lonely Planet have highlighted many opportunities to travel the world from your armchair and this one is a real treat for Sir David Attenborough fans.

Go to [attenboroughsreef.com](https://www.attenboroughsreef.com) an interactive website, which brings to life the famed coral reef with video, audio and additional context from marine biologists, was first created in 2015 to coincide with the release of the BBC One documentary Great Barrier Reef.

### [David Hockney at The Royal Academy of Art - FREE online documentary](#)

Two landmark exhibitions by the iconic. Sit back and enjoy 'A Bigger Picture' and '82 Portraits and One Still-Life'. Now entering his 9th decade, Hockney shows absolutely no evidence of slowing down or losing his trademark boldness. Featuring intimate and in-depth interviews with Hockney, this revealing film focuses on two blockbuster exhibitions held in 2012 and 2016 at the Royal Academy of Art in London. Please use this link to watch the documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-RjpQMjKUrw>

### [Shakespeare's Globe Theatre](#)

The venue will release 40 free titles over the coming weeks, including six main-stage shows and 34 that were created as part of the venue's epic "Globe to Globe" series of international performances. Go to <https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/watch/> for the link and further extras such as the pre-show talk and introductory notes

### [Visit British landmarks](#)

If you're currently sitting at home and wishing you'd travelled more, maybe to see the Giant's Causeway, or nose around Buckingham Palace, then wish no more! You can now virtually visit 14 of the UK's biggest landmarks from the comfort of your own home with these online tours.

[https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/virtual-tours-of-the-uk?utm\\_campaign=ENL-EMEA-ENGAGED-20200407&utm\\_source=sfmc&utm\\_medium=email&stuid=6d57a69141cd04cb82faf46bfa18de93&utm\\_content=144798&utm\\_term=](https://www.lonelyplanet.com/articles/virtual-tours-of-the-uk?utm_campaign=ENL-EMEA-ENGAGED-20200407&utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&stuid=6d57a69141cd04cb82faf46bfa18de93&utm_content=144798&utm_term=)

### [Take a virtual ride on the Postal Museum underground railway](#)

The Postal Museum reveals five centuries of British social and communications history through the eyes of its iconic postal service. Now you can take a virtual ride on Mail Rail, capturing the sights and sounds of Mail Rail. [https://www.postalmuseum.org/make-a-](https://www.postalmuseum.org/make-a-connection/mail-rail-from-home/?utm_source=The+Postal+Museum&utm_campaign=70362364be-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_17_12_47&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_30b15c3bb7-70362364be-274652489&mc_cid=70362364be&mc_eid=95668a29d1)

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### [Gresham College Lectures](#)

Gresham College was founded in 1597 and has been providing free lectures within the City of London for over 400 years. The College's 2,000 lectures are open to all and can be searched by topic which include science, business, law, history, politics, art & literature and many more <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/>

### [Philharmonia Orchestra: Beethoven's 9th Symphony FREE online](#)

This archive is almost exactly 50 years old. Enjoy the Ninth Symphony, with Otto Klemperer, considered one of the greatest conductors of the twentieth century. The video will be available until 10 October 2020. Use this link to stream the concert: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K98zzC2FUtQ>



## Red Kite Neighbourhood Awards 2020 Nominate & Appreciate!

Every year Red Kite hold their Neighbourhood Awards event, so that they can give recognition to the people who really make a difference in our communities.

We are pleased to announce that the nominations are now open for the 2020 neighbourhood awards. Categories are as follows:

- Amazing Volunteer
- Good Neighbour
- Young Hero
- Gardening Awards – this includes best kept garden, best small garden, best vegetable garden, best school garden and best communal garden

For more information and to enter in this competition please use the following link- <https://redkitehousing.org.uk/supporting-communities/neighbourhood-awards>

**Please note:** Due to the COVID-19 situation, they'll not be holding any formal ceremony, and all prizes and certificates will be sent electronically or via post if needed. They'll announce the winners on their website, social media and via digital newsletter.

Please phone 07767 481855 or email [Bazgha.sultana@redkitehousing.org.uk](mailto:Bazgha.sultana@redkitehousing.org.uk) if you have any questions or would like to nominate but can't do so on-line.

