



fiftyplus

Older Persons'
Forum newsletter

NEWS & VIEWS

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



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FOR 'AGE MATTERS'
AGE CONCERN NEWS



Welcome

to the first edition of 'Fifty Plus', a three times a year publication that has been put together by members of the Westlea Housing Older Persons' Forum (OPF) in partnership with Age Concern Wiltshire. This newsletter is being sent to all Westlea tenants who are over the age of 50; we hope that you will find the information of interest to you.

You may be interested in joining the OPF, which is a group for Westlea tenants and residents that meets three times a year at various locations throughout North Wiltshire. The Forum meetings include speakers and presentations from both Westlea and other organisations, along with various displays and stands. There are also theatre and shopping trips and other activities available to members. The Older Persons' Forum meets in March, July and December from 10am-2pm. Lunch is provided, and transport can be arranged if necessary. If you drive yourself you may claim a mileage allowance.

Details of the next Forum are given on the enclosed reply paid card/booking form. If you would like to attend, please complete the tear-off slip and return it to us by 4 July 2006. Places are limited so book now!

Composting is a great way of cutting the amount of rubbish we send to landfill, but what if you don't have your own garden?

Going green at sheltered schemes

A cost-effective solution is being pioneered in sheltered housing schemes in North Wiltshire, in a unique partnership between Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and Westlea Housing.

Composting facilities have been set up at five Westlea Sheltered Housing Schemes in Corsham, Calne, Purton and Cricklade. A reception took place in May at Spring Tinings Sheltered Housing Scheme in Corsham to celebrate the success of this green venture.

"The environment is one of the key themes of our community development strategy and we're really pleased to be working with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and other partners on various schemes," says Helen Barbrook, Neighbourhood Development Manager at Westlea. "Our sheltered housing tenants have been really enthusiastic about this composting project which is brilliant."

Tom Cairns, Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's Composting Officer says: "To many of Westlea's sheltered housing residents, composting is simply a matter of common sense. They were brought up to believe that you shouldn't waste things that can still be used.

"Individual green kitchen



waste such as vegetable peelings, banana skins and tea-bags can be mixed with shredded paper, torn up cardboard and egg boxes to create a healthy compost mix that really takes off when you add all those

shrub prunings, grass cuttings and cut weeds from the communal grounds. The

resulting rich brown crumbly compost will help to improve the soil or provide a surface mulch that keeps the weeds down and retains water." At least half the contents of the



average dustbin can be composted. If buried in landfill, it will decompose instead to produce methane, a gas that is 20 times more damaging to the world's climate than carbon-dioxide.

Operation Christmas Child (OCC)

Last year members of the OPF (pictured) knitted nearly 150 teddy bears that were sent to Russia as part of the OCC shoebox appeal, along with several sets of hats, scarves and mittens. Several members also handed in filled shoeboxes to be sent to Eastern Europe. This year

the organisers of the shoebox appeal have asked that people knit hand puppets which can be decorated in any way you wish, which will appeal to the very creative nature of the Forum members! We will hopefully be able to issue this pattern at the July Forum. We also have a pattern for the hats, scarves and mittens, which has been kindly written by Mrs Romain of Lacock. If people wish to continue to knit teddies, we still have patterns and filling available.

We hope that the Forum members will be as generous this year as they were last year, and we will start collecting knitted items from July onwards, and shoeboxes from October.



Older Persons' Forum

REPORT FROM THE LAST MEETING

More than 60 people attended the last meeting of the Older Persons' Forum, which was held at Minety Village Hall at the end of March.

The day started with a very interesting talk by Rod Law from the Bobby Van Trust. Rod spoke about the work of the Trust and emphasised that people should learn 'good habits' when it came to security. For example, they should keep their door chain off at night, in case someone needs to enter the property



in an emergency situation; they also should keep phone numbers of the main utilities to hand so that they can make a call to check that a caller is not bogus. He also showed members some cunningly disguised tin cans that double up as moneyboxes!

Penny Church from Age Concern Wiltshire spoke of the services they provide, which varies from information about bus passes through to a nail cutting service! Martyn Matthews from Westlea then gave a very entertaining presentation concerning 'Affordable Warmth'. Tim Hill, who explained in detail how Westlea operates its Grounds Maintenance Service, followed him. After the speakers there was a short workshop, which

gave people an opportunity to express their views about this joint newsletter – produced by Forum members in partnership with Age Concern Wiltshire.

All the speakers stayed for the duration of the Forum, so members were able to speak to them about individual matters if they wished. The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust also attended and provided advice and information about their projects.

A hot lunch was followed by a raffle that had over 30 prizes, including a money box disguised as a baked beans tin that was kindly donated by Rod from the Bobby Van.

The feedback from the Forum shows that those who attended had a very enjoyable time with nearly all the people saying they would attend another meeting.

Comments included: "Thank you for a lovely day, you took care of us all very well." "Very good information all round, will come again next time." "It is good for older people to get together for their views to be heard".

The July Forum promises to be just as interesting and hopefully equally enjoyable – don't forget to book your place by returning the reply paid card today!

Out & about

Forum member **Philip Chapman** gives a round-up of two recent trips

- Trip to the Bristol Hippodrome to see 'My Fair Lady'

The Older Persons' Forum's planning team must be congratulated in organising such a good afternoon out – 24 people came on the trip, and although many were strangers to one another we all felt we enjoyed the company. The show was brilliant. Some of the stars were missing, but the stand-ins were brilliant and the starts were not missed at all. The girl who took the part of Eliza Doolittle was only a slip of a girl, but my goodness what a voice! She was fantastic, as was all of the cast. Gareth Hale took the part of Eliza's father and I could appreciate the East End Cockney accent of him and Eliza. The singing of the cast was so good; I could sit through it again.

From the conversation coming home, it was obvious that everyone had a fantastic afternoon; some were even singing the tunes!

- Trip to Compton Acres and Poole (Springfield House residents' trip)

The gardens were beautiful with several large waterfalls. Each garden was designed and laid out in different nationalities – Greek, Italian, Chinese, English cottage etc. In the Greek garden there was a long pool with three large fountains with fish about two-and-a-half feet long! At Poole, we enjoyed a fish and chip lunch overlooking the harbour. After a stroll on the seafront and an ice cream we set off home.

More grey clouds than blue sky? Get on the bus!

The Open Blue bus visits Corsham Road in Lacock every Tuesday afternoon. Several of the older residents of the area meet up each week to enjoy the facilities on offer, and to chat with their neighbours.



Open Blue uses a double decker bus, to get out on the road to people in Wiltshire who "see more grey clouds than blue sky". The bus has been refitted to particularly meet the needs of people who can't get to other community facilities. The lower deck is used as a café and community centre, for meeting friends and neighbours. The bus has been used for a Christmas party; for short courses and presentations; and even a 'have a go' session with a local sculptor.

Hopefully, the bus will be able to visit some other Westlea neighbourhoods some time in the future.

News from North Wiltshire District Council on wheeled bins

Residents without wheeled bins were previously issued 156 black sacks printed with the NWDC logo. This allowed for each household to be able to put 3 sacks per week out for collection, the equivalent of one wheeled bin. It has now been decided that these households will be supplied with 156 NWDC printed labels, to stick on black sacks provided by themselves.

However, if a resident within your household is in receipt of the State Retirement Pension or is currently in receipt of an assisted collection, you may still apply for a free annual supply of 52 black plastic sacks by ringing 01249 706693 for an application form.

Meanwhile, if you feel that you are able to accommodate a wheeled bin and have not had one previously, please ring 01249 706693 to arrange delivery.



GET IN TOUCH!

For any further information about this newsletter or Westlea's Older Persons' Forum please contact Jen Eastman at Westlea on 01249 466168.

“A good age to be...”

Photo: Gazette & Herald



Michael Pearce thinks that being in your 60s is a good age to be. He has recently joined Age Concern Wiltshire as a volunteer helping us to maintain and develop our local Traders Scheme. Michael has a background in the construction industry and enjoys doing small jobs for older people in his area. He is very pleased to be developing a practical scheme to help people find a reliable trades person.

“The thing that is good about being in your 60s is having more time to spend in your garden and with your family and grandchildren,” says Michael. As an ex-serviceman, Michael is a member of the Royal Engineers Association and enjoys having more time now he has retired to attend their meetings and events.

SUCCESSFUL TREK RAISES OVER £5,000



Congratulations to Age Concern Wiltshire director, Liddy Davidson, who had an exciting trip to Peru in March and raised over £5,000 to support the work of Age Concern. She walked for four days across the Andes to see the wonders of Machu Picchu. Liddy says: “It was exhausting, exhilarating and a lot of fun but best of all was knowing that I was helping to raise money for older people in Wiltshire.”

Healthy eating

Chinese chicken and vegetable stir fry

This takes 10 minutes to cook and can be varied according to taste. You can cook it without the chicken, nuts, ginger or garlic.

If you prefer to choose your own vegetables then chop them into matchstick size pieces. Carrots, peppers, peas and bean sprouts are a good mix. It will taste slightly different each time you cook it.

