

ESSA NEWSLETTER 2022



HASTINGS CASTLE



A New Forum



An open meeting organised by ESCC back in the early summer attracted my interest and before I knew it, I had held up my hand and the job of founding a new forum was mine.

The sad death of the former chair, lockdown and time passing meant that the previous Lewes Seniors Forum had been disbanded. So now what? No members, no constitution, funding or presence in the town. I have been the chair [for a CIC] before, but this felt very challenging. I compounded the difficulties by having a hip replacement in June but I could still use my phone and computer to start the process.

With kind help from Sue Dunkley and ESSA we held another meeting with some interested brave souls and together we came up with a new name. This includes our nearby villages and leaves out the word forum. A small committee have since met twice to pin down our aims in a constitution and sketch out how we might run some events that would build our membership. We again asked for help from ESSA [to avoid reinventing the wheel] and so gradually the necessary elements are coming together.

I've really enjoyed meeting up with other organisations with a view to sharing our aims, members and benefits. We are now affiliated with the Lewes House of Friendship, are collaborating with Ovesco and the District Council on a project called Eat or Heat which is addressing aspects of the cost of living crisis and consulting with the Phoenix development on Access and Mobility. Other contacts have enabled us to hold a small workshop on mobility and we are hoping

to host an open event soon. A poetry group and a Quiz afternoon are also planned.

The most unexpected and frustrating challenge was navigating the ridiculous technically hard route in setting up a bank account - if only I had a personal assistant and an I.T. department! Fingers crossed that is now resolved.

Soon we shall have our own flyer explaining who we are and why you should join us. Determination and some newly acquired patience will see us flourish in the New Year. Thank you all for your support.

Polly Senter 06/11/2022

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LOVE IN LOCKDOWN: A TRUE STORY FROM WEALDEN

She had decided to move into retirement living not long before the world went mad. She was almost 70 and had been widowed for 7 years but had no intentions of sharing her busy life with anyone. But she had to admit that she was a bit lonely in the rented barn in the park. So she moved into the local council run court in the centre of town, with the 50+ flats and external bungalows.

Then a year later – LOCKDOWN! Things changed. A small group settled into a new routine through the hot spring, having a daily socially distanced “coffee morning” outside in the garden, with some joining in from balconies and patios. At least there was some human contact, but then there was always catching up with box sets on the TV as well.

Just before lockdown, at the monthly lunch at the court, she had got chatting computers with a “new” chap, named Paul, who seemed to be a bit of a “know all” when it came to IT. He said he would have a look at her laptop which wouldn’t “talk to” her printer. But the day he was due to come over, she was having one of her “bad days” and could not face seeing anyone. (She had quite a few of them.) Then LOCKDOWN! The computer whizz kid rang her a week or so later to see if she had managed to get it going – alas no. But they chatted and laughed. She hadn’t had much to laugh about for a long time, but it came back so naturally with Paul. They had so much in common and had both been through bad times, losing their loved ones. Paul rang again a couple of weeks later and again the laughter rang out. LOCK-

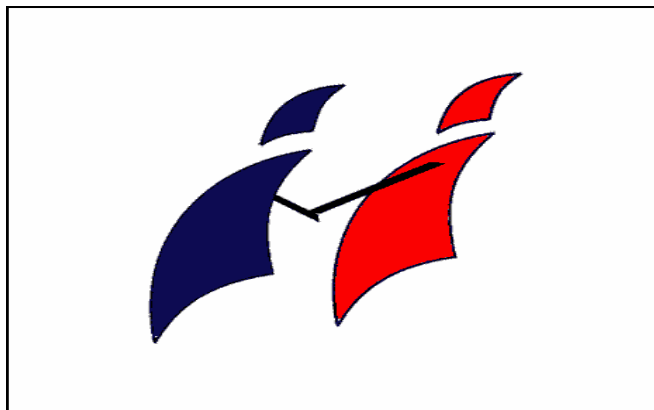
DOWN wasn't so bad after all.

Then, on her birthday in May, she was on her Juliet balcony having coffee with those below, when along the garden, from the rear gate to the bungalows, came Paul with a pretty gift bag in his hand. There was much teasing and laughing and ideas of how to get the pretty bag, and its contents, up to her. They managed it eventually by borrowing the next door neighbour's walking stick and with it, upside-down, Paul reached it up for her to grab. The card, chocolates and flowers were muchly appreciated and envied by the other coffee ladies. On the May bank holiday Monday she invited Paul to come and share a couple of baguettes in the shade of the trees in the garden. They talked and talked, all socially distanced in the shade, but both realised that there was something there!

