

EAST SUSSEX Seniors' Association

The Voice of Older People



The Voice of Older people

Autumn/Winter 2013 ~ Newsletter No.10



Have your say, Get involved, Make a difference, Shape the Future

www.essaforums.org.uk

Chair's Letter

Challenging times – that is the only way I can describe it. Many of you liken it to the post war years when money was short and everyone had to 'tighten their belts'. How many times have we been asked to do that over the years? ESCC has had to make significant savings which have had an impact on all of us.

ESSA has been persistently vocal in putting forward your views gathered from the seven forums. Our message has been - protect the most vulnerable and consider those who carefully saved and planned for a comfortable retirement only to find their savings diminished and their quality of life reduced.

The impact of the cuts on you as members will play an important part in our meetings with Adult Social Care (ASC) in the New Year. However it is not all bad news. In East Sussex ASC and the NHS are beginning to work together to pool resources. We can all contribute to the development of the your local surgery's Patient Participation Group and by attending the various stake holders meetings occurring across the county.

There are Locality meetings to develop ways of working together for the benefit of your community and always opportunities to volunteer in a variety of different ways.

Keep busy – get involved.

Some of you may get this newsletter before Christmas it will depend when your forum sends them out. My Christmas message to you all is, there is no need to spend Christmas Day at home alone if you would rather not.

Many churches and local charities provide a Christmas Day Lunch and often include free transport. Scan your local newspapers, phone the local churches, contact your Senior Forum. Churches welcome everybody and a volunteer to help serving up meals or doing the washing up would be greatly appreciated.

Merry Christmas to you all and a very Happy New Year.

Kate Davies
Chair

When you change your clock, test your smoke alarm

Last year 226 people died in house fires. So when you change your clocks on 27th October, test your smoke alarm. It takes no time at all and gives you and your family a better chance of surviving a fire. **NB:** Put you clocks back one hour this time.





Turn2us
to access benefits & grants



Turn2Us

Turn2Us is a charity that helps all people in financial need to access welfare benefits, charitable grants, and other financial help – online, by phone, and face to face in some instances via their partner organisations.

Turn2Us

is part of a charity called Elizabeth Finn Care, a charity originally set up in 1897 as the Distressed Gentlefolk's Aid Association, in response to the worsening economic climate at that time, and which still gives direct financial aid to those in need.

Turn2Us can be accessed by the following means:

Online

Anyone can access the Turn2Us website, details of which are below, however as a casual user, access to all the grants and benefits information is limited, and the best use of this is via an Intermediary as above, or by direct contact.

Turn2Us website:

www.turn2us.org.uk/default.aspx

Turn2Us Helpline

0808 802 2000 – hours 8am to 8pm. This is a Freephone number and as a bonus is also free for users of 6 of the major mobile network operators (Pay as You Go) – being Orange, 3, Vodaphone, T-Mobile, Virgin and O2, but check with your supplier first. If your network does charge, and you are worried about the cost, the helpline can phone you back.

Turn2Us Intermediaries

These are volunteers who have been given training in grants searching and benefit checking. We are lucky that within East Sussex, we have a trained Intermediary, who can “signpost” people to channels that may be able to assist. If you are interested in this avenue, please contact: Mrs Christine Bowman on: 01273 583213 or 07866 301908 or email: secretary@essaforums.org.uk

Stay Safe Campaign Update

Simple steps to staying safe

As the nights draw in and the temperatures drop, it's a good time to think about some simple steps to help you stay safe around the home and reduce the risk of fire.

Having a working smoke alarm that you can hear on each floor in your house is top of the list of tips from East Sussex Fire and Rescue. You are four times more likely to get out alive if you have one.

If you have fire alarms fitted, take the Government's Tick, Tock, Test advice and check they're working when you put your clocks back on 27th October.



If you can't safely reach up and test it yourself, ask a family member, neighbour or friend. Don't be shy – it might save your life.

Other simple advice from East Sussex Fire and Rescue includes:

- Know your escape route and make sure it's free from obstructions.
- Take care in the kitchen – accidents while cooking account for over half of fires in the home.
- If you smoke, make sure cigarettes are stubbed out properly and never smoke in bed.

- Don't leave the TV and other electrical appliances on standby - switch off and unplug when not in use.



