

Note from the Editor

Last month, the newsletter had rather an upbeat feel to it with all the events and celebrations around Older Peoples Day so I apologise for bringing us all down to earth with a bump again. Rather a lot of doom and gloom as I feature financial matters on page 5 and a very thought provoking article on page 3 from the Centre of Ageing Better about sharing your thoughts and wishes about end of life. This time last year, I was very much in the aftermath of losing my Dad very suddenly. We'd never had any discussions about what he would have wanted and I found myself having to make decisions, hoping that he would have been happy. I've certainly realised how important it is to talk to people and plan ahead.

Back on to positive things. I'm sure that you must have seen some of the media coverage on Song-a-minute Man in the last 2-3 weeks. We mentioned Ted last month and his singing car journeys with his son which quickly became an internet sensation. Since then Ted has got a recording contract and the single, a cover of Frank Sinatra's 'You Make Me Feel So Young' is raising further funds for Alzheimer's Society. Ted is currently No43 in the Singles chart.

And would you believe it? Some other pensioners are also releasing a new record! You might have heard of them, the Rolling Stones. Their blues album will even be available on vinyl. October is beginning to feel like 'retro' month.

I hope that you enjoy the newsletter this month and if you would like to include any events, information or clubs in a future edition, my details as ever are on the back page.



Andy



New Funding Opportunity from Active Bucks



Buckinghamshire is split into 19 Local Areas and each has been allocated Active Bucks funding over two years, 2016 and 2017, to support the development of new, local physical activity opportunities for residents to access.

The range of physical activity opportunities have been developed as part of a community engagement phase of the project and each forum has made a decision on what activity opportunities best meet the needs of the residents within the local area.

Applications for the second year of Active Bucks provision funded by Public Health is now open and below lists areas and target areas that target older people.

- Beeches - Gentle Exercise
- Chesham and Chiltern Villages - Gentle Exercise
- Gerrards Cross and Denham – Yoga / Pilates
- Great Brickhill, Wing and Ivinghoe - Jog/Run Group
- Southwest Chilterns and Marlow - Yoga/Pilates/Tai Chi

All those interested in applying for funding can find out more information access the specifications and application forms at <http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/healthy-living/active-bucks/funding-opportunities/>

The deadline to receive applications is Monday 31 October 2016

Joanne Fowler, Active Communities Officer, Joint Community and Leisure Team

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Adult Advocacy, User Engagement & Direct Payment Consultation



Buckinghamshire
County Council

Buckinghamshire County Council need to re-commission the current engagement, advocacy and direct payment services because contracts are due to end on 31 March 2017. At the moment these are provided through two contracts. They are proposing to split the advocacy from direct payments services and, along with engagement, re-commission three individual contracts. As part of this they are also proposing to provide only statutory advocacy services. This means withdrawing non-social care community advocacy. They believe that this will help to get better value for money, make it clear what support is on offer and where to go for help.

They want to consult with people who currently use or provide these services - as well those who refer people to these services - so that they can develop the proposal in line with your experiences, what works for you and the skill needed to do this.

Formal consultation started on the 8th September and will finish on the 4th November and is available electronically at <https://www.research.net/r/ADVOCENGDPCONSULT2016> as well as face to meetings. Hard copies of the consultation are available by contacting Bucks County Council on 01296 387677

Over 50s insurance rip-off: Specialist firms charging customers up to four times as much as regular insurers

Elderly drivers and homeowners are being overcharged by insurance providers catering specifically to over 50s, consumer campaigners have warned, as they are paying up to four times as much for cover offered by regular providers.

A mystery shop by Which? found some year-long policies offered by specialist providers were between £110 and £1,134 more expensive than the best deal given by a normal insurer.

Experts have said that it is "unacceptable" for trusted brands including Age UK and Saga to overcharge old and vulnerable customers just because were less likely to question the value of deals.

James Daley, director at Fairer Finance, said: "These firms should be more careful about claiming they offer good value to over 50s and then in practice offering some of them very bad value."

It has been reported in the Telegraph that sources have told them that some insurance policies offered by Saga, which offers insurance policies provided by a range of different insurers, are sold for 80pc more than the actual cost of the insurance. The Which? report found it charged £437 for an annual home insurance policy, around 35pc more than the best deal offered by Direct Line £286.

Saga have responded, insisting that it does not charge commission and sets prices which covers its costs including marketing and customer care.

