



Basingstoke & Deane Over 55's Forum



Assisted by
*Basingstoke
and Deane*

NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 2013

A warm welcome to you all to the last newsletter for this year. I do hope you have found some interesting reading and that you have been able to benefit from some of the issues raised.

As you are all well aware, Christmas is rapidly approaching. The town centre and the shops are really busy and, unfortunately, there are some very unscrupulous people about who think nothing of stealing handbags, purses, wallets etc. Don't give them the opportunity: make sure you close your bags and don't leave them unattended. If you are drawing money out of cash machines, use the ones inside the bank where possible, rather than the ones outside, and shield your pin number when keying it in. One of my neighbours contacted me to tell me that his partner's mother had £9000 stolen from her bank account. She used the cash machine at Sainsburys, in Hatch Warren, and when she got back to her car and put her bags inside, two men approached her and one said that she had dropped a £10 note on the ground. She got out to have a look and while speaking to one of the men the other one took her handbag from the car without her realising. They had obviously watched her keying in her pin number so were then able to use her card. This sort of distraction crime is increasing, particularly in car parks so **BEWARE.**

Gerald, as Governor for Older People at the North Hants hospital, has asked me to tell you about the action taken by the Chairman of Governors and the Board of Directors of the Hospital Foundation Trust. You have no doubt read and heard the media coverage of the problems caused by the closure of the walk-in clinics. The Trust has introduced a GP to work in A & E to relieve the pressure due to the increasing number of patients attending the department.

He has also asked me to pass on apologies from the hospital about the traffic problems being caused by the new building works. Everything is being done by the management to rectify the problem as soon as possible.

Gerald would like to remind you that if you have any concerns with the hospital to contact him and he will deal with it and advise you of the best way forward.

MEMBERSHIP

We currently have 624 members and if you renew your membership by the end of the year it will only cost you £5 – what a bargain! There will probably be a long queue at the Forum in December, of members waiting to renew so it would be appreciated if you could either post it or pay Gerald if you should see him outside of the Forum.

If you have requested to receive your newsletter etc by e-mail and don't receive it or you receive it in the post as well, please let us know. We also need to know if you don't receive it by post.

OCTOBER 2013 OPEN FORUM MEETING

Graham opened the meeting by welcoming the 203 members and 27 visitors who attended the meeting. He thanked all those who had helped with the chairs, the raffle, the food and coffees, the book exchange, all those who donated prizes for the raffle and last but not least, thanks to St John's Ambulance for being there, just in case!

Graham sent the Forum's best wishes to John Cook who is receiving radiotherapy treatment and, although very ill, was comfortable.

DESTINATIONS – BASINGSTOKE AND BEYOND

Joan Sullivan, one of our members, is a member of the Basingstoke Writing Circle, and she gave a short presentation on a book produced by them. The book contains both prose and poetry, written by the members, and Joan read out one of her own poems. I had read the book previously and really

enjoyed it, so much so, that I read it again! The book was being offered for sale to the members for £5 and 25% of the proceeds were being donated to the Testicular Cancer charity.

RECYCLING IN BASINGSTOKE

Cllr Elaine Still introduced the presentation and then handed over to Chris Noble from Hampshire County Council who said it would be a challenge to make a talk about rubbish interesting! He started with some figures: there are 740,000 tonnes of waste each year in Hampshire and it costs over £100m to collect and dispose of it. There is a lack of landfill sites in Hampshire and incinerators were used in the past but, due to age and pollution factors, most have been closed. If items for recycling are put in the green bin and are in plastic bags, these won't be recycled as the bag cannot be opened due to health and safety reasons. The only items for recycling are plastic bottles, paper, cardboard, aerosols, food tins and drink cans. He went on to explain the importance of recycling and how waste is being used as a resource rather than using landfills, to improve value for money for Hampshire residents. One of the questions asked was what was being done about excess packaging. There are ongoing discussions with suppliers etc on the subject but you can always remove packaging and leave it at the supermarket. You can report incidents of excessive packaging to Trading Standards.

BREEZE RADIO 107.60

This presentation was given by Belinda Allen, Regional Director for Celador. Breeze is our local radio station and is owned by Paul Smith, who received a CBE in 2012 for services to the media industry. He came up with the hit TV show, Who Wants to be a Millionaire and won £250 million by taking Disney to court. The station covers North West Hampshire and reports on local events, accidents, bad weather etc. Newbury Building Society has sponsored the Community Billboard which helps to give charities, community groups, children's groups and non-profit making organisations a voice in Basingstoke FREE OF CHARGE. Belinda recommended that you tune in to the Morning Show as the presenter, Tony James, will have you dancing round the kitchen!!

Should you wish to contact Breeze the telephone number is **01256 694000**

HAMPSHIRE FIRE SERVICE

Community Safety Officer, Gary Sloan, gave this presentation. He is the Watch Manager at Andover and his main job is to ensure the safety of people in their homes. There are 51 Fire Stations in Hampshire, 12 manned 24 hours a day providing an 8 minute response time, and 39 part time stations. There are 1,500 staff within the service and some 50 volunteers. They not only tackle fires, there is an animal rescue service, rescue teams in buildings, water rescue team, responders to back up ambulance services and a road safety team.

He outlined the importance of having a plan in the event of fire in your home, especially if you have a disability. The Fire Service will help you with this. He listed the main risks of fire hazards in the home e.g. smoking, candles, electrical faults, chip pans. He emphasised the importance of having smoke alarms in the correct positions, knowing where the door key is, keeping a phone by the bed, and closing doors to prevent the spread of fire.

I have only given you the main points of the presentations. The minutes give the full reports and are available on the web site www.bdover55sforum.btck.co.uk or from our secretary Gerald.

The committee had been given a short presentation about the refurbishment of the Top of Town and members at the Forum meeting were asked to fill in a short questionnaire for the Council.

We also had a meeting with a representative from HCC about the closure of Deeside. We were given the assurance that the home would remain open until the requirements of all the residents had been met.

HCC are running the "Hitting the Cold Spots" campaign again and leaflets were available at the Forum.

NEW AGE KURLING

The last session of Kurling in 2013 will be on Monday 9th December at 2.00pm in the Carnival Hall. This is free to members and good fun.

CORE FITNESS

The six week session of core fitness finishes at the end of November and hopefully we will be able to start again in the New Year. I enjoyed it very much even although I felt a bit stiff after the first class but it did get easier and I definitely felt the benefit.

EVENTS FOR 2013

We have had some very successful trips this year. Our thanks go to Gerald for all his hard work in organising them. The free trip to Gloucester will go ahead in the spring of next year. All those members who qualify will be informed of the details early next year and any member who doesn't qualify can book and pay the nominal price of £10.

By the time you receive this newsletter you will have received the details and be getting ready for the 3 day trip to Thursford on **Wednesday 4th December**, which I'm sure you will all enjoy.

Friday 13th December – Brick Lane Music Hall. Gerald is looking for 1 more place, if you have booked to go and think you are unlikely to make it, please let Gerald know as soon as possible.

The New Year Trip to Torquay is now fully booked.

PROPOSED EVENTS FOR 2014

The following list is not in any order – the dates and costs to be confirmed.

Stourhead House and Gardens and Shaftesbury

Aylesbury and the Grand Union Canal cruise with a cream tea.

Houses of Parliament (Possible date for June)

Sandringham House, Museum and Gardens

Mystery Tour

Highgrove House and Gardens

RAF Cosford

Bletchley Park Heritage Tour –WW Codebreakers - 21st March 2014. Cost Members £21.25, Non members £23.25. Coach only, cost of Entry TBA.

Thriplow Daffodils and Baldock – 6th April 2014. Cost Members £19.95, Non Member £21.95, including entry fee.

These events are subject to change and more could be added to the programme.

France – WW1 War Graves, in Belgium & France - Flanders Fields and Menin Gate with the 'Last Post'. We will visit interesting places on route to our hotel on our outward journey. Cost **£379** which includes 3 nights DBB, 2 full day guided tours and entrance into 2 museums. If you wish to visit any special place, please let Gerald know and he will try to include that in our programme. Please send deposit of **£40 per person** when booking, **cheques made payable to B&D Over 55s Forum**. This is one of the projects we are trying to get funding towards to Commemorate the Centenary of the First World War. Single Room Supplement is **£74**.

CARNIVAL CHORUS

We now have 45 members of the choir, five of whom are **men!!**

Our busy Christmas programme of entertaining in the residential homes has started and I am still getting requests for more; I think we will run out of time.

We were very saddened to hear of the sudden death of Paul Chamberlain of Anvil Arts. He produced the show "Authentic Voices" in which we were invited to sing. A celebration of his life was held at the Haymarket and we were honoured to be asked to sing some of the songs we had performed in the show.

If you are coming to the Forum meeting, you will be able to hear us singing some of our Christmas songs.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Ashcombe House – part of the Barchester Healthcare Group have written to us with details of the services and support they give to older people. They can provide a safe and comfortable environment with 24 hour nursing and residential care. They are equipped to help with palliative care and long-term illness, offering assessments and time-limited stays as well as longer-term care and support. If you would like more information Diane Stone, General Manager, would be very happy to take your call on **01256 468252**.

Hampshire County Council has commissioned Aster Living to provide a subsidised “Handyperson Service” right across Hampshire for anyone over the age of 55, those with a disability and families with disabled children. They undertake many tasks about the home including fitting curtain tracks, fixing cupboard doors, moving furniture, replacing electric sockets, small plumbing jobs, changing tap washers and much, much more. There is a subsidised hourly rate for labour of £12(incl VAT) if you are in receipt of a means tested benefit or £18 if you don’t. All materials are charged at cost and the “handy persons” are fully trained and DBS tested. They have so far helped over 2000 customers in Hampshire.

