

# GREY MATTERS

## UK OLDER PEOPLE'S DAY 2015



We hosted a free Information Roadshow and Entertainment day, celebrating UK Older People's Day 2015, on Saturday 3 October in Crowborough Community Centre. It was attended by over 100 people, who enjoyed browsing the information stalls, watching demonstrations by the community chef, trying a chair-based exercise session, and being entertained by local musicians.

The event was opened by Sara Stoner, Vice Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, who also cut the cake with our Chair, Ivy Elsey, to celebrate WSCP's Tenth Anniversary. Sara spent the morning visiting the stands and talking to our attendees. We had 14 stands offering a range of information for older people and a full programme, including our AGM. We offered refreshments throughout the day and a free lunch with orange juice. The Vice Chair of Wealden District Council, Cllr Dashwood-Morris, also attended and again spent the morning with us.

Many completed surveys after the event, and most rated it "good" or "very good". Comments included praise for the friendly, jolly atmosphere, the good organisation, and people felt that WSCP had provided a varied and interesting day. We gained 38 new members as a result.

If you missed it this year, try to get along to our next event!



## THIS WINTER - WILL YOU QUALIFY FOR THE WARM HOME DISCOUNT (WHD) SCHEME?

This is an electricity bill rebate of around £140. The WHD is offered by the big six energy providers and some of the smaller energy companies. Anyone on Pension Credit Guarantee should get this money automatically.

Those on other means tested benefits may be able to get this payment but they will need to telephone their electricity supplier to double check the eligibility criteria and how to apply. Normally an application form is sent out or completed over the telephone. Note that some suppliers are still open to applications and others have closed. If you think you may be eligible you should telephone your supplier to find out.

Even if you are not eligible for WHD, you will almost certainly qualify for a Government Electricity Rebate, a £12 government contribution to help lower your fuel bill. If you pay by Direct Debit or on receipt of a bill you will see a credit automatically applied to the next bill. However, if you pay for your electricity through a pre-payment meter you may need to actively redeem the rebate. Your supplier should inform you about how to claim.

Tips for keeping warm at home during the day

- Set your thermostat at around 21°C (70°F) and heat all the rooms you use in the day
- If you can't heat all your rooms make sure you keep your living room warm throughout the day and heat your bedroom before going to bed
- Set the timer on your heating to come on before you get up and switch off when you go to bed
- In very cold weather, rather than turn the thermostat up, set the heating to come on earlier so you won't be cold while you wait for your home to heat up



The Wealden Senior Citizens' Partnership is a member of ESSA - The East Sussex Seniors' Association - "The Voice of Older People"  
See website: [www.essaforums.org.uk](http://www.essaforums.org.uk)

## CHRISTMAS GALA CONCERT IN HEATHFIELD

After their much acclaimed candle-lit performance of Messiah in 2014, Heathfield Choral Society are this year joining forces with the Buxted Symphony Orchestra for an evening of classics and Christmas cheer on Saturday 12th December in the State Hall, Heathfield. Works to be performed will include Mozart's E flat Horn Concerto and Vaughan Williams' Fantasia on Christmas Carols, along with a number of other festive pieces. The concert starts at 7.30pm; tickets are just £12 in advance and can be purchased by calling 01435 863414, or by visiting [www.wegotickets.com/event/335758](http://www.wegotickets.com/event/335758)

## CHRISTMAS IN WILDERNESS WOOD, HADLOW DOWN

Come and make a beautiful CHRISTMAS WREATH with Roberta, local florist and enjoy a delicious drink from the Wild Bar next to the roaring fire in the Wilderness cafe on Thursday 3rd December from 7pm-9pm: <http://www.thegoodflorist.co.uk/blog/>

Come along to the CHRISTMAS MARKET in the marquee on 5th and 6th and 12th and 13th December. You can buy presents, watch artisans at work, have a go yourself and enjoy home-made mincepies and mulled wine around a fire.

Over the CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS the CAFE will be open every day except December 25th and 26th serving hot lunches, teas and coffees and amazing cakes.

## CONTACT THE ELDERLY

Contact the Elderly are looking for older members for the group (75yrs+) living in Crowborough who spend most weekends on their own and who would enjoy a monthly Sunday afternoon tea party. The parties are held in the homes of volunteer hosts and volunteer drivers would pick up and accompany the older people to the events. The older people should be able to walk, with support if required, to the driver's car. There is no charge for this.