Age UK, Rias and Castle Cover, all of which are aimed at older customers and sell insurance on behalf of Ageus, were also named and shamed in the report.

Examples of overcharging included According to Which? Castle Cover charges £1,364 a year for car insurance, around four times the price of the best deal from LV= at £330. Age UK provided a quote of £919 while Rias quoted a price of £1,187.

Editor - A reminder to us all, no matter what our age, it is always good to get alternative quotes whether it's insurance, energy supplies or work on our homes etc



It can be difficult to think about death

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It can be difficult to think about death – either our own or that of those closest to us – and to start conversations about what we hope for. Even so, many people want to be in control of certain medical decisions during end of life care.

So, putting the right building blocks in place is important. Thinking and talking about these issues is a good start; but formal steps can provide more assurance and clarity for people and practitioners. These range from an ‘advance decision’ (a legal record of decisions to refuse certain treatments) or an advance statement (non-enforceable steer); to arranging ‘power of attorney’, so a relative can take certain decisions on behalf of a patient.

At the moment, only 4% of people in England and 2% in Wales have made an advance decision. People may actively choose not to take one out. But there are many who aren’t aware of or informed on their legal options, as well as an unfortunate but common misconception that relatives can have final say in a patient’s treatment decisions, if they have lost capacity to do so.

One person who has been tackling these issues in her own community is Susan Hannis. She trained as a Soul Midwife in 2013 after becoming increasingly convinced of the importance of a good death, and interested in ways of enabling her own. Then following Death Café events in her area and a growing local interest in talking about death, Susan invited a small group to her living room to share their experiences of death, and to research questions together. In this informal context, she shared her own process of writing a ‘Living Will’ (involving several aspects of end of life planning) and the group worked out how they wanted to approach these issues themselves.

This all became bigger than she imagined; she soon had a large waiting list. The first group met five times, and a further three different groups followed this. Each supported each other in unpicking preferences, having conversations with relatives and – where people wanted to – putting legal structures in place. Within the mix of different interests, the common theme has been frank conversation in an informal, confidential and safe environment, with the help of greater knowledge and networks to take things further if people want to. Recently, a funeral director talked to around 20 interested members and answered questions. It’s planned for a solicitor, a doctor and a hospice worker to do the same.

Susan emphasised that not everyone wants to set up legal processes: “you can’t do it in the wrong state or for the wrong reasons”. But feedback from groups suggested that even having these conversations has helped people. For some it opened up the need to resolve family difficulties, or to be honest about their beliefs. Others realised they had too much baggage around the subject to face it now, while some wrote out a full funeral service. Susan’s personal belief is that getting your practical and emotional affairs in order can help you approach death with a quiet mind; and in particular, stories of good or painful deaths as told by those accompanying the dying make a deep impression on us.

Many people think that the taboo around death is lessening. In a recent poll, 64% agreed that it “it is more acceptable to talk about dying, death and bereavement now than it was 10 years ago”. International initiatives like Death Café are bringing informal conversations about death into towns and cities across the world and individuals like Susan are opening up personal and practical conversations. Informal groups are great at breaking down taboos; but in reaching a wider number of people, health and other professionals also have a key role in initiating conversations about end of life care decisions. Age UK have launched some helpful guidance on preparing for end of life and this can be found at www.ageuk.org.uk/health-wellbeing/relationships-and-family/end-of-life/overview

The Centre for Ageing Better is also scoping a wider piece of work on planning and preparing for later life. If you would like to share your experiences, evidence or ideas with us, please do get in touch with Ali.Hawker@ageing-better.org.uk

My thanks to Ali Hawker and the Centre For Ageing Better for their permission in reproducing this article



Volunteering News



Helping you stay independent

Important changes to the Volunteer Hub

There are changes to the Prevention Matters Volunteer Hub and what services are available to support groups in the future. The Volunteer Hub has supported many groups for 3 years and has had some great successes. However, the Volunteer Hub concludes as planned on 18 October when its contract comes to an end

support for the VolunteeringBucks.org.uk website

Volunteer roles can be advertised on volunteeringbucks.org.uk and you can also search for volunteer on the website by postcode, when and how long that you wish to volunteer as well as type of volunteering.

