

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



SEE PAGES 3 & 4
FOR 'AGE MATTERS'
AGE CONCERN NEWS



For further information about this newsletter or the Older Persons' Forum please contact Jen Eastman on 01249 466168 (jen.eastman@westlea.co.uk). Westlea Housing, Methuen Park, Chippenham SN14 0GU.

Advice if you are planning to go away

The following information has been sent to us from Wiltshire Police and tells you what precautions you should take to reduce the risk of a break-in when you go away.

- Leave a light on if you're going to be out during the evening, but not so as to draw unnecessary attention to your home. You could also consider getting a timer switch to control the lights automatically. You can buy these from most DIY stores.
- Ask a friend or neighbour to keep an eye on your home. This could include opening and shutting curtains, switching lights on and off and making sure post and papers are pushed through your letterbox properly.
- Remember to cancel paper and milk deliveries before you go away.

Think about what's outside

- Never leave a key hidden outside your home (e.g. under a doormat).
- Always lock sheds and garages.
- Always put ladders or tools away - they could be used by an intruder.

Call Wiltshire Police on 0845 408 7000 ext 722 8257 694 / 826

Did you have the call?

TELEPHONE SURVEY FEEDBACK



Some of you may have taken part in two recent Westlea Housing telephone surveys that were aimed at people over the age of 50.

In the first survey, we were trying to

find out about housing for older people. We wanted to know what things people felt were important when thinking about the type of housing they may want in the future. We managed to speak to 187 residents. What people told us was that they needed to be near to facilities such as shops and bus stops, and many people also said that they would like to have a good size property with more than one bedroom.

Over 60% of people said that they may consider moving into a bungalow at some time in the future and nearly 30% may consider moving to a flat in one of Westlea's sheltered housing schemes.

We also wanted to find out how Westlea could help make moving into a smaller property easier for people; the most popular option was to have a dedicated person to help with the move by organising removals and disconnection of utilities. Another popular choice was to have the new property fully decorated and having new carpets and curtains fitted.

Some organisations offer cash payments to older people who move to a smaller property; nearly 80% of you thought that this was a good idea – with the most popular amount of cash being offered being between £500 and £1000. Westlea is currently looking into the possibility of setting up an incentive scheme to help people who may want to move to a smaller home and these survey results will form an important part of this process, so thank you to everyone who took part.

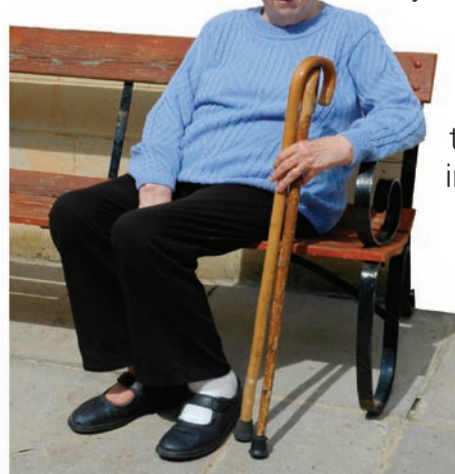
Our other survey aimed at older people was about the new floating support service. As many of you may know, the delivery of support to the over-55s changed in April 2008 to continues overpage

So what do you know about your local Link Good Neighbour Scheme?

"It's all about getting old people to the doctor's right?"

Wrong! Link Schemes are about so much more than simply transport. Link volunteers in your community offer help with many good neighbour tasks such as collecting prescriptions, shopping and calling in for a chat. Link Good Neighbour Schemes aim to help local people in need of a little help in their daily lives. These valuable schemes provide a service which enables many people to do some of those little things which they may be finding difficult. Every week over 900 people, mainly our older residents, are helped to do those things which most of us take for granted. Indeed for many people the friendly voice and face of a Link volunteer is often the only social contact they may have.

