

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 Bucks. 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 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 you can call them on **07900577298** or to use the QR code below) and they will post out the packs to you.



Delivering the new
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

Keeping in touch with vulnerable people

Buckinghamshire Council, Adult Social Care team is one of many essential frontline services that are looking after people during this emergency. The priority for the team is to make sure vulnerable residents are safe and are getting the support they need.

They are making phone calls to over 1,200 vulnerable adults already using local services to check in on them and assess their needs. Over half are getting calls every day, and everyone gets at least two phone calls a week. They are also contacting any other residents who may be vulnerable where we know about them, for example through the NHS national referral scheme or through local contact.

This emergency can make vulnerable residents even more vulnerable. If you are concerned about a vulnerable person or think they may be at risk please call them on **01296 383 204**.



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> or call them on the number below.

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 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 the 3rd 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> or call **0300 123 900** DVSA customer service centre.



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 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.



Shout out to Local Businesses

There has been a wonderful response from local businesses offering support in so many different ways to help local health and public services. Here are just some of the outstanding examples mentioned in a recent Council update :

- **Buckingham University** is making visors using their 3D printer
- **3D Print World in Aylesbury** are printing personal protective equipment
- **ANT Telecom in Bourne End** is offering free welfare checks for home and lone workers
- **The British Honey Company based near Oakley**, which usually makes gin and vodka out of honey, is using spare capacity at its distillery to make hand sanitiser ingredients
- **Griffiths Brothers gin distillery in Amersham** is making and donating hand sanitiser to local health centres and GP surgeries
- **The Seven Stars pub in Dinton** has turned itself into a community shop
- **Orchard View Farm, also near Dinton**, has teamed up with a local food shop to deliver essential supplies to the local community within a 10 mile radius
- **Rumsey's Chocolate Shop in Wendover** has given chocolates to Stoke Mandeville and John Radcliffe Hospitals
- In Marlow you can order a Sunday Roast and have it delivered from **Café Globe and chef Jack Blumenthal** – who are donating 20% of all profits to the Meals for the NHS charity
- **Well-known chef Tom Kerridge** is sending food to staff at Wycombe Hospital and Wexham Park

STREET ASSOCIATIONS



Street Associations for the invaluable organised support they are providing to their communities across the county. In Buckinghamshire, there are 290 streets with street associations and 387 street members in total. Seventeen new Street Associations formed in March, showing how our communities are working together during this time of crisis. From doing shopping to collecting and dropping off medicines to making friendly phone calls to people self-isolating,

Street Associations know who lives in their area and how to provide the help they need. You can find out more about help in your area by visiting;

directory.buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

You can ask a family member or a friend who can use the internet to access this site where you provide your postcode and the type of help you need.

Local businesses are stepping up to help vulnerable residents

Many local family run businesses across the county have adapted and introduced services to help residents in their communities who are self isolating at home.

These include fruit & veg stalls that are located in garden centres now supplying fruit & veg boxes, bakeries now doing home deliveries of baked goods as well as flour, milk, eggs and other essentials.

So if you are struggling to get supplies in, it is highly likely that there are local businesses near you ready and waiting to help. Certainly call your local shops and ask them if they have any arrangements or if they know of other shops locally with a delivery service. If you are having a local newspaper delivered, keep an eye in there too.

And don't forget that you can always call us (details on the back page) and we'll see what we can find out for you



Interesting facts - Trains, planes and automobiles...

1. The world's longest commercial flight took around 30 hours.

The so-called 'Double Sunrise' service by Qantas, which ran from Australia to Sri Lanka from 1943-45, often lasted over 30 hours, with passengers seeing the sunrise twice. Today the longest commercial flight is the Singapore Airlines Singapore to New York route, with an average journey time of 17 hours and 50 minutes.

2. The shortest commercial flight takes less than two minutes.

Incredibly, the shortest commercial flight, operating between the neighbouring islands of Westray and Papa Westray in Scotland's Orkney islands, takes around one and a half minutes. With the fastest recorded flight taking less than 50 seconds.

3. Japanese railways hand out 'certificates' for delays of more than five minutes.

Japanese trains, reputedly the most punctual in the world, issue passengers with a 'delay certificate' if a train is running more than five minutes behind schedule. The documents can be shown to bosses or teachers to explain a passenger's lateness. Delay certificates are also issued on some trains in Germany and in Paris.

4. The most expensive airport to city taxi ride costs around £190.

Any budget traveller worth their salt attempts to avoid airport taxis at all costs, but anyone keeping an eye on their finances should certainly avoid jumping in a cab from Tokyo's Narita Airport. According to a study by Moneycorp (a currency exchange company), the ride is the most expensive airport-to-city transfer in the world, costing an average of £191/\$235 one way.

5. India's trains transport roughly 23 million passengers each day.

That's the entire population of Australia. Additionally, if laid out in a single line, the tracks from India's railway network could circle the world one and a half times.



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!





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.



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

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

Although they recognise the additional strain that this unprecedented public health emergency is placing on these services, they 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 whether it's GPs, Hospitals, Pharmacies, Dentists, Care Homes, they want to hear from you if you are encountering any major problems with these services. They are 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 by calling **01844 34 88 39**,

SALMON FISHCAKES RECIPE



Ingredients
Serves: 4

- 1 (415g) tin salmon, drained and flaked
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil

Pick through the salmon and remove any bones. In a mixing bowl, beat the eggs and add the diced onion, salmon and pepper. Mix thoroughly.

Shape into 8 patties. In a large frying pan over medium heat, heat the oil. Fry each patty for 5 minutes on each side or until crispy and golden brown.

If you feel they're not holding together as you'd like then add a 1/4 cup of flour or breadcrumbs.

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