There is still plenty of support available from Community Impact Bucks including: Free Volunteering and Funding Advice Surgeries to receive 1-2-1 support and

To read the full briefing go to www.communityimpactbucks.org.uk/pages/important-changes-to-the-volunteer-hub.html

Buckinghamshire Time credits

Earning Time Credits

Camaraderie Club, Amersham

The Camaraderie club is a lunch group for older people on Wednesdays that meet at Gower House, Chestnut Lane, Amersham and where they can socialize and take part in activities as well as enjoy a hot lunch and afternoon tea including homemade cakes.

Fiona says the secret to the groups success is their team of volunteers. She says "We are all in it together and work well making the day happen with our individual roles and responsibilities". We are always looking for new volunteers and that is why we have recently signed up to the Buckinghamshire Time Credits scheme." Rod who volunteers with group has already seen the benefits having spent his Time Credits on Thames Clippers. He was really pleased to have had his efforts acknowledged in the letter he was sent from them when he got the tickets, saying well done for volunteering.

For enquires regarding volunteering at the club on a Wednesday please call Fiona Goodall on 07769917792.



Spending Your Time Credits

The Monument, London

A permanent reminder of the Great Fire of 1666, the Monument commemorates one of the most famous events in London's history. Standing on the piazza between Fish Street Hill and Monument Street, the 202ft column designed by Sir Christopher Wren and Dr Robert Hooke, celebrates the City which rose from the ashes.

Now you can climb the Monument with Time Credits! Just one Time Credit needs to be exchanged for access to the towering viewing platform, giving views across the City of London and south over the Thames. You do not need to pre-book to use your Time Credits here, just turn up on the day

To enjoy views from The Monument there is a **311 step** climb up a spiral staircase – due to the nature of the building there is no lift access.

Winter Opening

Hours: October - March
9:30am - 5:30pm daily (last admission 5:00pm)
The Monument is closed from 24 - 26 December.





Money News

Green hints benefits may change after 2020

New Work and Pensions Secretary, Damian Green has said there is a need to look at “intergenerational fairness” over the long-term, which could include changes to the triple-lock on the state pension and withdrawing universal benefits such as the winter fuel allowance and the concessionary bus pass. Whilst his comments to the BBC also confirmed that there was no intention of making any changes during the lifetime of this Parliament, campaigners are concerned that an early election as some have predicted would bring that promise into question.

A recent report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies has also suggested that a slump in home ownership and less generous pensions have left those born in the early 1980s with only half the wealth of those born a decade earlier by the same stage of their lives. Interestingly, this analysis now takes the issue beyond one of simply setting younger generations against pensioners, and now suggests that there is a divide between 30 and 40-year-olds.

Pensioners face change to housing benefit

Thousands of pensioners could be hit by a little known change to housing benefit rules that is due to take effect from April 2018.

Under the change, housing benefit in social housing will be limited to the level of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), which is calculated on the size of the household rather than the size of the property.

This means that a single pensioner or couple, living in a two bedroom home will have their housing benefit capped at the one bedroom LHA rate. Tenants will then have to find the shortfall in their housing benefit or move to a smaller property. For some this will mean a cut of between £300 and £1700 a year.

Despite government promises that older people would not be affected by the so-called “bedroom tax”, this new way of calculating LHA will, over time impact on hundreds of thousands of our poorest pensioners.

Attendance Allowance Campaign



The future of Attendance Allowance (AA) is in doubt under government plans to devolve responsibility for it to local authorities, the NPC has warned. Under plans currently being considered by ministers, local councils would get to keep 100% of all business rates in their area, but in return would have to fund items such as AA. Campaigners are concerned that this will create a postcode lottery, with different areas paying AA at different rates and having different eligibility criteria.

The National Pensioners Convention is asking supporters to send a letter to their MPs raising concerns about this issue. You can download a copy of the model letter at <http://npcuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/MODEL-LETTER-TO-MPs-ON-AA.doc>. Please let us know how your MP responds.

You can get free home visits from Optometrists

Good eyesight is a significant factor in retaining independence and quality of life as we all get older. Regular eye tests can help to detect, monitor and help treat eye conditions such as Cataracts, Glaucoma, Age-related Macular Degeneration and Diabetic Retinopathy.

Anyone who is over 60 and cannot leave home unaccompanied are entitled to a free NHS eye test at their place of residence. Those who receive certain benefits may also qualify for help towards the cost of glasses. You may also be entitled to NHS-funded mobile services where the ophthalmic practitioner comes to visit you at home, a care home or at a day centre.

You can call 111 to find out who provides mobile sight tests in your area.

