



# GREY MATTERS

## CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

### JOIN IN WITH THE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE TO PUT THE VIEWS OF OLDER PEOPLE ACROSS

The principal aim in setting up older people's forums such as ours is to create opportunities for older people to be involved in improving public services. In pursuit of this aim, WSCP members have been attending a whole range of meetings organised by agencies in the statutory and voluntary sectors, at which they are able to represent the interests and views of older people.

One of the main areas of concern is that of Health, Social Care and Wellbeing, and we have set up a special interest group with the objective of monitoring the provision of health and social care services for older people in Wealden District.

For instance, we have been asked to comment on proposed changes to East Sussex County Council's policy of charging for domiciliary care services. The main thrust of the changes is to introduce a more consistent and less intrusive way of allowing for any expenditure incurred due to a person's disability when calculating the amount charged for home care services. Unfortunately, we were not given very long in which to formulate a reply, as it is the Council's intention to implement these changes in April.

If this is an issue that affects you, we would be very interested to hear from you in due course as to whether or not you find these changes helpful in your personal circumstances. Please let us know, so that we can pass on your views.



## COME TO A COFFEE MORNING

The Wealden Senior Citizens' Partnership exists to give a voice to older people throughout Wealden, and our aim is to give every person over 50 the opportunity to join. Membership is free, and the only commitment is to receive newsletters on a regular basis.

In order to extend awareness of our existence in the northern and southern extremities of the Wealden district, the Partnership will hold two coffee mornings, one in Westham Village Hall, near Pevensey, from 10am to 12:30 on Saturday, March 31<sup>st</sup> and the other in the United Reform Church Hall, Croft Road, Crowborough from 10am to 12:30 on Saturday, April 21<sup>st</sup>.

This will be an opportunity to meet the Partnership committee, to help to represent older people in areas such as transport, health and social care, to hear interesting speakers and to have a say on important issues. Please let us know that you are coming by completing the reply slip on page 4. Transport can be provided if needed.

## WALK MORE... FEEL THE DIFFERENCE

How far have you walked today? Did you know that the current recommendation for physical activity is that just 30 minutes a day of moderate activity, such as brisk walking, is all it takes to feel a difference?

This might sound a lot all in one go, but you can walk for ten minutes three times a day, or 15 minutes twice a day. 'Brisk' walking means walking so that you breathe a little faster, feel warmer and have a slightly faster heart beat – it doesn't need to be 'hard', and you should still be able to talk!

If you are free of serious health problems you can start walking more with confidence.

Try to walk on most days of the week; maybe starting with a 10 minute walk and gradually increasing the time you spend walking.

## MAKE IT PART OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE!



**PLEASE DON'T JUST READ THIS NEWSLETTER AND THROW IT AWAY. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN ISSUES OF CONCERN TO OLDER PEOPLE WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU. PLEASE BECOME A MEMBER OF THE WEALDEN SENIOR CITIZENS' PARTNERSHIP BY COMPLETING AND RETURNING THE SLIP ON THE BACK PAGE.**

## **ANNOUNCING THE LAUNCH OF.....ESSE**

There's going to be a county-wide association of older people's forums.

In order to act as a non-political umbrella organisation for all seniors' forums in East Sussex, the East Sussex Seniors' Executive - ESSE - is due to be launched at the end of March.

The aims of this new association are: to ensure continuous improvement in local government and other public services for older people, to ensure that older people are fully involved in the development of services and policies which affect them, and to create appropriate opportunities for older people to participate and be active members of their communities.

## **IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO GET INVOLVED**

WSCP member Mike Benians is a prime example of how older people can make a difference in their local community. A resident of Uckfield, Mike has taken up the cause of restoring a local beauty spot, Lime Tree Avenue.

The Avenue was originally planted with around 200 limes, over 150 years ago, and is nearly half a mile long. Over the years it has become sadly neglected with the loss of as many as half its original number of trees.

Keen to reverse this deterioration, Mike set up an action group, Lime Aid, and sought the help of The Tree Council. With the help of a grant from this national organisation, a group of Uckfield children were the principal volunteers assisting Lime Aid during National Tree Week last November in the planting of ten new replacement trees within the Avenue.

