



Swale Seniors Forum

Sittingbourne, Sheppey, Faversham and surrounding villages

Issue 12 – September 2012

Welcome to our latest Newsletter

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Living in Safety Event



This annual event is organised by Staying Put – operated by Swale Borough Council - whose principle aim is to ensure that those over 60 with disability or infirmity are enabled to stay safely in their own homes.

This year the event is being held in Sheerness at the Healthy Living Centre - off The Broadway – on Friday 28 September between 10.00 am and 1.00 pm. A number of relevant organisations will be represented – including Swale Seniors Forum – and they will offer lots of information on free services available to you. As so often with events in Swale the matter of getting to them is always something of a problem – research shows that Arriva bus service 334 runs a service that will enable those from Sittingbourne to visit the Event with reasonable ease. The train service would also be available as Sheerness station is not too far from the venue. Those in Faversham and surrounding villages will perhaps be hardest pressed to make the journey. If you would wish to attend the Event and find that public transport makes this

impossible telephone Swale CVS on 473828 and leave us a message and we will see if we can assist you. If any with their own transport would offer a lift to others then again – leave us a message.

Swale Stroke Group

The existence of this group was brought to our attention by an SSF member who attended one of their meetings.

It is a group of people who have been affected directly or indirectly by strokes. They have regular meetings of a social and informative nature and also run some activity sessions and occasional outings.

Meetings usually take place on the last Thursday of each month – 10.30 am to 12.30 pm and are held at the Hope Street Centre in Sheerness.

If you, or anyone you know, may benefit from the services this Group can offer please contact their Chairman – Stewart Kitching (who himself has suffered a stroke) on telephone number 01795 437569 or by email on piper1923@talktalk.net

Scams

‘Nottingham Knockers’ – thanks to the Kent Police Neighbourhood Watch your correspondent now knows more about those young people who knock at his door and claim to be ex-convicts attempting to mend their ways before trying to sell everyday household products at very high prices.

These people are not part of any recognised offender rehabilitation programme and usually travel around the UK targeting one town at a time. Many will not possess a ‘Pedlar’s Certificate’ which is necessary for salespeople to legally sell door-to-door. It is suggested that to deter these people you ask to see their certificate,

if they do produce one its authenticity can be checked with the police – dial 101.

Needless to say do not be pressurised into buying anything and please do notify the police of their call so that they can keep track of them!

Other recent scams have involved people telephoning claiming to be from the Ministry of Justice and advising that monies are owed to them if they will make a up-front payment to enable them to process the monies they are owed! Also callers represent themselves as from the Electricity Board, Gas Board or Water Board and offer discounts or products which will save consumers money. The key in these cases is that such ‘Boards’ no longer exist (for better or worse!) and thus the call is not genuine!

Scam or not your correspondent spent over 20 minutes on an unsolicited telephone call listening to Carlos from Sanda Wellness who eventually offered his companies pomegranate extract at a substantial discount to that he would have to pay at his local ‘Wellbeing Centre’ (?). His offer was declined but this has not stopped Carlos, or one his associates, calling again twice to ask how my health was! This company is quite legitimate and has an impressive website so it really comes down to how convinced you are that pomegranate extract will improve your health and wellbeing!

Health & Health and Social Care

It is not an understatement to say that all matters regarding and Health and Health and Social Care are currently complex and, in many areas, extremely uncertain.

A classic case of uncertainty is that relating to mental health provision in our area. In June we sent you a copy of a booklet outlining proposals regarding inpatient provision for those older persons with dementia or mental health problems. This focused on the options for future provision of facilities at Canterbury, Ashford and Margate. We had queried with the relevant authorities whether this provision truly covered all of Swale and were led to believe it did. The same authorities have now produced proposals for changes to Adult mental health inpatient facilities at Dartford, Maidstone and Medway again with various options. The preferred option is that people from Sittingbourne and Sheppey would use beds at Maidstone with those from

Faversham using Canterbury which they would under all options. Alternative options for Sittingbourne and Sheppey folk are to use either Dartford or Canterbury.

Rather than again send out these latest proposals to all members would those who feel they would wish to know more and/or complete the relevant survey let us know and we will send a copy of the proposals.

We will take forward the precise reasons why provision for ‘older people’ as opposed to ‘adults’ might be different!

In July the Government finally published a white paper entitled Caring for our Future and alongside it a Care and Support Bill. Generally speaking these items were seeking to address what has been termed the ‘Crisis in Care’ issue which is broadly an acceptance that as our population in general lives longer there is pressure on the availability of ‘care’ and that the cost of such ‘care’ is set to increase to a level which is fast becoming a major, and perhaps unacceptable, proportion of public spending. The proposals also seek to give people some certainty regarding how much ‘care’ will cost them and to be able to plan for it.

As you can imagine the proposals are not simple and at present the way in which they will be funded is not specified.

These matters are ones which bodies such as Age UK and the National Pensioners Convention take a keen and detailed interest in and both provide the Forum with notes and information – we will endeavour to keep members abreast of developments.

Local matters –

Kent Community Health NHS Trust is a Kent wide organisation providing NHS community health services which encompass much of the care that members will use. In particular they operate our three local community hospitals in Sittingbourne, Sheerness and Faversham. The Trust is seeking to obtain ‘Foundation Trust’ status which they feel will enhance their ability to provide services, improve their funding opportunities and to better develop their services. Many of the services currently operated by this Trust will be ‘commissioned’ by the New Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG’s) which come into operation in April 2013. If you want to learn more about this issue of Trust status they are holding a public meeting on Monday 15

October, 10.00 – 12.00, at UK Paper Leisure Club, Avenue of Remembrance, Sittingbourne.

Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG's) – these are the new bodies that in 2013 take over the services previously carried out by PCT's (Primary Care Trusts). Swale has such a group but is the smallest in Kent and may have to share some of its work with other CCG's. Swale CCG will not in any event include Faversham which will be part of Canterbury CCG.

We will keep in touch with developments and let you have updates as this group takes shape.

Continuing Healthcare Funding. Due to the change from PCT's to CCG's it is necessary for people who receive such funding to apply for it to continue after March 2013.

Basically continuing healthcare is care arranged for those people not in hospital but whose primary need, as a result of disability, accident or illness, is for healthcare (rather than social care). Most of those eligible may live in residential care but some are in their own home.

If members, or their relatives, who currently receive such funding, or think they may qualify, need to take action quickly if they have not already done so. Whilst there are two 'cut off' dates the first is 30 September 2012 so it would be advisable to act now. We are informed that residents of Swale should contact NHS Kent and Medway on telephone number 01634 335045. We take the view that even if you are uncertain of the position you do act!

Nuisance Noise



As a result of a member suggestion we are able to advise you that should you experience unacceptable disturbance from noise – music, mechanical devices, faulty alarms, rowdy neighbours etc Swale Borough Council operate a designated telephone number on which you can report this. The number is 0788 181 7601. It is a 'live' number on Fridays and Saturdays between 9.00 pm and 1.00 am but at other times you will be able to leave a recorded message which will receive attention on the next working day.

Falls Clinics

In April the Forum, along with Kent Community Health NHS Trust (see above), organised a meeting to highlight falls risks.

Following this meeting some 20-30 people have signed up for a session of exercise classes aimed at improving mobility and to help avoid falls. Sadly there have been some issues around accommodation and timings of these classes although they are proceeding and those attending have expressed the view that they are very useful.

It is hoped that further classes can be organised – if you think you may be interested, or previously expressed an interest but could not participate in the current classes please let us know and we will pass you details to the health trust.

Transport Issues

Many months ago the Forum became involved in a campaign to try and provide proper pedestrian access across to the Sittingbourne Retail Park. Initially unsuccessful we now know that there is a proposal to install a pedestrian crossing in Mill Way roughly outside the existing Pizza Hut. Whilst not an exactly perfect location it is at least a provision that will allow safe passage across this busy road – we await with interest to know if this proposal is accepted.

Since talk of town centre regeneration in Sittingbourne was first mooted the provision of a 'Transport Hub' was included which it was hoped would provide a connected link between train, bus and taxi services. The Forum has consistently sought to clarify what, if anything, will come of this as many members complain of the inadequate facilities currently provided at the Forum bus stop.

Now that an 'agreement' with the developers has been signed we had an early indication that perhaps the proposed hub would not be quite what was hoped for. At a recent Local Engagement Forum it was asserted on behalf of Swale Borough Council that what had been envisaged to date was 'vision and concept' and that we now had to await further consultations followed by precise planning applications which would put ideas into actions – watch this space!

Free Insulation



Swale Borough Council has teamed up with Climate Energy to offer all Swale residents free cavity wall and loft insulation whether you own your property or rent it.

For further details call 0800 083 7383 or go the councils website www.swale.gov.uk

As with all such offers there will be conditions and limitations so make sure what is offered is suitable for you.

Your correspondent can vouch for the difference such insulation makes both in terms of warmth and in cost savings.

Retirement Age

Reproduced by kind permission of Yours magazine –

Q. I remember reading in **Yours** about the changes in the retirement age. I am a single woman born in 1953, so will be 60 next year. Will I still qualify for the State Pension at age 60?

A. Michael says: Unfortunately you will not qualify for your State Pension for another five years. Some time ago, the Government introduced a phased increase in the pension ages for both men and women. For men born before December 6, 1953 the State Pension age is still 65. For women born after April 5, 1950 but before December 6, 1953, their State Pension age is between 60 and 65. In your case, your new state retirement age is July 2017, just before you reach 64. By the year 2046, the retirement age will be 68 for both men and women.

This change has come as shock to many people, even though the changes were flagged up a year or so ago and confirmed last year. If this change is likely to cause you financial difficulty, you should obtain some financial advice now rather than waiting until you reach retirement.

To begin with, use the retirement age calculator on the website www.direct.gov.uk If you do not have access to the internet but need assistance, contact Age UK which should be able to help – its helpline, 0800 169 6565 operates seven days a week.

Elections!!

Surely we are not due to vote in any elections local or national for some time yet!

Oh yes we are – PCC elections!

PCC, in this case stands for Police and Crime Commissioner who in England and Wales will take the place of county Police Authorities.

The Commissioner will ‘hold the police force to account for the service it delivers’.

The elections, including Kent, take place on November 15 and before that households should receive an explanatory booklet from the Home Office.

There is much speculation that these elections will produce, overall, the lowest turnout ever recorded. If this happens it is likely to be for a combination of reasons – timing in mid November, disinterest, ignorance of what the election is for, lack of a funded facility for candidates to present their case to their electors. If turnout is indeed very low voters/citizens may well feel that the successful candidate has no mandate to fulfil their function – what think you?

And finally – a poem for older folk

A row of bottles on my shelf
Caused me to analyze myself.
One yellow pill I have to pop
Goes to my heart so it won't stop.
A little white one that I take
Goes to my hands so they won't shake.
The blue ones that I use a lot
Tell me I'm happy when I'm not.
The purple pill goes to my brain
And tells me that I have no pain.
The capsules tell me not to wheeze
Or cough or choke or even sneeze...
The red ones, smallest of them all
Go to my blood so I won't fall.
The orange ones, very big and bright
Prevent my leg cramps in the night.
Such an array of brilliant pills
Helping to cure all kinds of ills.
But what I'd really like to know.....

Is what tells each one where to go!

Contact Us

By post at
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Central Avenue, Sittingbourne
ME10 4NU

By telephone – ring Swale CVS on
01795 473828
And ask staff there to pass your message to us

By E Mail on
[**swaleseniorsforum@hotmail.com**](mailto:swaleseniorsforum@hotmail.com)

We always value feedback from members and other readers