



Swale Seniors Forum

Sittingbourne, Sheppey,
Faversham and surrounding villages

Issue 7 – February 2012

Welcome to our latest Newsletter

You will immediately notice a change of format which is much simpler to produce and will hopefully enable us to produce an issue much more quickly and therefore be more up to date with information we can give.

DIGITAL TV SWITCHOVER

In conjunction with Swale Neighbourhood Watch we are organising three meetings on the subject of the Digital TV Switchover.

The meetings are as follows –

Friday 17 February

10.30 – 12.30

**Gatefield Hall, Alexander Centre, Preston Street,
Faversham**

Monday 20 February

10.30 – 12.30

Phoenix House, Central Avenue, Sittingbourne

Wednesday 22 February

10.30 – 12.00

**The Gateway, High Street
Sheerness**

The content of each meeting will be the same and will be led by a representative of the Digital Switchover Team who will not only explain what is happening but give details of the help that is available

It is important that everybody fully understands what will happen after the existing analogue signal is turned off and what action they need to take if they cannot currently receive a digital signal.

MAKE SURE YOU COME ALONG TO ONE OF THESE MEETINGS AND FIND OUT HOW YOU WILL BE EFFECTED

Tea and Coffee will be served at the end of the Faversham & Sittingbourne meetings

NATIONAL EXPRESS COACHES

Our Transport Group have been in contact with National Express. Initially we were asking them to provide a 'pick up point' in Swale – they are not able to state whether they could implement such a service but it is still being looked at!

In addition we did ask what, if any, concessions they were making for Seniors now that the Government had withdrawn the 'half price' concessionary scheme. We have some good news –

A Senior Coachcard is available to the over 60's at a cost of £10.00 and is valid for one year. The card entitles the traveller to a one third discount on the usual adult fare any time and any day.

Trips to or from an airport are excluded and terms and conditions apply but this is a positive result for Seniors.

SMOKE ALARMS

Hopefully all members have a smoke alarm installed in their property.

However, **does it work?** To ensure that it does all alarms need to be tested at least once a week and if the batteries need changing this is a priority.

The most recent and best approved alarms have batteries that now last many years.

If you have any concerns about your alarm, or lack of one, Kent Fire and Rescue are available to assist you—contact them on 0800 923 7000.

You may also get assistance from Staying Put and Age Concern.

On this matter we have heard that inspections on behalf of Amicus Horizon included a check of smoke alarms but in at least one case this was not in fact completed—always make sure the check has been done.

SCAMS

The most recent scam that we have heard of is that people are telephoning householders claiming to be from a security company that is working with the police and seeking information and access to property. Do not respond to such calls and report them to the police and /or Trading Standards.

KENT TRADING STANDARDS

As we mention Trading Standards it is perhaps useful to know a little more about this organisation.

Kent Trading Standards aims to make Kent a better place to live and do business. They enforce a wide range of legislation to protect the consumer, ensure that businesses compete on a "level playing field" and to control farm animal welfare and disease.

They operate from two Area Offices, at West Malling and Ashford, each managed by an Area Manager. Their Advice and Education team is also based at Ashford. The Head of Trading Standards is based at Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone together with a small team providing legal expertise and administrative and operational support.

They have an "intelligence led" approach to their work and use campaigns to find out the

extent of a problem or to target known problems. This benefits the whole community by concentrating activities on those issues causing the most problems. It is rare that they investigate individual complaints about traders, but they do record all information supplied to as this is a vital part of intelligence gathering.

They liaise with other Trading Standards Services throughout the country to ensure a consistent approach to enforcement. Trading Standards enforcement staff also work closely with Police, Customs and other enforcement agencies; State Veterinary Service and other staff of DEFRA; the Office of Fair Trading, the Health and Safety Executive, etc.

Each year they produce a Business Plan. This sets out the activities planned to be carried out during the year. They also produce an Enforcement Policy and Food Service Plan (a separate requirement of the Food Standards Agency).

If you want further information look at the website www.tradingstandards.gov.uk/kent

In most cases, if you have a case to report or require some information you will need to contact Consumer Direct which is a separate national organisation funded directly by Government and run by the Office of Fair Trading. They will offer advice to individuals and any complaints or issues raised will be shared with the local Trading Standards authority.

Consumer Direct can be contacted on 08454 04 05 06 or at www.direct.gov.uk

POLICE TELEPHONE NUMBER - 101

This is the new telephone contact number for non-urgent issues which has been introduced so that the public can easily contact the police in situations where an emergency response is not required.

FACES OF KENT

FACES of Kent is the new name of Swale & Canterbury Carers Support. In this case FACES stands for Families Affected by Caring Empowerment Services.