In North Wiltshire there are 11 Link Good Neighbour schemes covering a huge geographical area. Link 6, the new Good Neighbour Scheme for Bradenstoke, Broad Town, Bushton, Clyffe Pypard, Lyneham and Tockenham became operational on 5



January 2009. The service got off to a flying start with the volunteers helping 16 people in January and the demand for help is increasing.



For more information about your local Link Good Neighbour Scheme or for further information about volunteering for a Link Good Neighbour Scheme please visit our website at www.wiltlink.org.uk or contact the Link Project on 01380 722241 or ask your Westlea support worker.

continued from page 1

three different levels depending on people's needs. We wanted to find out what people thought about the new service, and we spoke to 103 residents who are receiving various levels of support.

We asked whether people felt that they got more or less personal time with their support worker now: 46% of people felt that they got more and 41% felt that they got less. Most people had a copy of their individual support plan and 72% of people felt that the support worker helps them to maintain their independence. The results also showed that over 71% of people understood the new service and that 81% of people rated the service as good or very good. We asked people if they had any other comments they wished to make about the new service. Some people said that they did not see someone as often as they did in the past, but others were more than happy with the level of service they now receive, and appreciated that it is now possible to give individually tailored support based on people's needs.

Many thanks to everyone who took part in the survey - the answers that you gave us will be used to improve the service further. We offered a prize of £25 of shopping vouchers to those who took part and this was won by Mrs Rickman, of Derry Hill, who was delighted to win, as she is 91 and has never won anything in her life before!

News from the last Older Persons' Forum

Around a hundred people attended the December meeting of the Older Persons' Forum. Our main speaker, Melanie Jizzard from the Wiltshire Fire Rescue Service, gave an informative talk about fire safety and told us about the free safety checks that can be carried out in people's homes; many people signed up to get a have one carried out – if you would like to find out how to arrange a check for your home please contact her on 01380 731188.

We also had a quiz and a charity bazaar, which gave members an opportunity to purchase some last minute Christmas presents from a variety of stalls, many of

which were raising money for charity. The stallholders included Oxfam, McMillan Cancer Support, Age Concern and St John's Ambulance Trust.

A local group of singers came along and led people in singing songs from around the world, in the form of a 'round' where different groups sing the same songs at different times. Some people were



Mrs Snell enjoying the Community Singing at the December meeting

disappointed as they had had the impression that they would be singing carols (bearing in mind the

time of year). However, even though some people were not happy, the majority of people rated the singers highly with comments such as "it was great to have something different". It is almost impossible to please everyone, especially with a group of people who have such a large age range. Please do think carefully about whether the advertised programme for a meeting has something that you want to find out more about and then decide if you wish to attend. We do try to have a variety of speakers and workshops – with hopefully something for everyone. And if you have any suggestions about who you would like to see at future Forums or if you have heard a great speaker that you think would be good, please do give me ring on 01249 466168.

Jen Eastman



THANK YOU...to the people who volunteered to get involved in our cooking project, which we are running in partnership with Redland Children's Centre and which involves older people showing off their cookery skills to some of our younger residents. We are now piloting this project in Chippenham where six young mums who have signed up so far, learning a variety of dishes from fruit sponge to cornish pasties! One of the ladies attending has already been practicing her skills at home by making cakes for her son's birthday. We are considering extending the project to other areas – if you know someone who may be interested in gaining some cooking skills or would like to find out about how you can volunteer to help, please contact Julie Trudgeon on 01249 466294.

Be on the look out for bogus callers

Bogus callers pretend to be officials from the council, engineers from gas, electricity or water companies, police officers or salespeople in order to gain access to people's

homes and steal money or property. They usually carry fake identity cards and can seem very convincing. If someone calls round at your home, it's best to take precautions:

- Put the chain on the door before answering it
- Ask to see identification.
- Check their identification isn't fake - phone the company to check the caller is genuine. Look the company up in the phone book rather than using a number they give you.
- Ask a neighbour or friend to come round while the caller is there.

