

MERIDIAN MATURE CITIZENS FORUM

NEWSLETTER

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CHAIR'S REPORT

At the AGM in December we looked back over the last year to see if we had finished the tasks we had set ourselves.

We finished the final part of the research which was to look at :-

a) Continuity of support from GPs, particularly for the frail elderly or those with long-term illnesses. We talked to two doctors who told us that changes and improvements were taking place so rapidly that it was not always possible to see patients as regularly as they would like. It also looks as if the old idea of the family doctor with a small practice will eventually disappear.

b) Transport – this has been an on-going problem as we all know. However since the AGM we have had nothing but good news to report. CTLA will be operating a Taxi Rider service in Newhaven from April 1st, (see inside for details), and the concessionary buss pass will start at 9.00 again instead of 9.30! Brilliant news. The Transport Group, however remains active. The villages of South Heighton and Denton are not included in the Taxi Rider scheme and should be! The problems of rural transport will be looked at by ESSA with the Meridians support.

c) Isolation and loneliness – we are always hearing about this in the media but during our research we did not find a great deal of evidence of it. Our worry was that it is happening in the



Meridian Forum Committee

community without us being aware of it. We talked to sheltered housing managers who spoke of their active, extremely independent tenants who were out and about and preferred to do their own thing instead of doing things together. We are working with Age Concern (East Sussex) to see if we can set up a weekend Lunch Club - more news of this as we get the details.

Buzz Harrison who did the first research project with us talked of a new very small project called Reduced Horizons – this is looking into how people manage to keep in touch when they are no longer able to get out.

We have work to do in the coming year. Some of you will remember the POPP Party we held on St Valentine's day last year. This was a series of small projects that took place across the county. These have now been evaluated and the

successful ones will be rolled out over the entire county under the banner of Putting People First. We will be looking to you to participate in consultation meetings which we will advertise locally as they occur.

You **can** have your say and you **can** make a difference.

Anchor Staying Put

I would be very interested to hear from anybody who has used the Handyvan Service. It is still not being used often enough. Go on, give it a try!

Anchor Staying Put runs a similar service but offers much more than the Handyvan. Give them a call, they will help where ever they can. We all want you to stay in your own homes for as long as possible. Both schemes are there to help.

Contact Anchor Staying Put -
Handyperson Scheme:
01323 442556

ESSA - East Sussex Seniors Association

After the sad death of John Appleyard, our chair and a driving force behind the Forum movement we have had to carry on as John would have wished. Ron Sunderland (Rother), a close friend of John's, will continue as Acting Chair until the AGM in June. Kate Davies (Meridian) is acting Vice-Chair and James Rose (Meridian) Acting Secretary. Steve Thornett (Eastbourne) will continue as Treasurer.

There are now seven forums across the county and although we each have local issues we share many similar things like transport, care in the community and hospital closures amongst others. There are two interest groups - Transport and Health and Social Care. We invite relevant people from Health and Adult Social Care where we put questions to them and expect to get real answers. We represent your views at these meetings which are often lively but informative. ESSA will be producing its own newsletter which you will receive at our next mail-out.



COMMUNITY TRANSPORT FOR THE LEWES AREA
Providing accessible transport for people unable to access other forms of Public Transport

New Dial-A-Ride service in Newhaven

The town council has agreed to sponsor a new Dial-a-Ride service for Newhaven to be provided by Community Transport for the Lewes Area (CTLA).

The new service will start on 1st April and operate on two days a week - probably Tuesday and Thursday (to be confirmed) from 9.30am to 2.30pm. It can be used by anyone who finds it difficult to use ordinary bus services.

Users will need to register with CTLA before using the service (this will be free of charge). They can then telephone to book a journey to travel to and from anywhere in Newhaven. The service can be used for any purpose - visiting friends and relatives or going to the railway station, shops, Health Centre or Polyclinic.

Did you know the CTLA already run trips to places of interest such as garden centres, the Holmbush Centre in Shoreham and the Arndale and Sovereign Harbour shopping centres in Eastbourne?

For further information, or to register for the new service, please contact CTLA on **01273 517332**.

Maurice Langham Article

I was fortunate in being able to retire at the age of 56, and went to live in Spain where we had a holiday home. I became involved in local charities there and in particular in helping to fund the building of a hospice in the Costa del Sol.

By 2004 the huge influx of North Europeans made Spain less attractive and we made the decision to return to the United Kingdom.

Originally when we first went to live in Spain, life was good, the rate of exchange made for a good life, but gradually the changes in life style made the return to the United Kingdom desirable.

I was not going to go back to full time employment, so having looked around I joined the local Health Forum and became involved in fighting to keep the hospitals clean, to put a stop to Hospital Acquired Infections, to stop hospital closures, to end the threat to put pregnant mothers on a slow bus to Hastings.

Today I busy myself by serving on Newhaven Town Council, numerous other Health Bodies, Meridian and East Sussex Seniors' Forums. I visited the 22 GP Practices that fall within the East Sussex Downs and Weald PCT area. The Patient Environment Action Team the visits Lewes Victoria, Uckfield Community and Crowborough Memorial Hospitals. I often have several calls on my time for four out of five normal working days.

Next week I will celebrate being 75 years of age. I enjoy being kept busy. With deep regret I have not always won my battles. But as the saying goes, YOU WIN SOME, YOU LOSE SOME...THAT'S LIFE.

Some Tips For Good Mental Health

Talk about your feelings

Keep active

Eat well and drink sensibly

Keep in touch with family & friends

Ask for help

Take a break

Do something you're good at

Accept who you are

Care for others

These tips come from a booklet "How to look after your mental health", published by the Mental Health Foundation and available at the Summerhayes Centre, Newhaven.