- Don't overload electrical sockets. Remember – one socket, one plug.
- If you have mobility, hearing or sight issues, think about what extra help or equipment you may need to get out safely.
- Love your electric blanket – get a safety check every three years and make sure they are stored flat or rolled up when not in use.

If you have access to the internet, further fire safety advice is available on the East Sussex Fire and Rescue website: www.esfrs.org.

You can also contact our Community Safety Team on: **0800 177 7069**.

The team can register you for a free fire safety visit, subject to eligibility criteria.



East Sussex
Fire & Rescue Service

Home Security Advice

We are lucky to live in a relatively low crime area but we all need to take simple precautions to make our homes more secure.

Most burglaries happen from the rear of the house so it makes sense to prevent access to your rear garden. Secure your garden gate with a padlock and bolts which cannot be opened by reaching over the gate. Trellis can be added to the top of rear fences (to a maximum height of 2m) which makes it much more difficult for an intruder to climb over them.



Lock your front and back doors even when you are in the house. This stops the opportunistic burglar who will try doors until he finds an unlocked one. If you are in a front room or upstairs it is unlikely that you would hear an intruder - don't give them the opportunity!

Ensure all windows are closed and locked when leaving the house even if you are just going into the garden.

Ensure you have adequate locks on your doors. Modern PVCU doors should have multi-point locking systems. Wooden doors should have a minimum of a 5 lever mortice lock (BS3621).



With PVCU doors turn the key in the lock when leaving the house to prevent the handle being opened via the letterbox.

Fit a door viewer and a security chain on your front door and display a sticker (available from Sussex Police) stating you do not open the door to cold callers. You do not have to open your door to unexpected callers.

If you need to leave a key outside for access by carers install a key safe. There is never a safe plant pot or rock to leave a key under!



With the darker evenings approaching remember to always leave a light on (or use a timer) if you go out in the evenings. Don't illuminate a room that can be peered into from the road.

For more advice our website www.sussex.police.uk has a comprehensive crime prevention section or you can speak to your local Crime Prevention Officer or PCSO contactable at Sussex Police on 101.



Top tips for staying healthy this winter

Be Prepared!

In cold weather we need to look after ourselves so we keep warm and well. Here's a few tips to help you stay healthy:

Get your flu jab, it's quick and safe and will protect you all winter, they are free and recommended for the following groups of people:

- * Adults aged over 65 years
- * An adult or child with a long term condition such as diabetes, asthma, COPD, heart disease or a suppressed immune system
- * The main carer of an elderly or disabled person whose welfare may be at risk if the carer becomes ill
- * Those living in a long stay residential care home
- * Healthcare workers or social care workers with direct patient contact
- * Make sure your medicine cabinet is well stocked and medicines are in date.
- * Common illnesses can be treated by your local pharmacy. Always seek advice from your GP if your condition worsens. Call 999 if someone is having difficulty breathing, has chest pains, a seizure, or you suspect meningitis.



- * Catch it, Bin it, Kill it - catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue, put it in the bin and wash your hands.

Keep warm and well

For vulnerable people cold can lead to serious health problems.

When it's really cold:

- * keep curtains drawn and doors closed;
- * have regular hot drinks and at least one hot meal a day if possible, to keep energy levels up;
- * wear several light layers (rather than one chunky layer) and wrap up if going outside;
- * keep your living room at around 18-21°C (64-70°F), and the rest of the house at 16°C (61°F). If you can't heat all rooms, heat the living room during the day and bedroom just before bed;
- * Stay safe in snow - wear footwear with good grips and remember, black ice might not be visible.
- * keep active!

Did you know, the winter of 1932 was so cold that the Niagara Falls froze completely solid!



The Energy Saving Advice Service

The Energy Saving Advice Service can help with information on:

- ✿ available grants and discounts;
- ✿ saving energy;
- ✿ setting your heating at the right temperature;
- ✿ how to get the best deal on your gas and electricity; and
- ✿ what to do if you're worried about paying your heating bills.

Contact them on **0300 123 1234** or visit **www.energysavingstrust.org.uk** for more information.

For many, trying to keep the house warm is easier said than done. If you're over 65 or disabled, or on a low income, you may qualify for a **Winter Home Check**.