Members who know of this organisation will be aware of the work it does. For those who do not they –

Promote, support and empower Carers of all ages
 Raise awareness of the needs of Carers and the cared for, of all ages
 Empower Carers to make informed choices and regain control of their lives
 Improve and quality of life for all Carers
 Empower Carers to access appropriate services and support
 Enable all Carers to have their voice heard
 Increase the number of Carers accessing support services

It is to be stressed that the Carers that FACES of Kent seek to assist are those family members who care for and look after another family member. Very often this is a son or daughter caring for a parent. Very often the son or daughter will be a child or teenager and the parent not elderly. Conversely the Carer can be an elderly parent caring for an adult son or daughter. In some rare cases care is provided 24 hours, 7 days a week, 365 days a year – this imposes great strains on both carer and cared for and any support available is greatly welcome.

This support can vary greatly from just offering information, advice and guidance to the provision of peer support groups and social activities for Carers.

If you, or someone you know, would benefit from the services offered by FACES of Kent, or if you would like to support them; they can be contacted on 01795 583440 or view their website at www.facesofkent.org.uk (the site is currently being updated).

CARE IN CRISIS

We hear a lot in our news bulletins and newspapers of people claiming their human rights have been breached by UK or European Law. In all probability some of these people are right in their claims, others will be quite wrong. However, in a recent report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission it was concluded that a substantial proportion of those older people receiving 'care at home' were so neglected, or even abused, to the extent that their human rights were being breached!

That such a report can be produced in this country regarding the way in which our vulnerable older

folk are being treated is very disturbing. It is worthy of note that this report did not receive wide coverage by our media – out of sight, out of mind?

Whilst the report mentioned above related only to 'care at home' similar reports, or individual cases, have highlighted the shortcomings in care of the elderly in hospitals and residential care homes. In response to such cases the responsible body or organisation is usually reported to be extremely sorry that such lapses on the part of themselves or their employees have occurred and that 'lessons will be learned'. It always occurs to me what that phrase really means when quoted in relation to such incidents. It could be suggested that for anything to be learnt three key factors need to be a place –

a clear understanding of what needs to be learnt

a suitably trained person or persons to 'teach' the subject

a willing learner with an open mind

All too often it would appear that not all these factors are in place and thus lessons are not learned and the same or similar events occur time after time. To correct these lapses is both necessary and urgent and can no longer be ignored.

In order to try and address these issues there are a number of initiatives and campaigns being launched ahead of the Government releasing its plans for the long term future of care due this Spring.

We are aware of two campaigns in particular around this subject –

Age UK's Care in Crisis Campaign

The National Pensioners Convention Fair Care Campaign

The Age UK campaign calls upon the government to ensure that (a) everyone who needs care receives it and is treated with the respect they deserve (b) no-one is forced to sell their home or sacrifice all their savings to pay for the care they need (c) people are able to plan and prepare for care in advance. A petition covering these points is available for signature and can be signed at any of the Age UK (Age Concern) buildings in Swale. We will also ensure

a copy is available at our digital switchover meetings – see front page.

The Fair Care Campaign is broadly similar but makes some more specific demands including a UK-wide Dignity Code, a return to the public sector of the majority of social care provision and improved standards of care. This campaign will be launched on 21 March and we will keep members informed.

If you wish to know more please contact us or view the relevant websites – www.ageuk.org.uk or www.npcuk.org

On a lighter note

Julie Andrews Turns 70 - this is brilliant!

To commemorate her birthday, actress/vocalist, Julie Andrews made a special appearance at Manhattan's Radio City Music Hall for the benefit of the AARP. One of the musical numbers she performed was 'My Favourite Things' from the legendary movie 'Sound Of Music'.

Here are the lyrics she used: -

If you sing it, it's especially hysterical!!!

*Botox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string,
These are a few of my favourite things.*

*Cadillac's and cataracts, hearing aids and
glasses,
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favourite things.*

*When the pipes leak, When the bones creak,
When the knees go bad, I simply remember my
favourite things,
And then I don't feel so bad.*

*Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads for
bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions,
Bathrobes and heating pads and hot meals they
bring,*

*These are a few of my favourite things...
Back pain, confused brains and no need for
sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that
is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short shrunken
frames,
When we remember our favourite things.*

*When the joints ache, When the hips break,
When the eyes grow dim,
Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad.*

Ms. Andrews received a standing ovation from the crowd that lasted over four minutes and repeated encores.

Please share Ms. Andrews' clever wit and humour with others who would appreciate it

Contact Us

**We always value feedback from
members and other readers**

You can write to us at

C/O Swale CVS. Central House, Central
Avenue, Sittingbourne ME10 4NU

You can telephone Swale CVS and ask
staff there to pass on your message
01795 473828

You can E Mail us at
swaleseniorsforum@hotmail.com