Affordable warmth update

• All our homes are now above the national average for energy efficiency – we achieved this by replacing doors and double glazing windows, improving draught-proofing and increasing loft and wall insulation to help keep warmth in and save energy use and money.

• **We are currently running trial projects to assess electric heating options aimed at improving cost and control for electrically heated homes; results are promising so far!**

• We are also in the middle of a project involving residents in communally-heated homes aimed at improving how we use the systems and costs for residents with communal heating.

• **Energy advice is available from many other sources, but together with the Citizens Advice Bureau 'moneyfriend' service (contact Elizabeth Payne or Nigel West on 01249 445115) we now offer personal energy advice via our 'Energy Champions'. This includes advice on the best use of the system and controls, best social and other tariff options and suppliers, payment methods – and even the benefits of water meters.**

• And finally it is promising to note that our new build homes are 25% more energy efficient than building regulations expect – reducing energy demands for the future as well as improving existing homes to a good standard of thermal comfort.

Martyn Matthews

Citizens Advice

Tel: 0845 1203707

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 10am–4pm
Wednesday 9am–4 pm**

Chippenham: 3 Avon Reach, Monkton Hill –
Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 9am-1pm

Calne: 21 High Street – Tuesdays 10am-4pm; Fridays 10am-1pm

Corsham: Community Centre, Beechfield Road – Wednesdays 10am-1pm
(Appointments on the day)

Wootton Bassett: Civic Centre, Station Road
Thursdays 10am-3pm (Appointments on the day)

Malmesbury: Advice Line tel 01249 659464 (24 Hour voicemail)



If you would like to have any part of this document explained or translated, or in a different format such as in larger print, braille or on audio tape, contact Westlea on 01249 465465 to discuss your needs.

'Age No Barrier' week

20 to 26 June 2009

If you are involved in a group in your neighbourhood, you are invited to take part in "Age No Barrier Week" – a new, county-wide celebration of older people in their local communities across Wiltshire starting on Saturday 20 June.

The week is being organised by the Wiltshire and Swindon Users' Network in partnership with both Age Concern Wiltshire and Age Concern Salisbury District, and with the support of Wiltshire Council and NHS Wiltshire (the new name for the PCT). The aims of the week will be to raise the profile of older people across the county, to celebrate the contribution older people make in their communities, to encourage other age groups to become involved with older people and, of course, to promote the idea that age should not be a barrier.

A wide range of organisations and groups across Wiltshire (including parish councils, town councils, sheltered housing, care homes, day centres, lunch clubs, friendship groups and schools) have been sent invitations to

Age · NO Barrier

suggest that they might like to put on some form of event in their locality during the week. If you are a member of a local group you might like to consider how you could become involved in doing something for Age No Barrier Week.

If your group hasn't yet received a letter or you would like to know more about this exciting new initiative, please contact Nick Crane at Wiltshire and Swindon Users' Network - telephone 01380 871800 or email [nickcrane.wsun@btconnect.com]. Although it will be up to local groups to decide what they would like to do and take responsibility for all arrangements (including health and safety and insurance), the organisers of the week will be very happy to help promote what is happening in different localities. With your help we hope that the first Age No Barrier Week will be a real success and hopefully develop into an annual event if it is a real hit this year!

