

Canterbury and District Pensioners' Forum

www.cantdistforum.org.uk
Supported by Kent County Council

AUTUMN 2011



The Christmas Lunch Party will be held on **Friday 16th December 2011** at the Northgate Community Centre, Military Road, Canterbury (near to the City Council offices.)

Lovely food – musical entertainment – free raffle. From 12 noon to 2p.m.

Please ring **01227 366494** to book your place or send the slip at the end of the newsletter to: **CDPF 14 Essex Avenue, Herne Bay CT6 8AA**
PARTY FREE TO MEMBERS

FULL OF LIFE FESTIVAL 1st October.

With the Canterbury & District Multi Ethnic Council and the Youth Service joining us to provide the celebrations, the day was a great success. We recruited fourteen new members and met many interesting, nice people. Thanks to our members who staffed the stall, and to our patient Song Club who waited to do their bit right at the end of the day when our conductor at last arrived!

PENSIONS NEXT YEAR

The Government has said “Our first priority is today’s pensioners” **but** there has already been a huge reduction in the value of all pensions by their decision to move from the Retail Price Index (RPI) to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the calculation on the annual pensions increase.

The Chancellor is looking at ways of

avoiding the full pensions and benefit increase that the high inflation rate in September triggered. If there is no move to cap or change the state pension provision, the basic single pension should rise next April by £5.31 to £107.46 per week in line with the CPI figure of 5.2% in September which was a record inflationary rise in the cost of living. The joint state pension will increase by £8.49 to £171.84. If the Government had kept to the RPI calculation, the rise would have been £108.42 and £173.36 respectively. The record inflation rate hits pensioners very hard, particularly in the cost of food and fuel, and we already face a reduction of £50 in the Winter Fuel Allowance this year. Let’s keep our fingers crossed that we do not remain in their sights for further cuts this year.

Half price concessionary coach fare - for pensioners & disabled people has been completely cut with very little

publicity; even though the Conservatives pledged at the last election not to touch bus passes and travel concessions for the elderly & disabled. A pledge as trustworthy as the one not to reorganise the health service; which we have subsequently been told they planned during ten of the years in opposition.

KENT'S HEALTH PROFESSIONALS SAY NO TO THE NHS HEALTH REFORMS

In a letter to the Daily Telegraph leading professionals in Kent were among the 400 experts nationally warning that plans to reform the NHS risk “irreparable harm”.

Among those who signed the letter were – Amy Bird, speciality registrar in public health for Kent, Professor Stephen Clift, professor of health education at Canterbury Christ Church University, Dr. Linda Garvican, quality assurance director for cancer screening programmes at NHS South East Coast and Dr Angela Bhan, director of public health and managing director of Bromley Business Support Unit. They wrote –

“As public health doctors and specialists we are concerned that the Health & Social Care Bill will do irreparable harm to the NHS, to individual patients and to society as a whole.”

A national survey has found that seven out of 10 GPs believe that the changes will put them in an impossible “conflict of interest” position forced to choose between doctor-patient relationships and hard headed commercial decisions. 69% were concerned at having to both commission services (make

commercial decisions), and to actually provide care.

Although the Bill has yet to become an Act of Parliament, already much of it is being put into action – the Primary Care Trusts which used to work out what medical services were needed for their local area are almost disbanded, and the consortia of local GPs who will take over this work are already being set up; and we thought we lived in a democracy!

KENT FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Kent Fire & Rescue has published its draft plans in a document **Towards 2020**. It is published on their website www.kent.fire-uk.org. The plan focuses on the closure of a number of part-time fire stations, as well as proposals on dealing with automatic fire alarms. A printed copy and questionnaire is available on 01622 212428

EXCESS WINTER DEATHS

We have reported before on the high level of excess winter deaths within the Canterbury District of elderly people. The figures are one of the highest in the country. Work has been carried out within the Primary Care Trust during the summer, to improve the situation. The highest level is around Chestfield in the Whitstable area. Not a poor area, but one that may indicate property rich and capital poor householders. The Whitstable medical practise will now be involved in referring patients, with their agreement, to Climate Energy and to the Keep Warm & Well Kent pilot project. This pilot aims to reduce the risks of winter deaths, to increase

levels of thermal comfort, and to enhance heat and energy efficiency. Patients over 65 living alone or with certain health problems can be referred.

Handyman Service Please ring 01227 360494 (Age Concern Herne Bay) for help with repairs around the home, or Whitstable Age Concern on 01227 272055. In Canterbury you can ring Age UK's Handy Van Service on 0845 026 1055.

Age Concern has now come under the Age UK banner but retain their local independent charity status for the three centres around the Canterbury district. They all provide a range of services for older people living at home.

Ring them on the above numbers – the Canterbury Centre is 01227 780246

KENT LIBRARIES – provide a free Home Library Service for anyone unable to visit the library because of ill-health, disability or because they are a carer. They will also deliver books, talking books on CD or cassette. They provide a postal talking book service for those with visual impairment – contact your local library for details.

SAVE THE WESTGATE HALL!!

Help to save the Westgate Hall, Canterbury by coming to the Christmas Fayre on 27th November – food, music, stalls from 10.30 a.m. Support the Trust trying to save it!!

The next forum meeting will be on Friday 27th Jan 2012

Please reserve a place at the party for:

Name(s)

Address: