

GREY MATTERS



CELEBRATE UK OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY 2009 WITH US

Enclosed you will find a newsletter which has been put together with information about how "Full Of Life" day will be celebrated throughout East Sussex.

We ourselves will be celebrating the contribution that older people make to society on October 1st in the Hub 2, Uckfield Civic Centre, from 1 to 4pm, when we will be holding our fourth AGM, with the theme of

BRINGING GENERATIONS TOGETHER

We hope to be joined on this special occasion by a member of the Youth Cabinet and Sixth Formers from Uckfield Technology College. The day will begin with a FREE sandwich lunch at 1pm and end with a short AGM followed by FREE tea and cakes at 4pm. Everybody over 50 is welcome to attend, but for catering purposes, please let us know you are coming by ringing 01892 770487 or by completing and returning the reply slip on page 4.

This will be an opportunity to find out more about YOUR Older People's Forum and to take part in some intergenerational activities, with the object of promoting better understanding between the age groups. Please also consider whether you would like to join our committee. To find out more, contact our Secretary: details on the back page.

FREE ELECTRIC BLANKET TESTING: 12th to 16th October 2009

Free electric blanket testing returns to Wealden in October. After last year's successful week when 326 blankets were tested with a frightening 39% failure rate, a team will be visiting ten different venues during the week of the 12th to 16th October 2009. For full details of dates and venues, see page 6 of the enclosed Full Of Life newsletter.



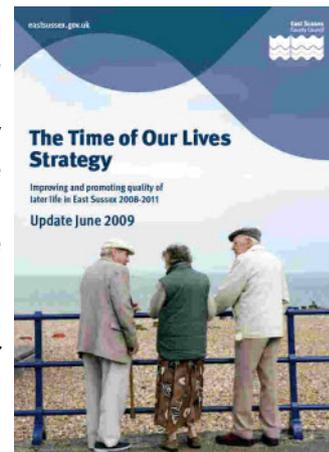
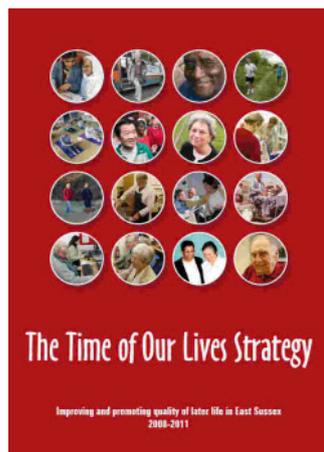
OLDER PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT DAY - JUNE 2009

All the members of the Wealden Senior Citizens' Partnership Committee were at the Older People's Engagement Day held on June 25th at the East Sussex National Golf Centre. The event took the form of 'Open Space' discussions, with those present setting the agenda and opportunities to discuss many aspects of life as an older person and to suggest priorities for future action. There was a lot of lively discussion, many recommendations, and plenty of food for thought which will help to develop an action plan for older people's services for 2009/2011 and beyond.

Those of you who have been members for more than a year will remember that last year we sent you a copy of a strategy and action plan called *The Time of Our Lives*, which was launched at the first Older People's Engagement Day in 2008. This provided a framework for a wide range of activities that support older people's quality of life and well-being, and was originally put together in partnership with older people and older people's organisations. At the 2008 Engagement Day, older people worked with decision-makers and influencers from across the county to identify eight themed 'Quality of Life' priority areas. The event in June this year provided an opportunity to get together to see how well things are going, and the outcomes from the day will be used as the basis for a *Time of Our Lives* action plan for 2009/10.

Our own committee members John and Rosemary Jones commented: "We sometimes wonder what we are achieving as members of this committee, attending, as we do, so many meetings all over Wealden to have our say on behalf of older people. This event completed the jigsaw and made us realise that we were part of a whole - we suddenly saw that our contribution, however small, was worthwhile".

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HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

WHY SHOULD I BE ACTIVE?

Having an active lifestyle is extremely beneficial to your health. It not only reduces your risk of many diseases including heart disease, cancer and diabetes. It also promotes good mental health and well-being, assists in pain control and helps to control weight.

How much activity should I be doing?

30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise at least 5 times per week

What does moderate intensity mean?

Any activity which makes you breathe slightly harder and feel slightly warmer than normal but still allows you to talk

If you want more information take a look at:

- British Heart Foundation www.bhf.org.uk
- Walking for Health www.whi.org.uk
- Wealden District Council www.wealden.gov.uk/leisure

WANT TO STOP SMOKING?