Thank you to Healthwatch Bucks for this information



New Asian Men's Movers and Shakers group in Castlefield

Thursday 1st September saw the launch of a new weekly social club for Asian Men. The inaugural gathering offered members two taster exercise sessions: a Tai Chi session and a especially designed fitness session. Members also enjoyed some well-deserved refreshments after the sessions!

Future sessions will include games, discussions and a varied programme of activities and entertainment for members to take part in. The activities will reflect the interests of the members and will evolve over time.



The club runs every Thursday from 10am at Castlefield Community Centre, High Wycombe and offers an excellent opportunity to meet old friends and make new ones. For more information on the club or to join, please email Munsoor: Castlefield@Karima.org.uk

Chalfont St Peter Pub Lunch club in the Greyhound Hotel

The Chalfont St Peter lunch club continues to be a popular monthly event in the Greyhound Hotel where they are offered both good food and lovely surroundings. More than 25 members attend regularly on the second Monday of each month from 12:30 onwards for a two course meal costing just £8. Anyone interested in joining this merry band can contact Madge Holah on 01494 875401



Pub Lunches elsewhere?

If you'd like to see a Pub Lunch Club started in your community or want to volunteer as a local coordinator please call Llew Monger on 07808 096513



AGED 55+

WALKING FOOTBALL

A SLOWER VERSION OF THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

Walking Football is one of the latest crazes, giving those that have given up the chance to get back into the sport they love!

As you've guessed Walking Football involves a lot of... well... walking. It carries all the same rules as every day football except you can't pick up too much speed. It provides a sociable, fun and safe environment for those looking to be a little more active in their spare time.

Two new sessions are starting

Start Date: Monday 10th October
Time: 13:00 – 14:00

Venue: **Aqua Vale** Park St, **Aylesbury** HP20 1DX

For more information email: jodiemorris@everyoneactive.com

Start date: 12 Dec 2016

Time: 10:30am - 11:30am

Venue: **Mursley Community Sports Pavilion**, Station Road, **Mursley**, MK17 0SA

For more information

email: jonathan.wood@berks-bucksfa.com



Health News

Laughter may boost physical activity, mental health for seniors

When it comes to health in later life, researchers find laughter may really be the best medicine. A new study in the US, led by Georgia State University, suggests combining laughter with moderate exercise may improve the mental health of older adults, as well as boost their motivation and ability to engage in physical activity

It is well established that physical activity at any age is beneficial for health. For older adults, regular physical activity can boost heart health, aid weight control, reduce diabetes risk, improve bone health, and maintain and grow muscle strength.

Additionally, seniors should engage in muscle-strengthening activities such as sit-ups or simply carrying heavy bags, at least 2 days a week.

For their study, the researchers set out to investigate whether combining laughter with physical activity would boost exercise enjoyment for older adults, enabling them to reap the associated health benefits. The program the researchers created is known as [LaughActive](#). It incorporates moderate-intensity physical activity with simulated laughter techniques, whereby participants choose to laugh, without there being any humorous stimuli. The researchers explain that the body is unable to pinpoint the difference between simulated and genuine laughter, so either form offers health benefits.

After 6 weeks, participants completed questionnaires that assessed their perceived benefits of participating in LaughActive. Their mental health and aerobic endurance were also assessed. 96% reported laughter as an enjoyable addition to physical activity, while 88% said that laughter boosted the motivation to take part in exercise activities.

While the study findings show promise, the researchers point out that they are early results in a small number of participants, so further studies are needed to gain a better understanding of how laughter may benefit health.



ARE YOU WORRIED ABOUT YOUR MEMORY?

Join us for a free Memory Information Session

On **20th October** at in The Oak Room, Downley Community Centre, School Close, Downley, High Wycombe, HP13 5TR and on **27th October** at The Centre, Verney Close, Buckingham, MK18 1JP

The session will last for two hours and will include:

- Understanding Memory & Memory Tips
- Coping Strategies
- Access to a wide range of information
- Signposting to other services & help

To book a place please contact Jane Dallaway on 01296 331749 or 07484 096966

Turtle Song

Turtle Song is a singing and song-writing initiative for people with memory problems and all forms of dementia and for their carers. It gathers professional musicians, and music students together to deliver a high quality and enjoyable experience.

Turtle Song takes place weekly, with the final session being a filmed sharing for invited family and friends. The aims are to enjoy singing together, to write and record a song and to give the brain and body mental stimulation and exercise. The project is in its 10th year and is a collaboration between Turtle Key Arts, the Royal College of Music and English Touring Opera.

