

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 4

SPRING 2007

COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

Davies (Chair)

Newhaven/Piddinghoe
Tel: 01273 516207

Fred Bennett

Denton/Newhaven
Tel: 01273 513629

Margaret Whiting

(Secretary)
Newhaven

Kathleen Manning

Telscombe Cliffs

Brenda Sawyers

Telscombe Cliffs

Gill Hart

CTLA/Newhaven

Jean Couture

Peacehaven

Diana Conyers

Co-opted member/
Newhaven

Di Smith

Administrator

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

LETTER FROM KATE DAVIES (CHAIR)

Can I first of all thank Fred Bennett for the huge amount of work he put into his time as Chair. He put us on the right track by helping to produce the Newsletter, raising funds and attending dozens of meetings on our behalf.

I have now to carry on his good work. Fred will, however, remain on the Committee spearheading fund-raising and publicity.

I have set three main tasks for my first year:

1. To increase membership
2. To strengthen our Committee
3. To listen to, and become involved in, the local community issues.

To increase membership – look out for our Newsletter, encourage others to become members, contact Committee members if you have issues you want pursued.

To strengthen our Committee – by forming special interest groups (SIGS):

- We are involved in the redevelopment and planning of the new Downlands Day Centre project
- The Downs Hospital, Newhaven, reopening for respite and day care.

- Transport – how to get to and from hospitals, dentists or doctors surgeries. Would anyone like to collate *all* the services available to make it easier for people to contact the right agencies?

Special Interest Group members do not necessarily have to be Committee members but can be formed by anyone with a particular interest.

Listening to others – holding small focus groups in Newhaven, Peacehaven and Telscombe Cliffs with invited speakers to talk and advise on issues like staying healthy, voluntary bodies who will help you stay in your own home, pension credit, easing isolation – please contact a Committee member with any of your ideas. Look out for notices of our meetings.

As you know there are huge changes taking place in health and social care. If you get involved through the Forum you *will* be heard and you *can* make a difference.

REPORT ON AGM

Our second AGM was held on Tuesday, 5th December 2006 at the Hillcrest Centre in Newhaven. New and old members were welcomed by Kathleen Manning in place of Fred Bennett who was unable to attend because of ill-health. Jean, Fred's wife, read a message from him wishing us well.

I am happy to report that Fred is well on his way to full recovery but unfortunately Jean is now unwell. We send her our best wishes and hope she is soon out and about.

Lesley Wilkins from Age Concern East Sussex conducted the main business of the meeting – the election of the committee. The present committee remains the same - as committee members are elected for a three year period. Fred is standing down as Chair but will remain on the committee. Jean Couture (co-opted) becomes a full member together with Margaret Whiting.

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OBITUARY FOR SHEILA CHALMERS

We were all saddened to hear of the death of Sheila Chalmers. She was a valued member of our committee with a wealth of experience gained from working tirelessly for older people. She will be greatly missed.

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Lesley Wilkins proposed a change to our Constitution – that the present title “Meridian Coast & Downs Mature Citizens Community Forum” was too long and unwieldy. There followed a lively discussion but finally Julie Coleman proposed that the present title should remain the same as it describes exactly who we are and who we represent but that for day to day purposes we use the title “Meridian Mature Citizens Forum”. The motion was carried.

Vicky Smith – Older Peoples Involvement Manager at ESCC gave a short talk on what the Forum is for – a platform where the needs of this particular age group can be identified as well as discussion with relative voluntary and statutory bodies to bring about change.

Further details can be found in Vicky’s Newsletter which spells out what the County is proposing and some of the meetings the Meridian Committee is involved in.

To finish our AGM we had a highly amusing presentation from Patrick Phillips from the Driving Standards Agency reminding us how times have changed since we first took our driving tests. You remember – when we could go up and down Newhaven High Street, we could park where we liked and there were no roundabouts, traffic wardens or MOT tests! Ah well, those were the days.

The meeting closed with a festive lunch provided by the Hillcrest Community Café.