Free NHS advice and support is available.
PHONE THE EAST SUSSEX STOP SMOKING
SERVICE: 0800 917 8896

SWINE FLU

For the latest Swine Flu information and to view the East Sussex Downs & Weald Influenza Contingency Plan go to: <http://www.eastsussexdownswealdpct.nhs.uk/about-us/swine-flu>
or ring 0800 1 513 513 (treatment advice 0800 1 513 100)

ESSA THEME GROUP

The East Sussex Seniors Association (ESSA), the umbrella association for the seven seniors' forums in East Sussex, has a Health & Community Care Theme group which meets bi-monthly to discuss issues around adult social care, primary care and the acute hospitals trust.

In July the ESSA Health and Community Care theme group welcomed Keith Hinkley, Director of Adult Social Care and Mike Wood, Chief Executive of the Primary Care Trusts, to their twice-yearly director's liaison meeting. In a new-style format enabling questions and concerns to be taken directly to the top, each forum had prepared three questions to ask them.

Issues raised included:

- 24-hour stroke care in East Sussex;
- improving consultation with the NHS;
- free dental check-ups for the over 60s;
- changes to the criteria for 'blue badges';
- how care home residents can express their views in confidence without fear of abuse;
- what policies are in place to reduce MRSA and clostridium difficile infections in hospitals and care homes; and
- whether home carers can do nail-cutting.

Are you affected by these or any other issues? Please let us have details by contacting our Health & Social Care Representative, Ivy Elsey, on 01435 863719

THE GARDEN NURSERY, NEW ROAD, HELLINGLY

The Garden Nursery, NHS owned and set up by the NHS as a non-profit-making organisation to provide work as therapy/rehabilitation for mental health patients who live outside in the community, was set up in 1994 when Hellingly Hospital (the then mental asylum) closed: up to 40 people, suffering psychological and learning disability problems, work at the site doing all kinds of gardening such as plant bedding, vegetable growing and creating hanging baskets.

The Nursery now faces closure to save money, but the following questions have to be asked: how much will it cost to care for those who work there when the Nursery is closed, and what are the plans for therapy in the future for those with mental health problems who currently work there? One patient, after a serious stroke, has been a regular volunteer at the Nursery and it has been her salvation.

Following many post office closures, this is another example of the effect of cutbacks on a rural community. It has now been decided that the Nursery will remain until the end of the year, and it is hoped that the therapy and rehabilitation of these mental health patients will continue in some way, but no one is sure how.

Please go along and sign the petition at the Nursery.



MORE HELP FOR CARERS AND GUIDANCE ON ASSESSMENTS



There will be increased support for carers in East Sussex over the next two years, thanks to a grant awarded by the Department of Health which will be used to fund projects for respite breaks for carers and to provide liaison workers in GP surgeries and acute hospitals. For more information, 'phone Debbie Charman, 01273 482159, email debbie.charman@eastsussex.gov.uk

The Carers Respite Emergency Support Service (CRESS) offers carers peace of mind by ensuring that alternative, short-term, home-based care can be put in place should an emergency arise, such as a carer becoming ill or being involved in an accident. Advice and guidance is available from Allyson King on 01323 747314, email allyson.king@eastsussex.gov.uk

TRANSPORT SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SURVEY



Many thanks to all those who responded to our Public Transportation Survey by completing and returning the questionnaire sent out with our last newsletter. Around 80 of these were received from 17 towns and villages throughout Wealden, from Hartfield in the north to Willingdon in the south. The responses showed that satisfaction with public transport varies widely from area to area, and that there is certainly a need for more services in the rural areas.

We are particularly concerned about people who are unable to use regular bus services, and have been pleased to see an initiative coming from East Sussex County Council to encourage the setting up of more community bus and voluntary car services to plug the gaps. We have already been able to pass on some details of areas where a clear need has been identified, and at the time of writing can report that plans are going ahead to extend the Wealdlink Community Bus service to more areas in the North of Wealden for a trial period.

Another cause for concern for many people is the positioning of bus stops, and here we can report that East Sussex's Transport and Environment Department has been carrying out a review and that where possible, bus stops are being updated and in some cases moved to more suitable locations. Unfortunately this is a slow and expensive process.

Concern was expressed by some respondents that some bus drivers pull away from bus stops too quickly, before passengers have had an opportunity to be seated. The bus companies are very keen to ensure that this does not happen, but can only taken action if specific instances are reported to them. Anyone who has experienced this problem can write to us and we will happily pass on details via the ESSA Transport Theme Group.

A number of people who were not already members of our forum returned the questionnaire, and we have taken the liberty of adding your names to our circulation list for Grey Matters so that you may continue to receive news of progress on transport issues. If you would rather not continue to receive this newsletter, please tick the box on the reply slip at the bottom of page 4 and return it and we will remove your name from our database.

DO YOU USE YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY?

Residents in East Sussex are being asked to help shape future library services in the county.

East Sussex County Council has launched the biggest ever library consultation which will run until Friday 30 October 2009.

The Council wants to hear from people who use their local library and people who don't. They want to know if the Council has got it right when it comes to the right mix of library services.