This includes the following:

- ✿ an assessment of your home and how to keep it warm;
- ✿ small home repairs, such as improving insulation, repairing boilers, clearing gutters or chimneys;
- ✿ help with emergency temporary heating; and
- ✿ advice on getting help with the cost of heating.



If you have any questions or you're interested in a Winter Home Check contact **Social Care Direct** on: **0345 60 80 191**.

For information on keeping well in winter visit NHS Choices **www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth**



Care & Support in East Sussex all in "1Space"

East Sussex County Council has launched **1Space** - an exciting new website which will help people find the care, support and wellbeing services they need. From personal care to getting odd jobs done, from advice to coping with ill health, East Sussex 1Space will help you find solutions around to help you live independently, safely and in good health.

www.eastsussex1space.co.uk

Up-to-date information about benefit changes

East Sussex County Council have added a new section to their website with up to date information about the benefit changes being made as part of the 2012 Welfare Reform Act. www.eastsussex.gov.uk

When you see this ESCC scheme logo it means that traders have been approved.

Their staff are properly trained and have Criminal Records Bureau clearance for all staff who carry out work in people's homes.



New Advice Helpline

The BIG Lottery Fund have announced a major grant of £5 million to *The Silver Line* describing them as “a vital new befriending and advice helpline”.

The grant has been made available through The Fund’s £20 million Dignity programme for older people which focuses on providing services to older people who are isolated and lonely across the UK. It recognises that a phone call can be transformative and lift someone’s mood and self-esteem; as one caller told us: “When I get off the phone I feel like I belong to the human race.”

The Silver Line aims to help elderly people by giving them someone to speak to 24 hours a day, and will work like ChildLine by giving support and advice to those suffering neglect or abuse.

The Silver Line Helpline provides three functions to support older people:

- A sign-posting service to link them into the many, varied services that exist around the country;
- A befriending service to combat loneliness;
- A means of empowering those who may be suffering abuse and neglect, if appropriate to transfer them to specialist services to protect them from harm.

The Silver Line aims to tackle loneliness for older people and is run by volunteers who will refer callers to activities and organisations that can help them.

How the Silver Line was born

In August 2011, Esther Rantzen CBE (who founded the children’s helpline ChildLine in 1986) wrote an article about the loneliness she has experienced since being bereaved, and living alone. She was overwhelmed by the huge response from older people who shared her experience.



Ms Rantzen said a £5m grant means the Silver Line will be able to launch before Christmas – often the loneliest time of year for older people. She said the line aims to tackle the “stigma” attached to being lonely which “makes it impossible” for older people to ask for help and can damage their self esteem.

The Silver Line
helpline for older people

**The Silver Line Helpline
number is 0800 328 8888**



ESSA Members in the News



Congratulations to Carol

At the recent Age UK AGM Carol Hodge was awarded one of the three certificate of merit handed out this year.

The wording on the certificate says: *"in appreciation of your devotion to helping older people in the Wealden District and your work for Wealden Senior Citizens Partnership"*.

ESSA is proud that one of its members got this award and indeed of all the forum members who put in so much of their time to ensure that the voice of seniors is heard at all levels.

Goodbye to Denise

The ESSA Health & Community Care theme group said goodbye to Denise Leary at their meeting on 12th September. Denise has helped to support the group for the past 4 years, enabling both commissioners and providers of Health and Social Care to attend meetings to share information, seek views and answer questions from seniors' representatives across the county. Denise has now left the County Council and we wish her well in any new endeavours. She will be missed.



Keith Hinkley, Director of Adult Social Care and Health, **Denise Leary**, and **Kate Davies**, Chair of East Sussex Seniors Association.

Speakers Corner

We are always interested in hearing your views, or maybe you have an item of interest to share with other readers?

Do send your letters to the Editor Steve Thornett,
1 Wellington Close, Eastbourne,
East Sussex, BN23 5AR

FOCUS ON FORUMS

Seaford Seniors' Forum



Seaford, one of the largest of the seven forums linked to ESSA has nearly 1300 members, and meets monthly to discuss a range of subjects and problems to improve lifestyles for our members and residents in general. The committee comprises people from all walks of life including the backing of a Seaford town councillor ensuring that good links and a working relationship is maintained. This committee forms sub-groups on issues that need urgent response. We've been involved in discussions with the local NHS Trust on the implementation of changes in the way acute services are managed, ensuring residents from Seaford will not have to undertake the journey to the Conquest Hospital, Hastings for urgent surgical or orthopedic care but can be transferred to the Royal County Hospital in Brighton instead.