COFFEE MORNING

The Meridian Mature Citizens Forum are holding a coffee morning on Saturday, 9th June from 10-11am at the Crossover Centre in Newhaven High Street (opposite Lampons).

If you are already a member please come in and meet the new committee, or come in and sign up! These coffee mornings are **free**. We are also trying to find a suitable, central venue in Peacehaven. But come on down to Newhaven and meet other members and have a chat.

**WRVS HERITAGE PLUS SUSSEX** (funded by the Heritage Lottery)

Justina Braddock has been working hard in both Newhaven and Peacehaven bringing together reminiscent groups looking back on Peacehaven Town and Newhaven Port. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring people together to remember how times have changed, how (literally) peaceful Peacehaven must have been and how bustling and busy Newhaven was.

From their memories each group will produce a work of art which will be displayed at Peacehaven Library in October and Newhaven Fish festival in June. The next workshops are currently in the planning stages. Justina is looking at an Oral History training workshop for Peacehaven and a Cooking and Reminiscence workshop in Newhaven. Look out for posters to find out when and where.

INDEPENDENCE FIRST - THE “POPP” PROGRAMME

Kathleen Manning and Kate Davies were invited to participate in the POPP programme. We still have a problem with trying to remember what POPP stands for, although we are well aware of what the programme is about: POPP, East Sussex: **Partnerships for Older People Programme** is a preventative programme to keep you healthy; to prevent you having to go into hospital; to prevent you falling or hurting yourself in any way, and to get you safely back home if you should have to go into hospital.

East Sussex were successful in obtaining a £3.2 million grant from the government (one of only 19 in the Country) to develop a partnership between the NHS and Social Care together with voluntary groups to provide a comprehensive “net” to keep you safe.

There are 4 main features:

1. To step in *before* you get in a muddle or become really unwell
2. To build on existing services, but to react more rapidly when help is needed
3. To promote the Navigator Service to help you stay in your own home
4. To develop a more rounded service – with exercise and well-being activities; transport to take you out and about and “handy person” schemes to help with minor repairs and things like gardening and decorating.

Many of the services mentioned above already exist but not everybody is aware of them. This can change. If an information page on the Anchor Navigator Service is not included with this Newsletter then phone either 01323 441013 or 01273 517250 for a copy.

EAST SUSSEX HEALTHY HOMES

It may seem a funny time to start talking about keeping your house warm but now is probably the best time to get things done in the home before next winter. There is plenty of money sloshing around to enable you to insulate your loft and cavity walls. You do not have to be on benefits in order to get this done FREE. You just have to be over 60 and live in council tax band A - D.

Phone Sara Winnington: 0798 3707729, or e-mail: sarawinnington@ecsc.org.uk

Why not have a free house MOT? This will show you how to stay warm, save money and be much healthier in the winter months.

Phone James Cox: 012873 484347, or e-mail: james.cox@lewes.gov.uk

NEWHAVEN REHABILITATION CENTRE

Kate Davies and Margaret Whiting visited the Newhaven Rehabilitation Centre in Church Hill on 23rd March and met the Deputy General Manager, Mr David Jones.

He told us about the work that had been done when the residential end of the building was open, mainly for rehabilitation and respite care; unfortunately financial problems had led to it being closed for the time being. It is hoped that at some point it will be used in the same way once more.

The remainder of the building is used for mental health clinics and meetings, and for a variety of out-patient clinics, including physiotherapy and podiatry as well as services for babies and children. We were also introduced to Pam Hayward who supervises volunteers and is a mine of useful information!

As a result of this meeting Kate Davies will be invited to join the *Health Matters Group* when it is re-convened following local organisational changes.

DOWNLANDS

We were delighted and relieved to hear that East Sussex County Council had successfully bid for a £3.2 million government grant to replace the facilities at the old Downlands Day Centre. This together with £3 million committed by Saxonweald Housing Association will provide a completely new way of supporting those of you who want to live independently for as long as possible. It is called "extra care housing" and it's different because:

- You are living at home – not in a home
- You have your own front door – you decide who comes in
- Couples and friends can stay together
- There is a mix of able and less able older people
- 24 hour care services are available – if you need them
- You get support to keep your independence
- You can join in social activities – or you can be private
- You have control over your finances
- You have security – the aim is a home for life

Two of our Committee members have been invited to participate in planning workshops as "stakeholders". That means we have "stake" in this new venture and we will be involved from start to finish.