Extra rights

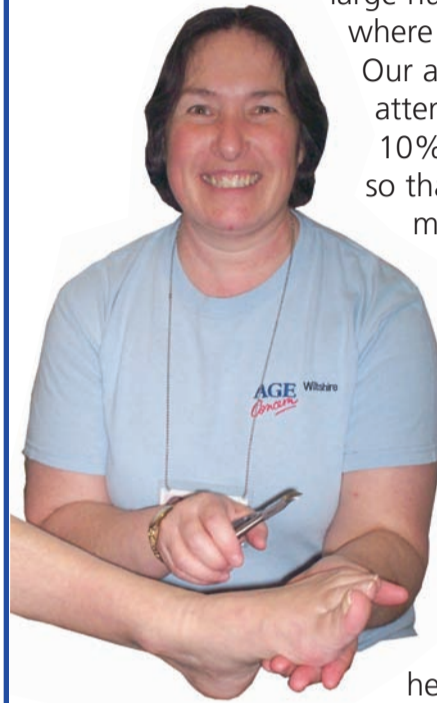
Wiltshire Trading Standards tell us that consumers now have extra rights when agreeing to a contract whilst a trader is in their home. It applies to any contract over £35 and consumers have seven days to change their mind about something they have agreed to. The right to cancel must be given in writing, and it is actually a criminal offence not to give a written notice of these rights. A consumer can ask for work to start immediately but must do this in writing, and will still have the right to a change of mind within seven days, but would, if cancelling, be liable for any work already done at that time. These are important rights and are designed to stamp out the practice of hard sell which has been such a feature of doorstep sellers in the past few years. Anyone who knows of any business not complying should tell Consumer Direct on 08454 040506.

Thanks from Sue

Sue Byatt is very grateful for the consideration shown by people using the nail cutting service. "I would like to say a big thank you to our regular clients as the number of people who did not turn up for their appointments without telling us during the last three months has reduced considerably. This means that if we know you are unable to make it to your appointment we can always see if we have people on the waiting list who may be able to take to available slot."

Our nail cutters are really keen to cut toe nails and like to have a full clinic so it is very disheartening to have a large number of appointments where people fail to show up.

Our aim is to have our 'do not attend' rate down to less than 10% over the next six months so thank you for helping us to move in the right direction.



Sue Byatt and a team of volunteers have been keeping this valuable service running since last summer when Sue's colleague retired. Sue now has a new member of staff, Jacki Liebling, who will be working with her. There are vacancies in some of our clinics at present so

if you are struggling to cut your toe nails and would like to find out more about the service, the costs and where we hold the clinics, then please contact us.

Vouchers for glasses



We have been receiving some enquiries recently from people who have just found out that they might be able to get help with the cost of

their glasses but who have been paying for them for several years. Most opticians will make people aware of the voucher scheme but it seems that this is not always the case. You will be entitled to a voucher to help towards the cost of your glasses if you are receiving pension credit (guarantee credit). The price of the voucher is not fixed but varies according to the type of prescription. If you don't qualify for automatic help you might still be entitled to some help under the low income scheme by completing form HC1. If you think you should be getting some help with the cost of glasses then please ask your optician next time you visit.



We all know how important it is to eat well but this is not always easy at times when you find shopping or cooking difficult. One option to consider is to buy ready made meals for the microwave or oven. A number of different organisations can supply meals to older people for re-heating at home. One local supplier is Wiltshire Farm Foods. Sue Hunt will come out to groups of older people to talk about healthy eating and special diets. She will also offer a tasting session of their products. If your group would like a talk from Wiltshire Farm Foods then please contact Sue Hunt on 07768 444129.

What is the WIN?

In the Summer 2008 edition of Age Matters, we let you know about Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) which have been set up nationally to help local people to 'have their say' about the delivery of health and social care services within their local area.



We can now introduce you to Wiltshire's LINK - which will be known locally as the Wiltshire Involvement Network or WIN. The WIN provides people in Wiltshire with greater opportunities to influence the planning, design, commissioning and provision of services as well as suggesting ideas to help improve them. The more local people and organisations that join, the stronger the WIN will become.

Anyone can get involved - we want to hear about your experiences of health and social services and your ideas for improvement or changes. You may have wanted to speak up about these services in your local area in the past and not known how? It might have been to offer an opinion on how things could be improved, or to talk about an experience, good or bad? Well, now you have the opportunity!

