



Basingstoke & Deane Over 55's Forum



Assisted by
*Basingstoke
and Deane*

NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2014

Welcome to you all at the beginning of another year. Hope you all enjoyed the Christmas and New Year festivities and Graham and the committee wish you all a “Happy New Year”. Our thoughts go to all those who were affected, and still are, by the floods and the damage caused by the extreme weather and hope they can recover and look forward to better times in the coming year.

We will continue in our work to address issues and problems that arise, not only for the benefit of all our members but those older people in the community who are not able to be members.

Spring must be on its way....the green garden waste collections are starting in February! The charge has been increased (no surprise there!) and it will cost £30 for 2 bags and 22 collections. My elderly neighbour and I share the cost as we only have small gardens and one bag each is quite sufficient.

MEMBERSHIP

There are still 210 members who have not yet renewed their membership at the time of writing this letter. If you wish to continue with your membership I would remind you that the cut-off date for renewal is the end of February.

Jane, our treasurer, has asked that, if members are writing cheques could they please write cheque amounts clearly. The cheques are read by machines and there have been several errors when the machine has misread the amount, causing the books not to balance. Can you also please ensure that there are no stickers on the back of the cheque as this causes the machine to jam.

DECEMBER 2013 AGM

Graham opened the meeting welcoming the 195 members attending and reminded any non-members present that they were welcome to stay for the AGM but should not take part in the vote for election of committee members.

As there were no nominations for the positions of chairman or secretary both Graham and Gerald agreed to stand for re-election and both were carried unanimously. The committee members were due for re-election this year and all the current members were prepared to stand again. There were no other nominations so Graham proposed that members take a vote on the whole committee; the vote was carried unanimously.

Graham was pleased to report another successful year for the Forum particularly as the membership had reached the record figure of 624 with an average attendance of 200 members at the bimonthly Forum meetings.

Although the Forum accounts show a small loss, our financial status is still healthy allowing us to only charge £5 for those members who renewed before the end of the year and keeping the membership subscription at £6 for a further year. The funding, by the Forum, for the purchase and installation of the permanent Hearing Loop has not only been of benefit to our members but for the wider community who use the Carnival Hall.

Copies of the full minutes of the AGM 2013 can be seen on the Forum's website www.bdoover55s.btck.co.uk or copies are available from Gerald.

DECEMBER 2013 OPEN FORUM MEETING

Graham opened the meeting welcoming not only 195 members but 31 visitors, who he hoped, would enjoy the meeting and consider becoming members.

He thanked all the committee members for their hard work and those members who helped on the day. I say it in every newsletter, we cannot manage without their help and it is very much appreciated.

The book exchange scheme is very popular and, whilst donations of CDs and DVDs are appreciated, we now have too many and could you make future donations to the local charity shops.

STAGECOACH BUSES AND ROUTES

This first presentation was given by Rob Vince, Operations Manager at Basingstoke. He outlined his background, having spent ten years at Basingstoke and having been a driver himself. There are some 140 drivers who undergo 2 weeks training, 2 weeks 'in class' training and then depot training. They all have to be CRB checked and attend an annual training day. There are fully equipped workshops in Rankine Road with a team of 30 mechanics and the buses are serviced every 3 weeks. They carry out 4.5 million passenger journeys a year, travelling 2.5 million miles and cover, not only Basingstoke, but Alton, Tadley, Newbury, Andover and Winchester. One third of the passengers are concessionary.

He reported that a network review was being carried out covering times, frequencies and routes. One of the changes involved the Jazz 3 route but he told the meeting that these changes had not been finalised.

HCC LISTENING EXERCISE

Alex Burn, from Hampshire County Council, had attended a Forum meeting two years ago, when she handed out some questionnaires for completion on the priorities for future planning. This is a follow up to the previous survey and she asked if as many members as possible could complete the form for collection at the tea/coffee break. The results of the survey would be provided in the New Year.

SULTANATE OF OMAN

The presentation was given by Margaret Bowman who spent seven years in Oman when her husband went to work there. She gave some background information about Oman and described the history of the country. Her presentation was a lengthy one so, if you are interested in reading the full version, you can visit the Forum website www.bdover55s.btk.co.uk or request a copy of the minutes from Gerald.

The Carnival Chorus, made up of Forum members, gave what Graham describes as a very professional and enjoyable concert of carols, favourite songs with some audience participation.

CORE FITNESS

The current six sessions are due to finish on Thursday 20th February and the next six sessions will start again on the following week, Thursday 27th February. If you feel the need to tone-up after the Christmas indulgences let Gerald know and you will be welcome to come along. The cost is £2.50 per session, with payment for all six sessions to be paid on the first day.

NEW AGE KURLING

Two kurling sessions have been arranged for this year so far – Monday 17th February and Monday 10th March at the Carnival Hall, starting at 2.00.

EVENTS FOR 2014

Non-members should add £2 to the cost of trips.

Friday 21st March – Bletchley Park. Members £27.10

Wednesday April 16th – Thriplow Daffodils and Baldock. Members £19.25

Monday 19th May – Aylesbury and a cruise on the Grand Union Canal, including a cream tea. Members £29.85

Wednesday 18th June – Sandringham (The Queen's residence). Members 27.30

Wednesday 16th July – Stourhead House and Gardens and Shaftesbury. Members £25.40

Friday 12th September – Mystery Trip. Members £12.50

Saturday 25th October – Swindon. No price to date

Sunday 2nd November – RAF Cosford. No confirmed price to date.

Monday 24th November – Birmingham Christmas Market. No price to date.

The 2 trips in May for the Houses of Parliament are both fully booked. Gerald is compiling a list of names for those who would like to go on a future date. Please let Gerald know as soon as possible if you are interested.