Contact Mike and Kate Arnold, [mike.arnold@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:mike.arnold@tiscali.co.uk) 01892 459967  
website [www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk](http://www.contact-the-elderly.org.uk)

Visit our website: [www.wealden-scp.org](http://www.wealden-scp.org)

WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED WITH YOUR COPY OF "GREY MATTERS", BEFORE CONSIGNING IT TO THE RECYCLING BIN, WHY NOT PASS IT ON TO A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOUR?

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

East Sussex County Council	East Sussex Fire and Rescue	0303 999 1000
• Adult social care – 0345 60 80 <b>191</b>	NHS Direct	111
• Roads and paths – 0345 60 80 <b>193</b>	Sussex Mental Healthline	0300 5000 101
• Buses and waste – 0345 60 80 <b>194</b>	Alzheimers Society	0845 3000336
• Library renewals – 0345 60 80 <b>195</b>	East Sussex Disability Association	01323 514500
• Library enquiries – 0345 60 80 <b>196</b>	Care for The Carers	01323 738390
• Trading Standards – 0345 60 80 <b>197</b>	Diabetes UK Careline	0845 120 2960
• Switchboard – 0345 60 80 <b>190</b>	Parkinsons Disease Society	0808 800 0303
Citizens' Advice Bureaux	Healthwatch	01323 643304
• Crowborough 01892 655303	Age UK East Sussex	01273 476 704
• Hailsham 01323 842336	Wealden & Eastbourne Lifeline	01323 644422
• Uckfield 01825 764940	Minicom:	01323 415111
• Wadhurst 01892 785658	Sussex Police non urgent	101
• Willingdon 01323 842336	Post Office Service	0845 722 3344
Hospitals	Trading standards	08454 040506
• Conquest Hospital 01424 755255	Energy Care Trust	0800 512012
• Eastbourne Hospital 01323 417400	National Talking Newspapers	01435 866102
• Uckfield Community Hospital 01825 769999	STEPS Housing Support Advice	01323 436414
• Crowborough Hospital 01892 652284	Pension Service	0845 6060265
• Tunbridge Wells Hospital 0845 155 1000	East Sussex Benefits Helpline	0333 344 0681
	Wealden District Council	01323 443322

## TOUGH BUDGET DECISIONS – ADULT SOCIAL CARE SAVINGS

East Sussex County Council have announced that they will have £40 million less to spend on adult social care services by March 2019. This is in addition to the £28 million that they have already saved from these services since 2013. This means making difficult decisions about which adult social care services they will continue to invest in. The latest consultation explains how they plan to make the savings, providing detailed information on the three main areas of saving in the first year (2016/17) and a summary of savings over the following two years.



There is a tough planning and decision-making process ahead for elected councillors. They will have to carefully consider the different views on how services could be provided in future with less money available.

The Council has admitted that many people who use adult social care services will be affected by the savings they need to make. It will be a difficult time for people who use services, their carers and family, as well as everyone working in the department and all partner organisations, providers and the voluntary sector.

You have an opportunity **NOW** to express your views on how they are proposing to make the savings.

### **If you are worried about the changes, please get in touch - see below**

If the County Council goes ahead with these proposals, changes to services will happen from April 2016 onwards. The consultation started on October 23rd and will go on for eight weeks to December 18th.

### **How to take part**

There are a number of ways you can give your views:

- By completing an online survey: [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/ascbudget](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/ascbudget)
- By printing and posting a survey back to: ASC Budget Consultation 2015, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, BN7 1UE (you can download it from the website or they can post you a survey)
- By emailing: [adultsocialcare@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:adultsocialcare@eastsussex.gov.uk) or writing to them with your comments
- If you would like help with taking part in the consultation please call 01273 481565

The main area where it is proposed to make savings affecting older people is Supporting People Services (Housing support services that help people live independently). All such services will be reviewed, and any that does not directly support an eligible need (i.e. one that they are required by law to provide) may be removed. If you live in a sheltered housing complex or an Extra Care Scheme (in Wealden these are Margaret House and Bentley Grange) you will almost certainly be affected. The Supporting People programme funds a range of services related to housing support. This could be an onsite worker to help maintain people's independence, support for people to live communally or to help people develop the life skills to move on to more independent accommodation. Some of the services are staffed overnight. Significant savings are proposed from this area of the budget, which will mean stopping many of these services entirely.

In addition, many voluntary sector organisations that support older and disabled people may have their county council funding cut. An example is the TN21, TN22 and Tech Clubs that operate in the Heathfield/Buxted area and many Age UK East Sussex and Alzheimers Society projects.