You can get involved in a way that suits you. You do not have to join a committee or commit lots of time in order to be involved in WIN. It can be as easy as giving WIN your comments by phone, freepost, email or via the Community Voices Online website www.communityvoicesonline.org **You can also contact Mary Rennie, our new WIN Support Officer (Older People) tel 01380 727767 or email mary.rennie@ageconcernwiltshire.org.uk**



Design and print for 'Age Matters' is provided by the Communications team at Westlea Housing working in partnership with Age Concern Wiltshire

New gardening jobs created

With so many reports of job losses, Age Concern Wiltshire is doing their bit towards the local economy. We have been building up a gardening service for older people over the past two years and are now preparing for our third growing season. This year we will be employing more gardeners than ever, and 12 new part time jobs have been filled.

Manager Alan Truscott said "We are very pleased to be developing a sustainable



business which not only helps older people stay independent in their own home but also offers employment to local people. In order to cover our costs we make a charge for our gardening service, but all the

gardeners have had a criminal record check and we offer them support and training from Age Concern Wiltshire."

Alan is now taking enquiries from people wanting some help in their garden. He will visit and give a you a quote for the work, whether it is large or small, regular

maintenance or just a one off job so if you would like to know more about the Age Concern Wiltshire gardening service please contact Alan on 01380 735510 or Steve on 01380 735511

New benefits rates

Since April 2009 there are new rates of benefits and tax credits. Most of the new rates were effective from week commencing 6th April 2009. We know

that millions of pounds of welfare benefits go unclaimed by older people. If you would like to talk to someone to check that you are claiming all you are entitled to then please call our Support Service team who will be able to help you.

PANCAKE RACES FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

The Devizes Pancake Races were held on 17 February, a week ahead of Shrove Tuesday. This was so that children could take part during their half term. The event was a huge success, with kind weather, BBC Radio Wiltshire broadcasting live from the races and the



competitors ranging from 4 to 84 years old. The team from Sudweeks Court in Devizes, pictured above, had a combined age of 300 and, like many other teams, took part in fancy dress. The event raised over £800 to support older people in Wiltshire. We would like to thank everyone who supported the races and came along to enjoy the fun.

CONTACT AGE CONCERN WILTSHIRE

Find us at 13 Market Place, Devizes SN10 1HT
Telephone 01380 727767 • Fax 01380 728797
Information Line 01380 735500
Email admin@ageconcernwiltshire.org.uk
Website www.ageconcernwiltshire.org.uk

THE BIG 60!

This year it is Age Concern Wiltshire's 60th Anniversary. We are celebrating our 60 years of service in the county by organising several events during 2009 and launching a massive fundraising appeal. We



aim to raise £60,000 to enable us to provide befriending and other services which bring friendship and help to local older people.

We are hoping that people of all ages and in all locations will get actively involved, either by joining in with one of our planned events or by organising fundraising activities of their own. If you are already planning an event this year, perhaps you would consider adopting the 60th Appeal as your designated charity? If you have a 60th birthday or anniversary coming up, you might like to suggest that, instead of a gift, friends and family make a donation to the 60th Appeal to mark the occasion. Alternatively, why not take on a "60 challenge" with a 60 minute, 60 lap or perhaps even a 60km sponsored activity! The choice is yours; however we can provide plenty of other ideas and advice to ensure that your event goes smoothly.

We recognise that the timing of the Appeal may not be ideal given the current financial climate, however more than ever now a little practical help from Age Concern Wiltshire will make such a great difference to the lives of older vulnerable people, who have no-one else to turn to. When relatives live far away, friends dwindle and mobility is restricted, a regular visit from our volunteers can bring the outside world into an older person's home and help them to retain their sense of independence.

If 1,000 individuals raised just £60 each, 100 groups raised £600 or a combination of the two, our target would soon be met. All of the money raised will be used locally, supporting one of the many hundreds of people who use our services. So please help us to "be a friend" and help an older person.

To find out more and/or register your participation in the Appeal: please call Belinda Fowler, our 60th Appeal Co-ordinator on 01380 727767 or email: belinda.fowler@ageconcernwiltshire.org.uk

Belinda will be able to supply you with information, advice and supporting materials to help make your "60 challenge" a fun and exciting event.