2014/15 New Year Celebrations 4day event will be at the Seabank Hotel, Porthcawl. Price £299 per person, includes all coach travel, full board, 2 half day trips and entertainment each night. A monthly savings scheme will operate. There are a few places still available and for information and booking speak to Gerald.

The 2014 Variety Show will take place on 4th October at Aldworth College. After the success of last year's show by the Olde Tyme Professional Theatre Company, we are hoping to welcome them back this year with a different show.

Forum members FREE trip. Gerald has the names of all those members who have qualified for this FREE Trip. We have decided to go to Gloucester and the dates are Wednesday 9th Aril and Sunday 27th April 2014. Please book your seats with Gerald for your suitable date and he will confirm if you have qualified when booking. Members who have not qualified and guests can come at a reduced cost of £10 but only if there are seats available.

WW1 CENTENARY

The trip to Belgium/France will be on 11th July for 3 nights. The cost will be £379 and a deposit of £40 will be required. Places of interest will be visited on the outward journey before reaching the hotel, places planned are Flanders Fields, Menin Gate with "Last Post" and others; entrance to 2 museums and guides are included in the price. If you are interested please speak to Gerald.

Packets of poppy seeds have been ordered and will be sent to members for planting, as part of the centenary events..

We are hoping to plan another event in June as part of the centenary events, but there are no details at time of going to print.

CARNIVAL CHORUS

The choir has returned after the Christmas break and we are busy learning new songs for our repertoire. Following on from our performances at the local residential homes, we've had lots of requests to go back again, as all the residents have thoroughly enjoyed being entertained and being able to join in with us. We had one gentleman who got really carried away and conducted us throughout our performance!

This picture was sent to us on a card from the residents of Marnell Lodge with their "thank you" for our visit to them.



On a sad note, one of our choir members Mrs Val Sanders, who joined us when the choir was first formed, passed away this month after a long illness.

OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

HOSPITAL INFORMATION

Gerald, as representative of older people on the hospital board, reported that he had attended an awards presentation ceremony and that the Hampshire Hospital Foundation Trust had won one award of two nominations. The hospital is financially sound.

If any member wishes to pay a compliment or make a complaint about any of the hospitals within the Trust (Basingstoke, Winchester and Andover), you can get a leaflet from Gerald giving you all the information you need.

You can get in touch with the PALS team who will listen to your complaints, ensure feedback, provide information about local NHS services and guide you to other useful sources of information and support.

Telephone – 01256 468766 or email – pals@hhft.nhs.uk

You can also write to – Customer Care Team, Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Basingstoke and North Hampshire Hospital, Aldermaston Road, Basingstoke, RG24 9NA

Should you wish to make a formal complaint you can use the above mentioned telephone number or email complaints@hhft.nhs.uk

If you write, you should address it to the Chief Executive at the above address.

PROSTATE CANCER CHARITY

Gerald is staging another fund-raising concert for Prostate Cancer Equipment at our North Hampshire Foundation Trust. This will be held on Sunday 13th April at Queen Mary's College, from 2pm until 5pm, and the ticket cost will be £7.50. One of the acts will be the Alder Valley Championship Brass Band – another act to be confirmed. Gerald is looking forward to your support to make this worthwhile Charity event another success.

HITTING THE COLD SPOTS

We have had a reminder from Hampshire County Council about the “Hitting the Cold Spots” campaign. If you need advice or help with heating your home, access to emergency heating or a home visit from an advisor, then you can ring the helpline **0800 8048601** or visit the website

www.hants.gov.uk/cold-spots

COSTLY TELEPHONE NUMBERS

There are a great many companies who use the expensive telephone numbers in the 08 range, such as 0844. Depending on your home phone provider, you can be charged as much as 5.1p per minute, plus a connection fee of up to 15p. If you visit the website **www.saynoto0870.com** it will give you a list of landline numbers for these companies that won't cost a penny to call.

0809

If you have a message on your phone saying that they have some very important information for you concerning a relative, telling you about a prize you have won or even telling you someone you know has died, do not respond to this if they number they give you to ring starts with **0809: it could result in costing you a lot of money!!**

BASINGSTOKE IN BLOOM

Volunteers are needed for the Basingstoke in Bloom scheme to help organise the annual competitions across the borough for schools, photographers and gardeners. You don't have to be a great gardener or even have a garden; just be available for meetings one evening each month. For more information about this scheme go to contact@basingstokeinbloom.com .

The Basingstoke Area Stroke Support is holding a “Jazz Night” on Thursday 20th March at the Irish Centre (next door to the Carnival Hall). If you are interested please speak to Gerald for more information.

MEMBERS CORNER

I was given a book for Christmas entitled “Thoughts and Blessings for the **Muddled**-Aged”:

It is full of quips and quotes very relevant for our age group. It opens with a quote which I’m sure you are all familiar with – “What did I come upstairs for?”

This is one of my favourite pieces:-

You know that you are over the hill.....

When you’ve seen it, done it and can’t remember most of it.

When you’d feel nostalgic, if only you could remember what for.

... When you keep repeating yourself.

When happy means an after-lunch nap.

When your reclining chair has more options than your car.

When you do the ‘Hokey Cokey’ you put your left hip out...and it stays out.

... When you keep repeating yourself.

When the waiter asks how you would like your steak...and you say, “Pureed”.

When you realise that a stamp today costs more than a cinema ticket when you were young.

When you choose the church pew based on the comfort of the pews.

... When you keep repeating yourself.

But....

Age doesn’t matter unless you are a cheese!

(Quote by Billie Burke, an American actress)

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 (incl. AGM)

Marian Wilson

Editor – January 2014 Newsletter