Mike says "Trees are valuable in so many ways, improving the quality of life, moderating global warming, providing habitat for wildlife and giving shade from sun or noise. Furthermore, planting trees brings our people closer together within the community." He hopes that the recent tree planting will be just the beginning of the process of bringing Lime Tree Avenue back to its former glory. He has also set up a website: <http://www.lime-aid.org.uk>

It's great to hear of an example of old and young working together to improve our environment. We would love to hear of other examples of this happening in Wealden.



## **ONLY TWO STARS FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

An independent council watchdog report published in February concludes that residents in East Sussex continue to receive good services from the County Council.

The Audit Commission has again given the council a 'three stars out of four' performance rating and says the authority is 'improving adequately', with four out of five of the main service areas rated as performing well (three stars). However, Adult Social Care, with two stars, was rated as only performing adequately. The report goes on to say that "East Sussex is improving services to many local people in its priority areas, and its rate of improvement is slightly above the average rate for all councils. However, investment in adult care has not yet resulted in a significant improvement in services. The Council faces a major challenge to further modernise services within existing resources."

Making sure that services for older people and those with learning disabilities will meet future demands and needs is at the heart of a two year review of the Council's adult social care services which has recently got underway.

East Sussex County Council has started the review as changes in the county's population are leading to a noticeable rise in the demand for services for older people and for people with learning disabilities. East Sussex has the highest percentage of people over 85 of any county in the UK and it is expected to increase even faster from 2010/2011.

The review will include a comprehensive audit by East Sussex County Council of all the home care, day care, residential, respite and community support services that it provides directly for older people and people with learning disabilities. The Council is committed to ensuring that future services offer choice, make a positive difference to people's lives and contribute to the well being of the local community.

The review will take account of the views of service users, staff and partner agencies, including members of all the older people's forums in East Sussex, who will be involved with the review process, and will be seeking to improve the Council's star rating for adult social care by telling the Council what older people really want.

YOU can have an input to this process by letting us know what changes you think are needed.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING IN SUSSEX

Sussex Police have launched a new update to their website. On the homepage you can now enter your postcode, which should enable you to easily contact your local officer.

In addition to photographs and contact details for every Police Community Support Officer and Neighbourhood Specialist Constable in Sussex, the pages also contain a monthly 'What's happening in your area?' community update, regular news flashes for the district, details of upcoming street briefings, up-to-date information and details of your nearest police station.

Go to [www.sussex.police.uk](http://www.sussex.police.uk), type in your postcode and you'll now find the names and photographs of all your local neighbourhood officers.

Click on their pictures and you'll see their personal profiles and contact details. You can contact them either by sending an email or by leaving them a voicemail message, simply by phoning the 0845 60 70 999 number and using the individual extension number provided.

### REMEMBER:

If it's an emergency, or to report a crime as it's happening, dial 999 and ask for the police - the same way as ever.

For other crimes and urgent matters, there's still the central 0845 60 70 999 number to call Sussex Police.



### CALLING ALL DOG LOVERS!

It's not too late to be a foster parent, even if you are over 50!

Most of us would think twice about taking on a young child when approaching or past retirement age - but how about a puppy?

A charity is seeking volunteers to be "puppy parents" or offer a "foster home" for a puppy. Canine Partners aims to transform the lives of people with disabilities, enabling them to lead more independent lives by providing them with highly trained assistance dogs. In the process of learning to care for and manage their dog, a "partner" experiences a sense of achievement and purpose which helps in building self-esteem, self confidence and motivation. But before a puppy can be introduced to its "partner", it needs to go through a training programme.

Active retirees are particularly well suited to the role of "puppy parents", who have a puppy living with them and assist in its training programme. Canine Partners provide all food and equipment and cover the veterinary costs.

The contact for Canine Partners is Malcolm Wells, the Senior Community Fundraiser. He can be contacted by ringing 01730 716011. If you love dogs but would rather not take one on for a long-term commitment, why not give him a call?