We are also responding to the recent consultation document on changes envisaged within the Mental Health Trust with regard to acute dementia bed relocation.

We run two main events each year, our AGM, where we invite speakers, and members can ask questions. Our other event, in October, is for the National Older People's Day. This year our theme was 'Caring for our Community', giving an insight into services and organisations in and around Seaford, who offer services with issues relating to benefits, crime prevention, fire and safety, memory loss and dementia, lunch clubs, and how to get out and about more to prevent loneliness and isolation.

We are involved with various agencies and are represented on the Seaford Stakeholder Group which is committed to ensuring that Seaford receives the best health care for the town, CASH a group which has similar aims but is more of a campaigning group. We are also in discussion with and sponsoring Community Transport Lewes Area looking at the viability of running a voluntary car driver scheme to and from Eastbourne District Hospital. This aims to provide patients, relatives, or friends with a cost effective way of reaching hospital. At present a minimum of two buses or a train from Seaford to Lewes, Lewes to Eastbourne and a bus is required. The alternative is by taxi which is extremely costly.

We are also very pleased to announce the launch of our new website, with grateful thanks to Anne Wyatt, one of our committee members for making this possible. This site has a wealth of information and is growing weekly, and is being 'hit' on a regular basis already. Please take time to look at the site at seaford-seniors-forum.org to see what interesting information is available.

We hope during 2014 to expand our social enterprises and begin to hold small, regular coffee mornings and meet and greet sessions, and to invite speakers or even have demonstrations to make these meetings interesting and encourage attendance. Watch the website for information on events. *See back cover for contact details.*

UK Older People's Day 2013 - Joining in!

UK Older People's Day is a nationally recognised day (1 October) which provides an opportunity to acknowledge the contributions, achievements, and aspirations of older people through celebration. In East Sussex there were over 50 events held throughout September and October to celebrate the Day. There was a wonderful choice of activities; including outings, information fairs, informative talks, taster sessions of complimentary therapies and social events to mark the occasion. The events were organised by seniors' forums across the county, community groups, organisations – many of whom are volunteers. The theme this year was very much about *Joining In*.

Picking just a few events across the county; there was 'The Good Life' held at the Winter Gardens in Eastbourne with 58 exhibitors, entertainment including comedy and a blues singer, and two raffles with great prizes. The event attracted well over 700 people.



In St Leonard's there was an Active Mind Body & Soul Day with lots of taster sessions including head, hand and foot massage, yoga and Bowen technique. What a wonderful way to relax! It was also a delight to meet a couple who had travelled from Seaford to come to the event in St Leonard's.



The Sea Gypsy's

In Piddinghoe they were bringing village archives to life; exploring the importance of unpublished records and how to preserve them for future generations. In Uckfield there was a demonstration of cooking for one, delicious easy meals to make, and in Hadlow Down the TN22 Club held the first public performance of their newly formed community choir. It was a real joy to hear them and it has inspired me to join a choir!

This year we were keen to ensure that those aged 50 plus were welcomed to the events. The 50 plus generation are sometimes referred to as the 'sandwich' generation because of the caring responsibilities many have for parents and grandchildren. We wanted to ensure that this group were included in the festivities, coming along in their own right or accompanying parents or friends.

I would like to say a big thank you to all the members of the Planning Group who meet each year to help pull the events together and to all the volunteers who organise and host them.

June Pratley

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Seniors' Forums Contact Details



Eastbourne Seniors Forum

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Hastings & St Leonards Seniors' Forum

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Lewes District Seniors Forum

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Meridian Mature Citizens Forum

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Rother Seniors Forum

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Seaford Seniors Forum

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Wealden Senior Citizens Partnership

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East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is proud to support the East Sussex Seniors Association (ESSA). However, it would like to point out that ESSA is an independent organisation and that the views stated in its newsletter will not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the County Council.