You can find out more about this service by visiting www.asterliving.co.uk or telephone **01264 405619** to speak to Sally Jobson, Operations Manager.

THAMES WATER

You may well have seen the reports in the press about Thames Water introducing a one-off charge to help pay for the purchase of land for the construction of the Thames Tideway Tunnel and a new sewer designed to tackle overflow problems in the Victorian sewers in London. This charge would include customers from parts of Basingstoke. Ofwat has disagreed with the planned cost and a final decision will be made by the end of November.

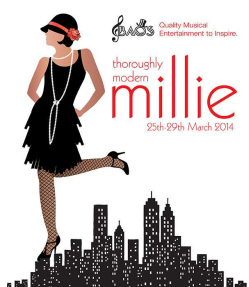
HOBBYCRAFT



The store “Hobbycraft” (just off Brighton Hill roundabout) is offering several free teaching hobby sessions for older people. No purchase is involved and they would like to offer this facility for older folk to enjoy some socialising and learn a craft at the same time.

You can contact Sharon on 08450516751 or email Basingstoke@hobbycraft.co.uk

THOROUGHLY MODERN MILLIE



The Basingstoke Amateur Operating Society are putting on a production of Thoroughly Modern Millie at the Haymarket Theatre, Basingstoke from 25th to 29th March 2014. Based on the musical comedy film starring Mary Tyler Moore, Julie Andrews and Carol Channing, Thoroughly Modern Millie is a perfect family show – a toe-tapping tribute to the fun of the flapper era.

A great night out and fun for all ages with lots of music, dancing and laughs. To book tickets please visit: <http://www.anvilarts.org.uk/whats-on/thoroughly-modern-millie> or call 01256 844244 (group bookings 01256 366935).

SCAMS

HCC has issued a bulletin highlighting scams being reported to Trading Standards.

If you are renewing your passport or European Health Insurance Card on-line you are advised to use the official websites as there are many sites, which although not necessarily illegal, are charging very high fees for the service. The health card is free from the EHIC website and your post office will check your passport information for a fee of £8.75 instead of some sites charging £30 to £40.

They have received many reports of fraudsters attempting to scam people out of large amounts of money. People have received calls and told they have won a large cash prize and to get this money

they are asked to give their bank details. In order to release the prize money, they ask for a fee, as much as £9000, before the money can be released. Never give your bank details to anyone or any business you do not know.

If you are a tax payer and receive an e-mail to say that you have received a tax refund, ignore it. HMRC have said that they never email a taxpayer about a rebate: it is always by official letter.

If you receive an email or letter offering an invitation for a loan, ignore it. The scammer will often use a company name similar to an existing loan company. If you accept the invitation, you will be asked to pay an upfront fee. If you pay that fee you will never hear from them again.

In a previous issue of the newsletter I gave details of the Telephone Preference service and the Mail Preference service. If you are receiving cold calls on a regular basis or unwanted mail, registering with these services goes a long way to alleviating this nuisance. Some companies target the elderly and vulnerable with unsolicited phone calls offering, for example, an intruder alarm system. Do not arrange a sales visit unless you have researched the company thoroughly.

We also have rogue traders operating in the area so be very careful not to be duped by them.

The telephone Preference Service number is **0845 070 0707** or visit www.tpsonline.org.uk
The Mailing Preference Service number is **0845 703 4599**

One final scam has been happening at supermarket checkouts. Always check your receipt as there have been cases where cash-back has been applied without it being asked for by the customer. If the customer does not check the receipt, then the cashier can pocket that amount of money. You will not know this until your bank statement comes in showing the amount debited.

The moral of that story is “Always check your receipt before leaving the checkout”

I'll lighten the mood now and hopefully make you smile!

MEMBERS CORNER

I found this joke in my newspaper and thought you might find it amusing.

An elderly couple had just learned how to send text messages on their newly acquired mobile phones. The wife was a romantic type and the husband was a no-nonsense kind of guy.

One afternoon when she was out, the wife sent her husband this romantic text:

“If you are sleeping, send me your dreams. If you are laughing, send me your smile. If you are eating, send me a bite. If you are drinking, send me a sip. If you are crying, send me your tears. I love you”

The husband replied: “I’m on the toilet. Please advise”

We are looking forward to seeing you at the AGM and Open Forum on the 11th December. You are welcome to bring visitors but they will not be able to participate in any voting.

OPEN FORUM MEETINGS 2014

The Forum meetings will always be held on a Wednesday.

February 12th, April 16th, June 11th, August 13th, October 15th, December 10th



Christmas and New Year wishes to you
all from Graham and all the Committee.



Marian Wilson

Editor- November 2013 Newsletter