## INDEPENDENCE FIRST – Partnership for Older People's Projects in East Sussex

Members of the Wealden Senior Citizens' Partnership have been learning recently about Independence First – the East Sussex programme set up last year as part of the nationwide POPPs project.

East Sussex County Council made one of nineteen successful bids in the country for a share of the funding provided by central Government for a new Department of Health initiative aimed at improving the quality of life for older people entitled the Partnership for Older People's Projects or POPPs.

The Government is recognising that the majority of the population is living much longer than before, resulting in an extra burden on health and social services which is no longer sustainable. East Sussex has been granted £3.2 million over the next two years as a "pump-priming" injection of new money to enable them to set up a range of preventative services which will result in early intervention to assess the clinical and social needs of older people and avoid unnecessary hospitalisation. The project will identify older people who might otherwise need to go into hospital or care and help them to live independently in their own homes. It will also focus on supporting people with mental health needs, and promote the use of technology to help people remain independent in their home, as well as encouraging older people to keep active, and involved in their local communities.

Management structures have been put in place on a national and local level, and now there is a brand new "reference group" which will enable members of the Older People's Forums in East Sussex to get involved. The next Reference Group Meeting will be held in March. Representatives from the Forums will be attending and we will keep you informed of future developments.

## COMPUTER SKILLS – GETTING STARTED

Following on to the article in the last “Grey Matters”, we have done some research to find out how someone without any computer knowledge can take the first step towards acquiring some. This could well be by visiting the local public library.



The People’s Network is a lottery-funded national initiative that has provided computers, broadband internet access and trained staff in all public libraries in the UK. Terminals are available for public use at most local libraries, for free or at low cost, which could give you access to information and lifelong learning without your having to invest in your own computer.

For older people, libraries provide a safe, welcoming environment where they can learn new skills, receive peer support, keep up with their grandchildren and keep in contact with friends and family members. Many libraries offer “Silver Surfer” sessions aimed specifically at older users.

Some smaller libraries have limited opening hours, but the following all have free internet and computer access. Why not give one of them a call?

Crowborough 01892 664426

Forest Row 01342 825331

Hailsham 01323 840604

Heathfield 01435 863975

Mayfield 01435 873195

Pevensy 01323 882155

Polegate 01323 482155

Ringmer 01273 814661

Uckfield 01825 763254

Wadhurst 01892 783649

## HOW THE LIBRARY CAN COME TO YOU



Do you enjoy reading, but find it difficult to get to a library because of frailty, disability or because you are caring for someone who cannot be left?

If so, the Home Library Service may be for you. All you need to do is to apply, using the form on a new leaflet which is now available, and you will receive a visit from a library staff member or a volunteer who will discuss your requirements with you. They will then bring you a library service on a regular basis. If you live in a residential or nursing care home, sheltered housing or attend a day centre, then the service may be provided in a different way.

If you like to know more, ring the Equal Access Services Manager on 01273 479155.

## CONTACT US

We would love to hear from you if any of the topics in this newsletter interest or affect you. Please write to us, care of 5 Rectory Field, Hartfield, East Sussex TN7 4JE, or email a committee member via our website, [www.wealden-scp.org](http://www.wealden-scp.org)

We particularly want to hear from you if you have **not** already told us that you would like to receive the newsletter on a regular basis. Please help us to increase our membership across the whole of Wealden. If you have already returned a reply slip from a previous newsletter, there is no need to do so again.

Please let us know if you would like to attend one of the Wealden Senior Citizens’ Partnership Coffee Mornings in Westham or Crowborough (See Page 1)

Number hoping to attend the meeting in Westham Village Hall on March 31st.....

Tick here if you require transport.....(or ring 01892 770487)

Number hoping to attend the meeting in the URC Hall, Croft Road Crowborough on April 21st.....

Tick here if you require transport.....(or ring 01892 770487)

NAME.....TEL. NO.....

ADDRESS.....Email Address.....

Even if you cannot come to one of the coffee mornings, please complete and return this slip if you are not already on our mailing list to receive the newsletter. Send to: WSCP, 5 Rectory Field, Hartfield, TN7 4JE.