

# Power of attorney

Here is a case history from the Citizens' Advice Bureau that should be helpful.

*My elderly father is becoming forgetful and has asked me to take over managing his financial affairs. The bank told me that I would need powers of attorney to do this and that I should arrange this now before his memory gets any worse. How do I go about it?*

Your father can create what is known as a lasting power of attorney (LPA). An LPA is a legal document made using a special form. It allows you to choose someone you trust to make decisions on your behalf about things such as property, financial affairs and personal welfare at a time in the future when you no longer wish to make those decisions or may lack the mental capacity to make those decisions yourself.

You can make an LPA at any time but it cannot be used until it has been registered with the Office of the Public Guardian. LPAs replaced enduring powers of attorney (EPA) on 1 October although EPAs already registered before this date are still valid.

For more information details on how to create an LPA, go to the website of the Office of the Public Guardian which is at [www.publicguardian.gov.uk](http://www.publicguardian.gov.uk). If you require further advice on these or any other matter contact your nearest Citizens' Advice Bureau.

# Water bill or meter: what's best for you?

Is a water meter fairer than a water bill for you? Just like gas and electricity, a water meter may be the fairest way for you to pay because you would be paying only for the water you use rather than a payment based on the rateable value of your home.

If you use relatively little water, a free water meter should mean smaller bills for you.

Although the rates were abolished in 1990, the rateable value of your house is used to fix the price of your water if you are not on a meter. Only about 30% of homes have meters. If there are more bedrooms than people in your house, you should get a water meter fitted. You can call your water company and ask them for a copy of its water meter calculator for you to work out if it would save you money.

All new homes built since 1989 have been fitted with water meters and, if you have a garden sprinkler or an unattended water device, you must, by

law, have a meter. A water company must provide a meter on request unless it is impracticable to do so.

There is no cost to you and the meter is normally fitted under the pavement next to your house. If you are not happy with the new arrangement, you can switch back to the old way of paying within the first 12 months.

The meter is tested before it is installed and, if you ever suspect that it is inaccurate, the water company will carry out a check without charge. Some older houses have the electrical earthing system connected to the water pipes (now prohibited since 1966); if this applies to you, have your system tested and brought up to date but you may have to pay the cost of that work.

It is good to cut water usage so ask your water company for a free "save a flush" bag to fit into your lavatory cistern. Save water, save money.

John Greenhill

# Caring with confidence: so many there to help you

## From front page

Details of this service in the area can be obtained from Swale Carers, Suite 8 Bank House, The Broadway, Sheerness, telephone 583440.

**East Kent Crossroads** provides high-quality respite care to relieve the stresses of caring for a relative or friend. Trained paid staff can take over the carer's role to give the carer a short break when it is most needed.

They accept referrals from anyone. For further details call 01227 742030 and they will respond within 48 hours. The carer will be contacted for further details to establish a level of priority and is then visited by a care manager and placed on a localised

waiting list. This service is free. **Caring with Confidence** This organisation runs regular training courses for carers in Swale. The course is over a seven-week period, one morning a week, and it covers all aspects of caring. It helps carers to make positive changes to their lives and to those they care for. It is an excellent and thorough way of facing and sharing the changes a carer has to make; it gives detailed information about all the support which is available; it enables one to share feelings and thoughts. Details are available by calling 01474 369159.

Details of other organisations will be in future newsletters.

Peter Morgan



Swale Seniors Forum  
Sittingbourne, Sheppey,  
Faversham and surrounding villages

July 2010



# Caring with confidence

Caring with confidence, the course needed by every carer. The amount of support offered to Kent carers is impressive

I have recently become a carer and, in the process, have been very impressed by the amount of help, support and advice available to carers in general.

If you are a carer or know a friend who is one, you might like to note this information.

**Admiral nurses** These are mental health nurses who specialise in dementia care. They work with health and social care professionals and voluntary organisations to help those caring for a relative suffering from dementia in all its forms. They help to identify what you need and then put you in touch with supportive organisations. You can be referred to one by your GP or by phoning 01795 845000.

**Care navigators** These advisers help people to manage their own lives by telling them what help is available and where to get it. They will call at

your home and discuss your situation and your needs with you. The care navigator is based in Faversham and may be called on 532766.

**The stay-put handyman** offers practical help with minor jobs in the home that would prevent a fall or are a safety issue. He will carry out a health and safety check in your house and advise you on what needs to be done. If you wish, he will fit grab rails, put in extra electricity sockets to prevent trailing wires, doors can be turned or changed to sliding doors, do work to steps and thresholds. You can find out about this by calling 417131.

**Citizens' Rights for Older People** An adviser can call on you to tell you about all the benefits available to you, help you to fill in the forms, advise you on financial matters, help you to make a complaint, help to deal with family conflict, negotiate

care or moving into sheltered accommodation, etc. Our nearest base is in Canterbury, so phone 01227 789777.