## Closure of the Post Office Card Account

The Post Office Card Account (POCa) contract will be ending in November 2021. This means if you currently receive your pension this way you will no longer be able to after this date. The DWP has been writing to account holders advising them to switch to an alternative account, either by using an existing one or by opening a new one. Although the POca contract will finish, most mainstream bank accounts will enable customers to withdraw cash over the Post Office counter. If you have any queries regarding the closure of your POca or about changing to an alternative account, please contact the DWP at; <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions> or you can call them at helpline on **0800 085 7133**

## MOT News

Drivers who have an MOT due from Monday 30 March onwards will be granted a six-month extension because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Transport Secretary has announced. An MOT is a test of a vehicle's safety and roadworthiness – you must have a valid MOT certificate in order to legally drive a car, motorcycle or van. But there are fears that the national lockdown due to coronavirus could make it hard for drivers with MOTs due to get their vehicle tested and keep it on the road. The Government said today that if the expiry date on your car, motorcycle or van's MOT is on or after Monday 30 March, you DON'T have to get it tested by then.

Instead, it will automatically grant a six-month extension to your current MOT – so for example, if your vehicle's MOT was due to expire on Friday 3 April, it will now run out on 3 October 2020. However, you will still have to keep your car in a roadworthy condition and garages will remain open for those needing repairs. For more information go to; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/vehicle-owners-to-be-granted-mot-exemption-in-battle-against-coronavirus>



## TV Licensing concessions latest update

You need a valid TV licence if you use television receiving equipment to watch or record any television programmes as they're being broadcast. This includes your TV, set-top box, computer, video or DVD recorder, tablet, mobile phone or any other device.

Anyone using BBC iPlayer also needs a valid TV licence, regardless of whether or not they watch programmes as they are being broadcast. This means you need a TV licence to watch BBC iPlayer even if you are watching programmes on 'catch-up'.

You need a TV Licence if you're watching or recording television programmes as they're being shown live, which includes the use of devices such as a TV, computer, mobile phone, games console, digital box and DVD/VHS recorder. A TV Licence costs £157.50 for colour and £53 for a black and white licence.

However, you could be entitled to a concession if you're: aged 75 or over (or your household includes someone who is over 75) ; registered as blind or severely sight impaired retired or disabled and live in certain accommodation.

Recognising the exceptional circumstances being brought about by Coronavirus, the BBC has announced that they are delaying changes to the over 75 licence until the 1 August and that this will be kept under review as the situation continues to evolve. Bucks Older Peoples Action Group (BOPAG) is working with TV Licensing closely and will update our members when new information is published.

For more information please visit: <https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-need-one/for-your-home/aged-74-and-over-aud3>

For more information about TV Licensing please visit [www.tvlicensing.co.uk](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk) or call **0300 790 6115**.

## Calls for state pension triple lock to be scrapped to pay for coronavirus

Retired workers should no longer have their state pensions protected by the triple lock guarantee to help fund the coronavirus crisis, according to plans from the Social Market Foundation (SMF). The Government bill to tackle the epidemic must be shared fairly between retirees and those of working age, new analysis from the think tank says.

Government debt will rise after the pandemic, which will force ministers to reform and reduce state spending. In a new briefing paper, the SMF says any future austerity programme must not favour pension benefits over working-age welfare, as happened after the financial crisis.

### **What is the pensions triple lock?**

The triple lock is a legal guarantee that the basic state pension will rise in line with the highest of average earnings growth, inflation or 2.5%. It was introduced in 2011 to help ensure that typical pensioner household incomes rose regardless of their economic circumstances.

The effectiveness of the triple lock guarantee has been mooted since it was first announced. Some experts have criticised it for creating intergenerational inequality between working-age households, who have seen little wage growth over the last decade, and those who are retired.

Replacing the triple lock with a 'double lock' that removed the 2.5% element could save £20 billion over the next five years, the SMF estimates. These savings could help meet the escalating costs arising from the lockdown.

Charities warn that scrapping the triple lock could make hundreds of thousands of pensioners worse off. Age UK estimates that 700,000 more pensioners could fall into poverty by 2050 if the government gets rid of the triple lock.