This is wonderful news for those who were so upset when Downlands closed. Our thanks go to the successful partnership between the County Council, the Health Authority and the Housing Association. We will keep you informed.

HEARING LOSS

Anyone who was at our AGM in December will remember Peter Wilson talking about the huge waiting list for hearing tests – two years! It coincided with a letter in The Argus which said exactly the same thing. After the meeting I spoke to Peter and he explained, as best he could – as we never quite know for sure why waiting lists are so long – that the hearing tests were to encourage users to change from analogue to digital aids.

The batteries for the analogue hearing aids need changing more often, they are less efficient and cannot be retuned to accommodate meaningful changes in hearing patterns. Digital aids are more compact, have lower power consumption and can be retuned more easily.

The problem appears to be the long waiting time between the doctor's referral and the first hearing test by the audiologist. It appears that there is a shortage of trained staff. It is far quicker to have the hearing test and subsequent aids done privately but this can run into thousands of pounds.

The East Sussex Hearing Resource Centre has a mobile advisory service (a bus) which calls in at the Meridian Centre, Peacehaven (for our area) to give demonstrations and displays of helpful equipment. They don't sell anything but you can see doorbells, telephones, radio and television devices aimed to help the deaf and hard of hearing. Look out for information in the local press or phone: 01323 722505, or e-mail: mail@eshrc.org.uk

CANINE PARTNERS

Canine Partners is a progressive charity which aims to transform the lives of people with disabilities (partners) 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.



Canine Partners are seeking volunteers to be “puppy parents” or offer a “foster home” for puppies going through the training programme. **Active retirees are particularly well suited to the role of puppy parents**, i.e. someone who has the puppy living with them and assisting in the training programme for the puppy. Canine Partners provide the puppy, all food and equipment and cover the veterinary costs.

The contact for Canine Partners is Malcolm Wells who is the Senior Community Fundraiser. For more information phone 01730 716011.



TRANSPORT

Taxi Rider – Peacehaven

I can hardly believe what I am reading in their latest leaflet revised 2nd April 2007!

“Taxi rider is a local transport service for the residents of Peacehaven, Telscombe Cliffs and East Saltdean. It runs from Monday to Friday between 8.00am and 5.00pm and offers a door-to-door service to take you shopping, to the bank, doctor’s, dentist’s, day centres or just to visit friends. The vehicle used provides easy access for passengers including people who wish to travel in their wheelchairs.

All you have to do is become a member, which is free, by filling in the form – which I found in the Information Office in the Meridian Centre; or by phoning Community Transport for Lewes Area (CTLA) on 01273 517332. If you are a County Card holder (free bus pass) the taxi is also free.

What I don’t understand is why this is not happening in Newhaven and to the villages along the C7 towards Lewes?

Gill Hart from CTLA tells me there was a service like this in Newhaven but very few people used it! Can that be true? Please phone me (Kate Davies) on 01273 516207 or Gill on 01273 517332 if you would like a free taxi to take you in to town and home again.

I will be talking to the villages, who I am sure would be delighted with any help as the bus service never seems to quite fit in with where they want to go. They have no shops, doctors, dentists nor libraries and have to go into Newhaven for everything.

NEWHAVEN FISH FESTIVAL

Newhaven Fish Festival takes place on Saturday 30th June on the West Quay lawns. The Dieppe Market will be open from about 8.00am and the marquee from 9.30 – 4pm. We will be there, manning our stand, inside the main marquee from 10am – 3pm. Come and talk to us and meet committee members. And those of you who haven’t signed up yet – come and do it now!

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
c/o The Hillcrest Centre, Hillcrest Road,
Newhaven, BN9 9EA

For more information about the Meridian Forum go to:
www.meridian-sf.org.uk