Ingredients

- 1 x chicken breast
- Small piece of root ginger
- 1 x pack of stir fry vegetables
- Soy sauce
- 6 x mushrooms
- Half a chicken stock cube
- Handful of unsalted cashew nuts
- 1 x teaspoon cornflour
- 1 x clove garlic
- A pinch of Chinese five spice powder
- 1 x pack of ready for wok noodles

Before starting to cook prepare all the ingredients. Chop the chicken into small strips. Chop the mushrooms into thin slices and chop the garlic and ginger finely. Mix the cornflour into a cup of cold water. Heat a good tablespoon of oil in a pan – a wok is ideal but a frying pan will do. Stir fry the chicken on a medium heat for three minutes turning frequently. Turn up the heat high and add the vegetables, garlic and ginger and salt and pepper to taste. Stir fry briefly and add the Chinese five spice powder. Continue to stir fry on a high heat for two minutes. Crumble the stock cube over the vegetables and add the cornflour and a good shake of soy sauce. Continue stirring as the sauce thickens slightly. Add the noodles and stir to warm through. Sit down and enjoy!

Project leaves older people better off

Wiltshire pensioners have £175,000 more in their pockets every year thanks to the work of Age Concern Wiltshire's Benefits Take Up Team. Since starting work a year ago, the team have visited pensioners living in rural isolated areas and advised on what state benefits they could claim. People who have care needs or are caring for someone have particularly benefited. Project worker Emily Cole says, “Over half of the claims that the Benefits Team have helped with have been care related – these include Attendance Allowance, an important benefit which many people do not realise they can claim. There are some common misconceptions about this benefit – it is not means tested, so it doesn't matter how much money the claimant has.” One 82 year old lady living on her own was able to claim Attendance Allowance after contacting the Age Concern Benefits Team. She said: “I like to live on my own and want to stay in my own home for as long as possible. The extra money I receive through Attendance Allowance is helping me to do this and remain independent.”

Anybody who thinks they may be entitled to Attendance Allowance is urged to contact the Benefits Team at Age Concern Wiltshire by ringing (01380) 735500. A member of the team can then visit at home to help them fill in the necessary claim forms.

At last! Help with toe nails

Many people have been telling us how difficult it is to get help to cut toenails. We are very pleased that we can now offer this thanks to a grant from the Balance Foundation. Clinics will be held in Calne, Chippenham, Corsham, Devizes, Pewsey and Wootton Bassett. Our two new members of staff, Marilyn and Sue, will be fully trained by the NHS Podiatry service and will offer simple toe nail cutting at a charge of £8 a cut. Each person using this service will need to purchase their own clippers and file from us which they will bring to each appointment. We will not be able to treat people with certain conditions such as diabetes, or who take medication such as Warfarin, so anyone wanting to use the service will be asked to answer some medical questions to make sure that it is safe for them to be treated.



If you would like to find out more please contact Age Concern Wiltshire in Devizes, tel 01380 727767.

Quizcorner

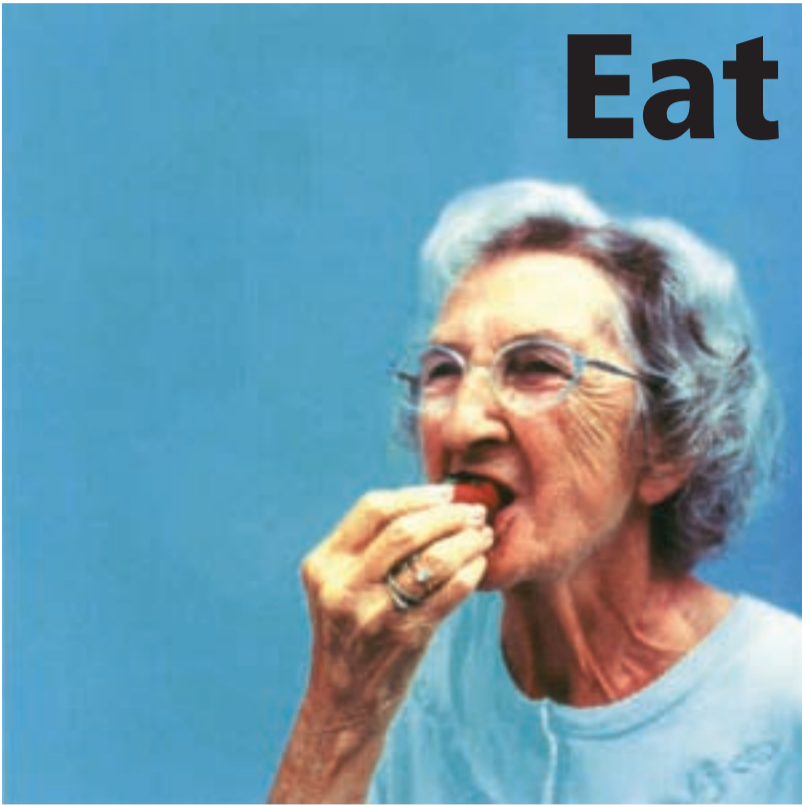
Work round the South West to identify these towns:

- 1 Regal sounding fruit
- 2 Ho! Not in? We've come for lace
- 3 The dock on the hill
- 4 Bowl with drake here
- 5 Two ways of crossing the river
- 6 Over a pit? No by the sea
- 7 What we do with our television
- 8 Wear rests upon me
- 9 Turkish? No, Roman
- 10 All shipshape in this fashion

ANSWERS NEXT ISSUE!



Design and print for this edition of 'Age Matters' is provided by Westlea Housing working in partnership with Age Concern Wiltshire www.westlea.co.uk



Eat well, age well!

Eating a varied and balanced diet is important for everyone. Making small changes to your diet can help you stay healthy and active. We all know that eating more fruit and vegetables can reduce the risk of some serious diseases, but it can be

difficult to get those five-a-day portions. If you find that buying and preparing fresh fruit and vegetables is a challenge, keep some frozen packs in the freezer. Also try soft dried apricots, raisins or a glass of fruit juice. Tinned fruit in natural juices can be kept in the

store cupboard along with tinned vegetables – try to choose those with no added salt or sugar. If you don't enjoy large meals then eat small portions more often. Eating a wide variety of food will help you to feel better and stay fit longer.

COULD YOU SPOT A SCAM?

A scam is when people con you out of your cash. New scams appear every day and it is important to know how to spot them. There are hundreds of types of scam – fake lotteries, schemes to make money quickly, fake investment plans, work from home schemes. Any leaflets or letters will look professional. People on the phone will sound pleasant and kind.

One easy way to spot a scam is if you are being offered something for nothing. It is very unlikely that someone you don't

know will do that. Another way to spot a scam is if you are asked to send money or give your bank or other personal details. Sometimes you may be told you have to buy something before you can claim a prize. Sometimes you may be told to ring a premium number – in the UK that will start with 090. Sometimes the address you're given will only be a PO Box number.

If you think you have been a victim of a scam then contact Consumer Direct on 08454 04 05 06.

Stuck for a present?

If you are soon celebrating a special birthday or anniversary and don't want people to give presents why not consider asking them to help older people in Wiltshire. We can provide a personalised collection box for donations from your party guests to help support the services we provide.

For more information call 01380 727767.

North Wiltshire Befriending Service – one year on

Age Concern Wiltshire extended their befriending services into North Wiltshire in February last year.

Wendy Meilton, who co-ordinates the service says "Already it seems as if we have been here forever. The people that my colleague Pat and I meet make this work so rewarding and often very humbling. The team is growing healthily and at a steady pace and we now have 20 volunteer befrienders, many of whom have been matched with older people. Some really good relationships are developing."

Befriending services are available in North Wiltshire, Kennet and West Wiltshire. If you know of someone who would benefit from having some social contact from a befriending volunteer or if you would like to help an older person by volunteering, contact:

- Wendy and Pat in North Wilts on 01249 705012
- Mary and Amanda in Kennet on 01672 517213
- Margaret and Joyce in West Wilts on 01225 404030

Age Concern Traders Scheme

In April Age Concern Wiltshire launched our Traders Scheme. We now have a list of people who are willing to do a fair job for older people for a fair price. This includes electricians, plumbers, gardeners and general builders. We would like the list to be longer so if you know of someone who does a good job and would like to join our scheme please ask them to contact us on 01380 727767.

Help make medicines safer

Many people take a cocktail of tablets each day and very occasionally a new prescription may make you feel worse instead of better. If you think a medicine or complementary remedy has caused an unwanted side effect, there is a way in which you can report the problem. The Medicines and Healthcare Regulatory Agency Yellow Card scheme welcomes reports on any suspected side effect, particularly if it is not mentioned in the leaflet that came with the medicine, or if it has caused problems bad enough to interfere with your normal daily life. If you are worried about a suspected side effect, contact your pharmacist or doctor and then consider using the Yellow Card Scheme to report the problem. This will help make medicines safer. You can report it by telephone on freephone 0808 100 3352 or ask your pharmacist for the Yellow leaflet.