Please do take part in this consultation - it is YOUR chance to have your say. Everything you tell the Council in surveys, letters, emails and conversations will be shared with Cabinet, and a detailed summary of the consultation results and printed copies of all responses will be available for Councillors to read in the week before Cabinet meets early in the New Year to make their decisions.

## **CONTACT YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**

The elected representative for Wealden in Parliament is now Nus Ghani, who took over after the General Election in May of this year.

Nus is very happy for constituents to get in touch with her with any problems they may have. As Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Ageing and Elderly People, Nus is also backing Age UK's campaign to combat loneliness among elderly people. She is calling for people to sign Age UK's petition, which is requesting the Government to take action to tackle this major problem affecting the lives of millions of older people.

Her telephone number is: 020 7219 4619, or you can email her on: [nusrat.ghani.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:nusrat.ghani.mp@parliament.uk)



## WINTER RELATED DOORSTEP SCAMS AND HOW TO AVOID THEM

When the weather gets cold, household related things can start going wrong. Unscrupulous traders will often try and take advantage of consumers who need repairs and maintenance on their property over the winter, as they know their services are at a premium.

Some traders like to catch you by surprise and offer their services on your doorstep, which neatly gets them into your home and gives them the opportunity to convince you that if you don't have certain jobs done, your property will suffer.

It's not against the law for a trader to canvass for business on the doorstep, although there are rules and regulations that govern this type of selling activity, to protect consumers from falling prey to traders who try and convince them into work they don't want or need. The problem is that this type of trader is aware that people are more scam-savvy these days, and will often target elderly homeowners who might not be so confident of their rights.

If you have elderly neighbours, keep an eye on them at this time of year, too. The Office of fair trading (OFT) along with Age UK has highlighted three main issues that scammers often focus on:

### ***Cavity Wall Insulation, Roof Repairs and Driveway Maintenance***

If it turns out to be an extremely cold winter, it's prime time for a salesman to call on you offering to help with insulation to keep this year's bills down, a builder or roofer claiming that there are urgent problems with your roof that have to be completed immediately, or a builder will "just passing" with a van load of leftover materials offering to re-tarmac your driveway at a bargain price, often asking for payment in advance. In some cases they find they need 'extra materials' which will of course cost you more...and more...

### ***How to Avoid being Scammed***

If a trader calls at your door, they aren't automatically a scammer. If you're interested in services offered by a doorstep seller, a few checks should put your mind at rest. Ask them for personal identification and ask which company they are calling from. A genuine salesperson or trader will happily show you ID and company literature as they want the sale. You should never give in to pressure to buy there and then, even if the salesperson is offering a 'one day only' deal. Take your time to decide whether you would like the work done, investigate further if you're not sure it's necessary and don't let anyone carry out repairs or maintenance on the spot. If they arrive out of the blue with tales of unsafe buildings or one-day only offers, you should be wary, and probably send them packing.

## TELEPHONE SCAMS

Telephone scams are becoming more and more common and are often difficult to recognise.

If the answer is YES to any of these questions, it could be a scam. Is it:

- an uninvited message or letter from a name or number you don't recognise?
- tempting you with something for nothing – prizes or an easy way of making money?
- tempting you with something that could change your life for the better?
- asking you to send money up-front or buy something up-front before you get the prize or offer?
- persuasive and rushing you into a quick decision?
- asking you to make expensive phone calls (premium rate numbers start with 090) to get the prize or offer?
- asking for your bank details or other personal information?
- using a mobile or PO box for its contact address? These are easy to close and difficult to trace and may be a sign that the company doesn't exist or isn't legitimate.

**If you think you have been the victim of a telephone scam, contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040**

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**IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS NEWSLETTER IN THE POST OR BY EMAIL, YOU ARE ALREADY A MEMBER! IF YOU HAVE PICKED IT UP AND WOULD LIKE TO JOIN, PLEASE RETURN THIS TEAR-OFF SLIP TO LET US KNOW IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE IT ON A REGULAR BASIS. YOU CAN ALSO USE THIS SLIP TO REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM OUR CIRCULATION LIST**

YOUR NAME.....TELEPHONE/EMAIL.....

YOUR ADDRESS.....POSTCODE.....

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

Detach and return this slip to Linda Graham, WSCP, 5 Rectory Field, Hartfield, TN7 4JE.  
Tel: 01892 770487, email: [lindagraham@wealden-scp.org](mailto:lindagraham@wealden-scp.org) If you are happy to receive this newsletter electronically in future and save on postage, send us an email!