When they were allowed to form a "bubble" they did and by the end of the first LOCKDOWN she had accepted his invitation to move in with him. Unable to get help from friends and family, they moved all her chattels into his bungalow between them. A mighty task.

Jean and Paul were married in July 2022 and have now joined the Wealden Seniors Committee.

Wealden Senior Citizens' Partnership



Wealden Senior Citizens' Partnership

In 2022, following the lifting of Covid restrictions, we arranged four social events for our members: a tea in Fairwarp Village Hall in May with entertainment provided by the Uckfield Ukulele Band, attended by 30 members; a cream tea at Holy Cross Priory in July for 40; a barbecue lunch in September at Hendall Manor Barn with a visit from Henry VIII (in the person of Tony Harris) attended by 55. Tony has been touring the UK as the 16th century's most notorious Tudor for over ten years. We heard all about Henry VIII's efforts to produce an heir and the trials and tribulations of having six wives. Our offering for Older People's Day in October was a fish and chips meal for 56, and a return visit from the Ukulele Band, at the Belmont Centre in Uckfield. 89% of those who were there rated this event as "Very Good" and 11% "Good". Indeed, all of these events were thoroughly enjoyed by our members, many of whom came to more than one. Altogether, 83 members attended one or more of these events through the year.

Linda Graham Chair

Turn the page to meet Henry VIII



Tony Harris as Henry V111



Hope G's Train Trip to Tunbridge Wells

Hastings Older People Ethnic – Group

Train Trip to Tunbridge Wells.



Hope-G 10th Outing:- Friday 22nd July 2022

During Covid Pandemic all Hope-G activities stopped. I emailed, phoned, and visited members. Some had more visits than others, visits were done according to the person's needs. In the beginning I used to stand by an open window or on the doorsteps, eventually I went inside their homes and shared tea and cakes, then we had lunch, burgers or pizza. This helped to build some confidence. As time moved on, we started going into the garden, doing a bit of weeding. We did small walks near their homes.

When Hope-G started meetings, I ensured a meal was provided and sometimes a goodie bag was given to some of the members. Meetings started at Central Hall, near Hastings Town Centre. A handful of members attended. Listening to the members, they were still scared. I decided to put on a Train Trip to Tunbridge Wells. It is a short journey. I contacted Christine Simmons who helped me organise this day out. She organised for Matthew Frazer – Southern Rails Community Officer to join us.

I made name badges with my name & contact details on the back. Everyone was given a Hope-G lanyard. One member was very anxious, we sat together and chatted, in no time we were at Tunbridge Wells Railway station. They were offered to join me or go off on their own. We agreed to meet back at the Railway Station at 3 pm.

A few of us had coffee together and visited a few shops. We met up with others off and on. For me personally, I did a lot of my own shopping, things I needed for my home but never had the time to do it.

Time just flew by, and we were now setting off to the Railway Station. On the way back we just gathered up the others, just like sheep joining the flock from every direction. We all reached Tunbridge Wells Railway Station. We were welcomed by the Station

10th November 2022

A highly successful Party was held in May with restricted numbers of 60 attending. We enjoyed a musical entertainment and sandwiches and cake were served.

The Older Peoples Day was held in September with an informative and interesting presentation given by the Sussex, Surrey and Kent Air Ambulance Service.

Our final event for this year is the ESF AGM in November. The speaker is from Citizens Advice on the rising cost of living crisis.

The third ESF newsletter is also due out this month.

Our membership numbers are now 1192.

The New Year sees an initiative to increase the number of social gatherings to encourage greater digital inclusion and diversity in our membership.

Judy

Cont:

Staff and offered water & shown the way to the station toilet. We were a happy bunch of people who sat in the train carriage, sharing their day's experience.

Julia Wells





1st December 2022

In June we held our Annual General Meeting and I was disappointed that only 15 members attended. This meeting is an opportunity for members to have an input in the future of our Forum. We had an interesting speaker from East Sussex County Council who informed us of benefits available to the older age group. We “few” enjoyed a sing-a-long session with Sally-Ann Fatkin, a selection of songs from the 60’s and also enjoyed wonderful cakes made by Jo, a member of your committee.

In October we returned to Seaford Community Cinema to celebrate Older Peoples Day with the film Downton Abbey-A new era. As always the cinema were very welcoming and provided refreshments before the film. There was a good size audience and all the comments received were very good so I am glad so many people enjoyed themselves. I hope to return to the cinema next year unless any member has any suggestions for something different to do. As things seem to be back to normal following Covid I hope to organise an outing in the Spring.

Lin Neeve Secretary Seaford Seniors