## Chelsea Goes Virtual



Originally due to take place from 19 - 23rd May 2020, the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) was forced to cancel the show (along with six other flower shows) as a result of the global pandemic. Instead they are planning a virtual show and this is still in its early stages, but the RHS is hoping to 'share the joy of gardening' with the nation and will be collaborating with growers, designers, landscapers and trade stands for the virtual show.

Following the cancellation of RHS Chelsea, thousands of quality plants grown to fill the 12,000m<sup>2</sup> Great Pavilion will remain unsold or go to waste if they can't find a home. Many of these award-winning nurseries have launched or made improvements to their mail order and online offering in order to sell their surplus plant stock and keep trading during this unprecedented time. You can find the full list of exhibitors at:

<https://www.rhs.org.uk/shows-events/rhs-chelsea-flower-show/exhibitors?type=1> and includes everyone from carnation experts to the Barbados Horticultural Society with links to their websites. It's a great place to snap up a plant that might just have bagged a gold award.

### Get coronavirus support as a clinically extremely vulnerable person

Register with this government service if either:

- you have a medical condition which means you're classed as being clinically extremely vulnerable to coronavirus
- you've been told by your GP or hospital clinician that you're clinically extremely vulnerable and need to 'shield'. 'Shielding' means not leaving your home and minimising contact with other members of your household.

You'll be able to ask for help if you need it - for example, with getting essential supplies or your basic care needs.

You can only register on-line so if you don't have access you will need to ask for help to do this. Please be aware that the criteria for this registration is extremely limited and excludes many people <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>

### Community Champions Funding Opportunity

Persimmon's Community Champions initiative has run since 2015 and gives away £64,000 every month in single donations up to the value of £1,000 to fund local community initiatives. So far over £3.5 million has been donated in the UK.

Persimmon has decided that from April 2020 all funding will go directly to groups supporting the over 70s. - a vulnerable group in our society that they feel need their support at this time.

It's really simple to apply for a donation. All you need to do is complete the online form, telling them why your group or charity, which works with or supports the over-70s, deserves our donation. Included in your application we need to know how much you want them to donate. They also need the name and location of the initiative so that they can ensure the right business receives your request.

The application form is online at [www.persimmonhomes.com/community-champions](http://www.persimmonhomes.com/community-champions)





2020

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 The Hale Farmhouse, Hale Lane, Wendover HP22 6QR

## 24 hour emergency contact for the extremely vulnerable

Buckinghamshire Council has a 24 hour phone number – [01296 383204](tel:01296383204) – set up specifically for calls relating to coronavirus only.

This is the number to call if you have concerns about an extremely vulnerable person. Please do not call this number for general enquiries, medical queries or any non-coronavirus related enquiry. Please use the customer service centre number – [01296 395000](tel:01296395000) – for all other enquiries.



## Spring edition on Age UK Engage

Engage is the quarterly magazine published by Age UK Buckinghamshire. The 2020 Spring Edition is now out and can be found at

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/buckinghamshire/about-us/latest-news/>

### 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



## Healthwatch Bucks seeking feedback on health and social care services across Buckinghamshire

Healthwatch Bucks, the independent watchdog for health and social care services in the county, is seeking feedback on the impact that the Covid-19 outbreak is having on local services.

Although we recognise the additional strain that this unprecedented public health emergency is placing on these services, we have been asked to support these services by continuing to act as the eyes and ears of the community, picking up on problems arising due to the impact of the pandemic. These issues will be escalated appropriately so that they can be addressed

So whether it's GPs, Hospitals, Pharmacies, Dentists, Care Homes, we want to hear from you if you are encountering any major problems with these services. We are, of course, also keen to hear the positive stories, if you feel that these services are going above and beyond during what is a challenging period for all.

You can get in touch with us at Healthwatch Bucks, by calling 01844 34 88 39, emailing [info@healthwatchbucks.co.uk](mailto:info@healthwatchbucks.co.uk), or via Twitter and Facebook

## Community spirit at its best!

In streets up and down the county, wonderful things are happening.

Here's a splendid example of a resident in Beaconsfield playing his accordion as his neighbours clapped along!



Find us on:  
**facebook®**

<https://www.facebook.com/bopag.org>