People can complete the questionnaire during a visit to the library and can also take part in the library consultation by completing the survey online at www.eastsussex.gov.uk/librarysurvey.

HMRC WARNING

HM Revenue & Customs has warned taxpayers not to respond to emails or telephone calls saying they are eligible for a tax refund and asking for personal, bank and/or credit card details. HMRC **only** communicates by post with people who are due a tax refund; it **never** uses emails, telephone calls or external companies in these circumstances. Anyone who receives a phishing email should forward it unopened to phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk

Details can be found at:

www.hmrc.gov.uk/security/fraud-attempts.htm

NEW 'CLUB' TO RETAIN SKILLS OF OLDER PEOPLE

With statistics showing UK pensioners now outnumber children, a new venture aims to ensure the skills of older people are not lost.

Emeritus Club, aimed at supporting retired professionals to continue using their expertise in the economy, was launched on August 18th by Harry Gray, an education adviser and management consultant, and will bring together professionals who wish to continue working in some capacity post-retirement.

It will help them connect with others and to find opportunities for paid projects and pro bono work.

Mr Gray says that new ways of thinking about work are needed as the number of active retirees grows.

'People are now working into their 90s and there is a whole labour market that is unconstructed. We need to rethink the labour market from start to finish,' he says.

To find out more about Emeritus Club email h.gray@gmwint.com

EAST SUSSEX SENIORS' ASSOCIATION

"THE VOICE OF OLDER PEOPLE"



"The East Sussex Seniors' Association is the combined voice of seven local forums throughout the county. On behalf of our ever-growing membership of over 50s we raise awareness and influence decision makers on older people's issues by involvement locally, regionally and nationally"

The above "Mission Statement" was agreed upon in June by representatives from all the Forums in East Sussex when they met together to make plans for the future of ESSA.

It was chosen from several alternative statements as the one best expressing the objectives of all the Forums, our own included.

ESSA now has its own website: www.essaforums.org.uk with information about and links to all the forums.

REAL HELP FOR OVER 60s NOW

People aged over 60, especially those who have low incomes, can feel especially vulnerable during economic downturns. A new booklet entitled "Real Help for Over 60s Now - Where to Find Help when you Need it" describes the action the Government is taking to fight the recession, and explains what real help is available now and where to find it on a range of issues:

- Help with pensions and benefits
- Help with fuel bills
- Help with savings and managing your money
- Help for people on a low income
- Help with money problems
- Help with keeping your home
- Help with skills and learning
- Help with jobs

To order a copy free of charge, please call TSO (The Stationery Office) on 08444 777 400, quote reference number RHN02 and give a name and address for delivery of the booklet.

The line is open between 9.00am and 5.30pm, Monday to Friday.

You can also find information on the available sources of support through the Real Help Now website: [www.realhelpnow.gov.uk].

MESSAGE FROM TRADING STANDARDS FOR COMPUTER USERS

Please be aware of emails asking you to update programmes on your computer. If you have had no previous dealings with the company then be AWARE! They may be trying to charge you for services that are otherwise offered for FREE, or they are trying to obtain your personal information. Examples are emails asking you to update PDF readers and other similar scams. If you are unsure about an email you receive please either delete it or do a quick Google search which usually highlights new scams. Or contact Trading Standards on 01323 463420

PLEASE JOIN OUR COMMITTEE!!!

The AGM would be a good time to join the WSCP Committee, who meet approximately once every six weeks, usually in Heathfield, and represent the forum in many other ways. You would be remunerated for any out-of-pocket expenses. If you would like to learn more, please ring our Secretary, Linda Graham, contact details at the bottom of this page, or complete and return the slip below.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.wealden-scp.org

IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS NEWSLETTER IN THE POST, WE REGARD YOU AS A MEMBER! IF YOU HAVE PICKED IT UP AND WOULD LIKE TO GO ON OUR MAILING LIST, PLEASE LET US KNOW BY COMPLETING AND RETURNING THIS REPLY SLIP. YOU CAN ALSO ASK US TO REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM OUR LIST. WE PROMISE NEVER TO PASS YOUR DETAILS ON TO ANY OTHER ORGANISATION.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

TELEPHONE/E-MAIL.....

PLEASE ADD THIS NAME TO/REMOVE THIS NAME FROM THE MAILING LIST (delete as appropriate)

PLEASE RESERVE PLACES AT THE "FULL OF LIFE" A G M ON THURSDAY, 1ST OCTOBER

DO YOU NEED HELP WITH TRANSPORT TO THIS EVENT? Yes/No

WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO JOIN THE COMMITTEE? Yes/No

Detach and return this slip to the Secretary: Linda Graham, Wealden Senior Citizens' Partnership, 5 Rectory Field, Hartfield, TN7 4JE. Enquiries to: 01892 770487, e-mail: lindagraham@wealden-scp.org