Turtle Song is FREE to all participants and takes place on Monday afternoons from 2pm to 4pm until the 21st November at Waddesdon Manor, Aylesbury, Bucks HP18 0JH. The Sharing performance takes place on 28th Nov at The Dairy, Waddesdon Manor.

Transport is provided for a limited number of participants. There will be pastoral workers on hand to support participants.

For further information phone 020 8964 5060 or email charlotte@turtlekeyarts.org.uk



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

2016 Dates

16th November

Christ the Servant King, Sycamore Road, High Wycombe

All are welcome. Please contact Andy Trueman on 01296 622122 for further information

Cops 'arrest' woman, 102, but for a nice reason

A 102-year-old Missouri woman was "arrested" for the first time in her life and charged with living life to the fullest.

Eddie Simms crossed one more thing off of her bucket list when St. Louis cops slapped handcuffs on her and took her for a ride in the back of a police cruiser.

Simms originally wanted to ride in a hot air balloon for her 102nd birthday, but when that fell through, officers who know her through her work at a local senior center, asked if she would take a ride in a police car.

"I mentioned the idea for someone to ask her," said Sgt. John McLaughlin "She said she would love that but she wants to be handcuffed."

On the day she was "busted," officers wrote up a mock arrest warrant for Simms and announced she was under arrest.

"We announced we were looking for this one subject in front of all her friends. She said I'm right here," said McLaughlin. "We said we're going to have you come with us."

Simms' is always trying new things. For her 100th birthday, she rode a motorcycle. "She's amazing. It's unbelievable the energy she has," said McLaughlin. "She's mentally smart as a whip."

Dates for your diary

13th October Flu Clinic & Information Fayre
Steeple Claydon Village Hall 1-5pm

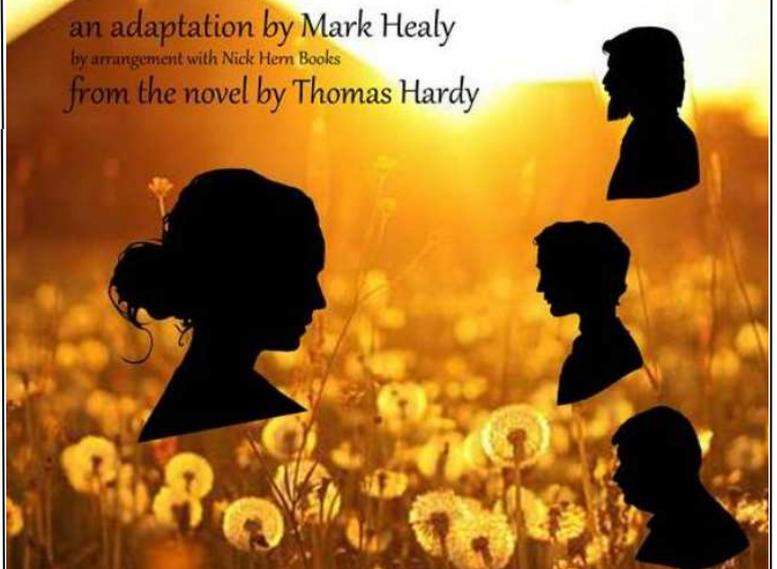
20th October Afternoon Tea for isolated older people 2.30 – 4 pm Holiday Inn, Tring Road, Aylesbury. Refreshments and entertainment provided. Free of charge. Make own travel arrangements. Contact Bal Harrington on 07956 361631 to book your place (Only 26 places available)

22nd October Buckingham Library Book Sale
Ex library stock 10am -1pm

Fourways Presents

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

*an adaptation by Mark Healy
by arrangement with Nick Hern Books
from the novel by Thomas Hardy*



Set in the 19th Century, Far From The Madding Crowd tells the story of the young, spirited and feisty Bathsheba Everdene. Having inherited her Uncle's farm, she finds herself playing mistress in a man's world. She is pursued by three would-be lovers: the constant shepherd, Gabriel Oak; the obsessive landowner, William Boldwood; and the reckless Sergeant Troy. But are any of them a match for the headstrong and independent Bathsheba?

Performances will take place at The Lancaster Theatre, Wycombe Abbey School, High Wycombe

**Thursday 27th – Saturday 29th October 2016
at 8pm**

**Tickets £14 (concs £12) at www.fourways.org.uk
or 01494 522722**