

# MERIDIAN MATURE CITIZENS FORUM

NEWSLETTER

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ISSUE 5

AUTUMN 2007

What can the  
Meridian Forum  
do for you?

Have Your Say

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

WHAT WOULD MAKE YOUR  
LIFE BETTER LIVING IN THE  
MERIDIAN AREA?

See inside to find out how to have  
your say!

## COFFEE MORNING

The Meridian Mature Citizens Forum  
are holding a coffee morning:

Wednesday, 12th September

Meridian Centre Main Foyer

10.00 - 12.00

Our Forum coffee  
morning is for  
existing members  
or for those who  
would like to join.  
Come and meet  
other members  
and members of  
the committee.

We want to hear  
your views and  
keep you up to date with what is  
happening in our community.



## COMMITTEE

### MEMBERS

Kate Davies (Chair)  
Newhaven/Piddinghoe  
Tel: 01273 516207

Fred Bennett  
Newhaven

Kathleen Manning  
Telscombe Cliffs

Brenda Sawyers  
Telscombe Cliffs

Gill Hart  
Newhaven

Margaret Whiting  
Newhaven

Jean Couture  
Peacehaven

Diana Conyers  
Co-opted member/  
Newhaven

Di Smith  
Administrator

**We are keen to co-opt  
additional committee  
members**

## UPDATE ON NHS CHANGES

As you must be aware enormous changes are taking place within the health service. People's health needs are changing and advancements in medical knowledge mean that some old traditional ways of treating illnesses are no longer necessary. Many more patients are receiving shorter stays in hospital and more help and support at home. It's quite a confusing picture and a bit worrying as you get older and may need more medical care. Members of the committee attend many meetings where health issues are being discussed and we do think that some of the changes are for the better. It is not just a case of saving money it is more to do with making better use of resources.

The NHS Trust is half way through a long process to become an NHS Foundation Trust. They believe that this new status would mean local people would have a greater say in what is happening in our hospitals and more control over their finances. A series of public meetings has been arranged throughout the County - our nearest one will be at:

**The Hillcrest Centre,**

**Hillcrest Road, Newhaven**

**Tuesday September 18<sup>th</sup> at 2pm**

Go and see what you make of it. If you don't understand what it is about we will ask somebody back to explain it to us all over again!

**EDITORIAL**

Since our last Newsletter in the Spring the committee has been extremely busy out and about interviewing, attending meetings and planning the launch of the East Sussex Seniors Association (ESSA).

Fred has successfully gained funding to enable us to buy a digital camera to keep a photographic account of our events and to update some of our "home office" equipment so that we can produce quality literature to send out to you.

The more we can produce ourselves the more money we can save to spend on other things. We are incredibly grateful to all our local Councils, Newhaven, Peacehaven and Telscombe who donate an annual grant to keep us ticking over.

**GETTING OUT AND ABOUT IN THE MERIDIAN AREA**

Peacehaven's Taxi rider appears to be very successful, although many of you will know by now that it is not like a taxi service where you can phone in the conventional way and get a taxi to take you anywhere you want to go. However it is working well. I have been told that perhaps TWO minibuses might be needed in the future.

Newhaven, on the other hand, has no Taxi Rider at all. I have been talking to CTLA (Community Transport, Lewes Area) who tell me that the Taxi-Rider in Newhaven was never successful. Unless the mini-buses are full at all times then the service cannot continue. On Thursdays there is a mini-bus which will take you shopping to Morrison's in Seaford. It is a door-to-door service and I am told that the drivers even carry your shopping to your front door.

The Shopping Rider is not free but if you phone CTLA on: **01273 517332** they will give you all the details and while you are about it ask them about their outings.

**HUMOUROUS QUOTES**

"You know you're getting old when you stoop to tie your shoelaces and wonder what else you could do while you're down there." George Burns

"I don't feel old. I don't feel anything until noon. Then it's time for my nap." Bob Hope

"I don't plan to grow old gracefully. I plan to have face-lifts until my ears meet." Rita Rudner

"As you get older three things happen. The first is your memory goes, and I can't remember the other two..." Sir Norman Wisdom

**ESSA**

At last ESSA – East Sussex Seniors Association - has had its launch.