Expert Patients Programme - Living Well

This is a **free** course run by the NHS for anyone with a long term health condition such as diabetes, asthma, arthritis, M.E, M.S, heart disease, IBS, back pain or any other condition.

The programme is run in six weekly sessions and is led by trained and quality assured volunteer tutors who are themselves living with long term conditions. Topics covered include managing symptoms, healthy eating, dealing with pain and fatigue, relaxation and improving communication with healthcare professionals.

The next courses run by East Sussex Downs and Weald and Hastings and Rother PCT will be:-

Hastings – Monday 9th February to Monday 16th March 2009 at Hastings Voluntary Action.

Lewes – Wednesday 22nd April to Wednesday 27th May 2009, 10.30am-1pm, at East Sussex and Weald PCT.

To register for a course or for more information please contact the Expert Patients Programme Information Line on **01273 403540**.

The Access Group

Did you know there are a small band of local people working on your behalf trying to create a safer environment for us all, especially disabled and older people? We are called the 'Access Group' and it is our 10th anniversary this year. We want everyone to be aware of its existence, so that even if you do not wish to join us, you may care to keep the Lewes District Access Officer's number in your phone book or on your computer, so that you may contact us if a problem occurs.

We would very much like anyone who has a disabled child or adolescent who would give us their views on how they cope outside in public places or what difficulties they have getting around in this location. We also need another representative for the blind and the deaf, to highlight their issues. You do not have to be disabled to join our friendly group; an able bodied person is such an asset.

Please give this matter some serious thought; we would love to see you. We meet just one hour on the first Monday of the month, 2pm to 3pm at Kempton House, Sutton Avenue, Peacehaven.

Telephone Sue Dunkley, Access Officer, Lewes District Officer on **01273 484409** or email **sue.dunkley@lewes.gov.uk**



'New lease of life – someone cares'.

'I now have something to look forward to'.

'The extra bit of company is just what I need'.

We receive compliments like this every day from delighted service users.

WRVS Get Well Stay Well & Good Neighbour volunteer scheme, provides a service which enables those needing a helping hand to remain independent, and live full active lives. We operate in the 'Havens' area covering East Saltdean, Telscombe Cliffs, Peacehaven, Newhaven, Denton & South Highton.

Would you like to be part of a team like this? A little of your time will make a real and positive difference to other people's lives. You may feel you can give practical support or you may simply prefer to make a phone call from the comfort of your own home. You may feel more comfortable using your IT, marketing, publicity or recruitment skills to benefit our scheme. Like to have a chat? Then our befriending service could use your friendly voice and time to talk. Whatever you can offer, we will accept gladly. You can give as little or as much time as you choose – all will be welcome. In return, we will support you, provide training and re-imburse all your expenses. You'll make new friends (our volunteers have a great social life!), learn new skills, gain work experience, increase your confidence and most importantly gain the satisfaction of making your community a better place to live.

Would you like to know more?

Please phone 01273 611441 or email getwellstaywell@wrvs.org.uk

We actively support diversity and encourage applications from all sections of the community.

Alzheimer's Society - Ouse Valley Carers Group

We usually meet on the 4th Monday of each month at the Newhaven Rehabilitation Centre.

Sometimes we have guest speakers, other times we just talk about being carers and giving each other support.

Our next meeting is on the 23rd March.

For information please phone Brenda Bryan on **01273 306134** or Margaret Selby on **01273 584994**. We also have an outreach worker covering the Ouse Valley area. She is Heidi Edwards and can be reached on **07967645058**.

Things to do in Newhaven

Extend classes

Gentle exercises for older people.

St. Leonards, Denton, Church Hall, 2.15 – 3.15pm
Wednesday.

Guinness Trust Community Room, Iveagh Crescent,
South Heighton, 3.30 – 4.30pm Wednesday.

Contact: Jenny Coote 515373

U3A Group for Newhaven / Peacehaven

Discussion group once a month in a member's home,
also a scrabble & rummikub group in a member's home.

Meeching W.I.

Meets on third Thursday morning starting at 10am in
Meeching Hall.

Ladies Group

Meets on second and fourth Thursdays, 2.30pm at the
Baptist Church Hall. This is an informal gathering, starts
with a hymn and prayer. Often a speaker, or members'
discussion. Occasional outings are organised.

Contact: Mrs. Gill Carpenter 612396

Tai Chi Class

Meets on Friday at 11.00am at the Hillcrest Centre.

**Contact: Hillcrest Centre 512379 for enquiries about
things that are happening there.**

Reminiscence Groups or exploring your family history courses

Run in Newhaven and Peacehaven, organised by
Justina Braddock of WRVS, based at the Hillcrest
Centre.

GARDENSHARE



New scheme in Peacehaven and Saltdean

Would you like unpaid help with regular garden maintenance and some delicious fruit and vegetables straight from your garden, with no effort? Or, would you like the space to grow your own fruit and vegetables, which you know are absolutely fresh and full of flavour?

We will be matching people who would like some help in their garden with people who do not have their own growing space. In return, the grower will offer some basic garden maintenance and share the produce with the garden owner. Your garden does not have to be enormous; some growers may prefer a smaller plot.

This is a new type of scheme run by the WRVS and funded by East Sussex County Council. We want to make sure both parties benefit and keep food local.

Our scheme will be for growers aged 18 and over who live in the Lewes District Council area and garden owners who:

- live in the East Saltdean or Peacehaven area;
- are aged 60 or over;
- have access to their garden from the public highway, without going through the house.

If you would like further details, please contact Linda Clark on **01273 611441** or email linda.clark@wrvs.org.uk

HAVE YOUR SAY!

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

Email us at: meridianforum@aol.com

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

WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!

For more information on the Meridian Mature Citizens Forum visit our website:

www.meridian-sf.org.uk