**Free will advice service** If you are planning to change your will, an adviser will give you free, confidential and impartial advice. You can contact the adviser on 01227 751125 between 9am and 5pm and she will visit you.

**Kent Carers' Emergency Card** This card is carried by a carer to ensure that, if ever he/she is involved in an accident, that person can be immediately identified as a carer. A message can be immediately passed to a KCC call centre (which provides a 24-hour service) and a pre-arranged emergency plan can be put quickly into action so that the cared-for person is notified and supported.

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Those who attended our last two Full of Life conferences will know the importance of building a better understanding between those working on older people's services in the statutory sector and older people themselves. Our conference will provide the perfect opportunity to share information on policies and priorities and there will be time for you to have your say about services and facilities that matter to all older people as well as sharing ideas with members of other forums in east Kent.

AN INVITATION FOR YOU TO ATTEND

The East Kent Association of Senior Citizens' Forums

# Annual conference

Friday 1 October 2010  
10am, finishing with a buffet lunch  
Westgate Hall, Westgate Road, Canterbury

Westgate Hall provides the ideal location for our conference, with adjoining car parking and a large hall with ample room for both delegates and display stands/stalls. More than 100 senior citizens from each of East Kent's five forums will be attending. Hope to see you there!

## SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

**Debra Exall** head of strategic policy, Kent County Council  
**Alison Davis** assistant director of commissioning, Eastern & Coastal Kent Primary Care Trust  
**Dot Gibson** national secretary of the National Pensioners' Convention  
**Dave Laws** chairman of the East Kent Association of Senior Citizens' Forums

To book a place, please contact **Diane Aslett**, regional adviser (partners), the SE Regional Team of Age UK, Rex House, William Road, Guildford GU1 4QZ. Telephone 0208 8510401 or 07970 127503. Email Diane.aslett@ageuk.org.uk

Free transport is available to and from the conference. To book a seat please call 01795 473828

# The bus service: boon or bane?

Based on your experience, we have compiled a list of transport objectives

What do you think about the provision of bus services in Swale?

At our open forums we have had many critical comments on the present bus services. As a result we have set up a special sub-committee to look into the problems many people experience. One result of the work of this group has been the holding of a transport conference.

On 28 April, we held our first conference to discuss the local bus services and the improvements we want to see for senior citizens in Swale. About 60 people attended at the UK Paper Leisure Club in The Avenue of Remembrance, Sittingbourne.

The conference was chaired by a member of our management committee, Jim Mitchell, who is the convener of the transport group. He explained the work being done by this group and the financial support it has been receiving through Gillian Wells, the co-ordinator of the outreach work being done by the universities based in Kent.

As a result of this support, our transport group has been enabled to run a questionnaire to find out exactly what the experiences of older people have been when using the bus services. Based on an analysis of the answers received, they have now compiled a list of objectives to set themselves. They are as follows:

- ❖ To produce a transport directory for Swale on a website and possibly a freephone;
- ❖ To liaise with existing transport providers to provide regular services direct to local hospitals;
- ❖ To seek to improve bus-stop waiting areas, especially at the Forum in Sittingbourne;
- ❖ To find a person (an advocate) who will help us to make our complaints productively;
- ❖ To seek to improve access onto the buses for disabled people;
- ❖ To have the bus timetable accessible by mobile phone;



Do Swale's bus services sometimes seem remote? Villagers are the most disadvantaged with public transport

- ❖ To seek to improve the evening bus services on the Isle of Sheppey;
  - ❖ To seek to improve the Sunday bus services in Swale in general.
- We have also found that this topic has been taken up in one form or another by every forum in Kent and we are researching the experiences and successes of others. We have set ourselves a massive programme and we plan to publish progress reports from time to time.
- We have also found out that the Traveline telephone number is 0871 200 2233 but it is not a freephone number. You can find train times on the web by entering "train times" and follow the instructions. The same service is available for bus travel.

Peter Morgan

## Five ways to live to 100

**Here's what an eminent doctor advises:**

**Be sociable** Some studies suggest that marriage can add as much as seven years to a man's life and two years to a woman's life.

**Enjoy yourself** Pleasure counteracts stress and causes our cells to release a natural antibiotic called enkelytin.

**Restrict your diet** Eating just enough has been shown to extend the lives of mice by about 30%, and

getting your five portions of fruit and veg per day could increase your lifespan by up to three years.

**Floss** Not flossing between your teeth leads to inflamed gums, which release inflammatory substances into the bloodstream that clogs the arteries.

**Maximise your assets** Several studies have shown that intelligence, good education, literacy and high-status jobs all seem to protect people from the mental ravages of old age.