Each of the Forums across the County helped in the planning of the day but we were overwhelmed by the response from our members, so that the last minute arrangements, particularly in the discussion groups, were difficult for some. What with that and the fire alarm not everything went as planned!

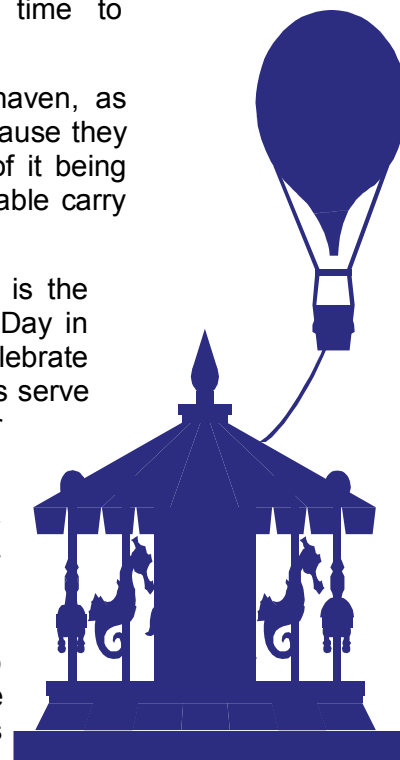
The most interesting part, for me, was the discussion from the floor right at the end of the afternoon. Many points were raised and noted and will be looked into at the ESSA meetings which begin on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2007.

**FAYRES, FETES AND CARNIVALS**

This is one of the most important ways of meeting members of the Forum and signing up new ones. Unfortunately Telscombe Cliff's was a washout. I felt so sorry for the committee who had obviously put so much time and effort into organising the day only to see it come to nothing. Peacehaven were luckier and it was a glorious day. Eve (my university researcher – see other article) and I made new friends and quickly signed them on to our Research Project before they had time to change their minds!

The Fish Festival in Newhaven, as always, was a success because they have a marquee. In spite of it being cold and wet we were still able carry on.

But my favourite "day out" is the annual children's free Fun Day in Newhaven where we celebrate National Play Day. I always serve the fruit juice and this year Edie from Summerhayes and her daughter-in-law Ann ran a bring-and-buy stall to raise funds for NIPPERS (after school club). We had a lovely time. The children are always so polite and the parents are grateful that everything is free.



**MERIDIAN FORUM & UNIVERSITIES OF SUSSEX & BRIGHTON RESEARCH PROJECT**

Introduction by Chloe Wincott-McGrath and Eve Mundy, University of Sussex.

***'Growing Older, Being Heard: Mature Citizens, Consultation and Participation'***

Greetings all members!

No doubt that you have all received a letter about the research project, 'Growing Older, Being Heard', a collaborative effort between the Forum and the University of Sussex. It offers an opportunity for older and younger to learn from one another, by listening to the voices and experiences of older people in the Meridian area, and by communicating what we have heard to relevant statutory bodies.

Well, we've had a very positive response, and we thank all of you who have contributed your time and your views. Interviews are almost over now, and we are generating a truly diverse and insightful picture of the Meridian area, as seen through the eyes of residents aged 50+.

Interviews are now being transcribed and themes teased out, and we will soon be in contact with details of an open meeting, wherein contributors can offer feedback on our findings and appraise the project. We look forward to seeing you all there!

**Outline Of Interview Process****Opening**

These questions include, for example:

Have long have you lived in this area? Do you like it here?

Looking for answers surrounding age; family; isolation; housing etc.

**Out and about**

These questions include, for example:

Where do you shop? Where else do you go? How do you get there? Do you go to the cinema, library etc?

Looking for answers surrounding financial situation; isolation; other social groups; car users; free bus pass users; friendships and family; transport and/or access to transport.

**Health**

These questions include, for example:

Are you keeping well? Is your doctor nice? Are you supported in your home? Who visits you?

Looking for answers surrounding access to doctors, dentists, specialists; hospital visits (including transport difficulties); friends, family, neighbours; other agencies.

**Consultation**

***The questions on consultation are an important part of our project. We need to know whether older peoples' voices are being heard. If not – how can we make this happen?***

These questions include, for example:

You are a member of the Forum – why did you join?

What do you think the Forum should do for you?

What about the Newsletters – or the coffee morning in Newhaven or the ESSA launch? Did you go?

Was transport a problem?

How do you think ESSA will help?

Do you belong to any other groups – and what do they do?

**HAVE YOUR SAY!**

This is your opportunity to let us know YOUR views. Tell us what YOU want from the Meridian Older People's Forum and what would make YOUR life better living in the Meridian area.

Email us at: [meridianforum@aol.com](mailto:meridianforum@aol.com)

Or write to us at: **PO Box 161, Newhaven, BN9 1AN**

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!**

**We hope you enjoy taking a look at the Independence First brochure enclosed with this news letter. In particular we draw your attention to the inside back page where the Older People's Reference Group is asking for your help in the consultation process.**

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Margaret attended a Fit for the Future – Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee evidence gathering meeting (phew). These meetings oversee the work of the County Council and respond to letters received by local interest groups and members of the public. Individuals are not usually allowed to speak at these meetings but members of the Forums were given a five minute slot to make any comments.

**East Sussex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)**

- 22nd June 07, Lewes

Report from Margaret Whiting

To begin at the end! After all the discussions had taken place at this meeting the opinion was given that not enough is known about this Health Overview Panel: it aims to gather evidence from interested parties in the fields of health and social care, weigh that evidence and give a balanced judgement to the decision makers across the county. This is no easy task from what I witnessed at the meeting on 22 June, when opposing views were put forward particularly about how maternity services should be organised in future in the east of the County.

The Crowborough Birthing Unit is an excellent example of how a

small unit can work for normal deliveries, with problems that arise being dealt with either there or at a hospital. For those who prefer to give birth in a hospital with a full obstetric unit, that is when the difficulties of location arise; doctors like to join larger specialist teams, (which are also more economical), which means that medium sized departments are not viable these days. That brings in its wake the need for some people to drive further than they feel happy about. I do not envy the Overview Committee coming to a recommendation on that!

Present at the meeting were Councillors with particular interest in health and social care matters and they were allowed to ask questions of 'witnesses'.

Keith Hinkley (Director of Adult Social Care) said that it is a 'huge

challenge' to provide adequate social care for the rising number of older people in this area. The emphasis now is to help people to keep out of hospital, and Health and Social Care Services are now working more effectively to do this.

Other speakers included Dr. Arnold Goldman, Fred Cullen, and Don Hart, all representing Seniors' Forums in the East Sussex area.

It was agreed by the HOSC that two members of the East Sussex group should be delegates to a large joint HOSC which will cover an area between Portsmouth and Hampshire West Sussex, Surrey, Brighton & Hove and East Sussex. One of the delegates from East Sussex will be David Rogers, a member of the Meridian Mature Citizens Forum. The aim of the joint HOSC will be to get a picture of what is happening across this

Kate was invited to attend a Corporate Assessment Review. These inspections are carried out about every 3 years and are to ensure that the Council are doing what they say they are doing. There were four of us from Forums across the County and we were asked whether we felt we were being sufficiently consulted about issues concerning older people. After some discussion we agreed that in some areas we are fully involved but in others we felt the time for consultation was too short and that sometimes we did not have enough information to build a proper assessment.

Yes I/We wish to be a member/s of the Meridian Mature Citizens Community Forum.

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Post Code: ..... Phone no: .....

E-mail: .....

**Please cut out and send to:**

**Meridian Coast & Downs Mature Citizens Community Forum**

**PO Box 161,**

**Newhaven, BN9 1AN**

**For more information about the Meridian Forum go to: [www.meridian-sf.org.uk](http://www.meridian-sf.org.uk)**