

# LEWES DISTRICT SENIORS' FORUM

www.lewesdistrictseniors.org.uk

Autumn 2011 ACTION NEWSLETTER

LEWES SENIORS' FORUM POST BOX  
C/O TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET  
LEWES, BN7 2DQ

## YOUR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

It has been some time since the Forum has formally announced the names of the current Committee and these are as follows:-

**Jean Gaston Parry** – Chairperson.

**Richard Kemp** – Vice Chairperson.

**David Glen** – Acting Treasurer.

**Elizabeth Newton-Price.**

**Wendy Johnson.**

**Ann Johns.**

**Ann Thomas.**

**John Wingate.**

**Sheila Kay** – Co-opted.

**Keith Baker.**

**Dr Arnold Goldman** - Webmaster

Any member is welcome to apply to join our committee. For further information please contact **Jean Gaston-Parry** on **01273 603576** or **David Glen** on **07947 422 897**.

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Although a little early this year, the message is just the same: **Happy Christmas** to all our members, families and friends **Wishing you Peace and Joy in this season of new hope.** Jean and our committee

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## HOME PROTECTION AND SECURITY

Be mindful, that the security and safety of your home is important not only to you but those you love and live under the same roof as you. We may read in the press that our police force is under pressure and crime is becoming a national problem, but the truth is that we in East Sussex are fortunate to have a caring and dedicated police force within our community that is very active indeed. Crime is well under control, but to sustain this level of control by the police, they do need our help to do so. This also applies to the Fire and Rescue services.

If your street or area does not have a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, then as a senior citizen, please consider the importance of becoming a Street Co-ordinator. This means looking out for your neighbours and each other when any suspicious or potentially dangerous situation occurs. For further information please contact: Gordon Bull on 01273 480153.

## 'SAVE OUR CHEQUES' CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

For the benefit of those members who perhaps have not heard via the national media, the Forum is delighted to report that the Payments Council has abandoned its quest to abolish cheques. Following the thousands of letters and e-mails from angry and concerned individuals, small organisations and businesses across the country, together with pressure from the Government's Treasury Select Committee in June 2011, the Payments Council announced its defeat on the 12 July 2011.

The Forum Committee mounted a vigorous campaign for the retention of cheques on behalf of the membership (and indeed the wider local public), and would like to thank all those Forum members who took the time and trouble to contact the Payments Council.

It is heartening to note that Age UK has pledged to keep regular contact with the Payments Office in the future, with particular reference to (a) Cheques must be made available to people with bank and building societies, sending out their customers automatic replacement cheque books, (b) Banks and building societies must ensure small traders and businesses are not penalised via prohibitive charges for cheque acceptance, (c) There must be easy access to cash via free ATM's, with access to all current accounts at the Post Office and (d) all payment systems must be designed 'inclusively' to meet the needs of the widest possible range of users.

Age UK also welcomes future innovative payment systems, but these must be designed with the needs of older people in mind.

However, it is worth remembering that the Payments Council saw fit to end the cheque guarantee plastic card facility at the end of June, 2011 and the only conclusion to be drawn from this measure is to discourage more and more businesses from cheque acceptance in the future. This decision may well prove to be the *'thin end of the wedge'* for ultimate survival of cheques and continued vigilance by bank and building society customers is going to be needed.

Reported by Wendy Johnson

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## THE PHILATELIC SOCIETY

It may be of interest to many of our members that the Lewes stamp society is seeking new members. Those of you who have either once or still collect stamps are always welcome to attend Society meetings on the second Friday of each month at Christ Reform Church at Fitzjohns Road, Lewes at 7.15 for 7.30pm. As the Editor is a member, please contact **David on 07947 422 897** for further information.

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**THE PENSIONERS £40 BILLION BOOST TO THE NATIONAL ECONOMY**

As a recent encouraging report states, the 'baby boom' generation is about to enter retirement and it confirms that Britain's pensioners contribute an estimated £100 million per day to this country's economy. It is the Women's Royal Volunteer Services charity that states that the report will change the outmoded attitudes towards older people who are all too often portrayed as a national burden.

It is the *Gold Age Pensioners* report that estimated Britain's over 65's made a net £40 billion to the economy during 2010 and is forecasted to rise to £77 billion by 2013. Most of this is based upon volunteering, which suggests to the Prime Minister David Cameron that the 'big society' has been around long before he came to power.

The WRVS charity clearly states the valuable and hidden value of older people unreservedly volunteering in local and county organisations reaches £10 billion per annum alone. It also states that the provision of adult social care by older people amounts to £34 billion, which is a figure predicted to reach £52 billion by 2030. The gift to charity and families by older citizens, at present contributes a total of £10 billion a year.

This contribution to the UK economy by older people was ten times greater than the UK Music industry and eight times the value of the UK chocolate confectionary industry.

The tax revenues from older people amounts to £45 million per year. This also includes pensioners who receive one or more vocational pensions per annum and who have to pay additional tax, but excluding the state pension.

This figure is estimated to rise to £82 million by 2030 as the numbers of retired people increase. This figure could be marginally adjusted if and when, hopefully, pensions are increased to £140 per week per retired person.

This news also comes as the Office of National Statistics reveals that many older people are going to stay in work longer, as the UK aging population is being seen as a national burden.

We are aware that in other cultures, older people have an elevated status and a deeper respect by the younger population. In Britain, the opposite is too often experienced.

The contribution of older people is often overlooked by the negative attention given to the cost of future welfare in an ever aging population.

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Not only have we shown that the over 60's financial contribution is huge and rising, but we also uncovered the crucial community roles that many of our loyal pensioners are playing in modern society. We need to celebrate these real social networks and activity groups, like senior forums, that are making Britain a really great place to grow old.

As we approach 2030, there will be an estimated 3 million people over 85 in the UK and 15 million over 65. Health and life longevity has never been greater and therefore one can see the debate becomes highly focused on the resulting cost to the nation.

Finally, the ultimate implications of an aging population are being extensively explored. We therefore question whether older people really represent this country as a net cost to society? Encouragingly, the contents of the WVRS report clearly refute these assumptions and provide a positive and healthy perspective for the whole matter of the age debate.



**THE FORUM SEEKS VOLUNTEERS**

The Forum now requires both active officers and members to join the working Management Committee. We require a Secretary, Treasurer, Vice-Chair and 3 ordinary members. The committee meets every month to plan and discuss future events and local issues concerning our membership. Applicants will need a good sense of humour, be dedicated and have lots of good ideas! We need motivated people to join this informal group. Please contact me and I will tell you more:

**Jean Gaston-Parry on 01273 603 576**



**FORUM MEMBERS' ADDRESSES**

If your postal address, your email address or your telephone number has changed since you joined the Forum, please forward the change(s) to our Membership Officer **David Glen** on **07947 422 897** or [dgreameglen@aol.com](mailto:dgreameglen@aol.com)

That way we can keep our mailing list up to date and you being kept informed.



***Remember when you wished for the pension you can't live on now?***

## OLDER PEOPLE'S WELL BEING DAY HOT OFF THE PRESS!

We are delighted to report that on the 5<sup>th</sup> October, the Forum's Open Day event to celebrate the annual Older People's Day was a great success with two excellent medical speakers being introduced by both the Chair of Lewes District Council and the current Mayor of Lewes.

As this item is very new, a full report of this event will be issued in our Spring 2012 edition complete with photographs. Sadly our chairperson Jean was unable to attend the open day owing to a prior hospital appointment.

Those present were invited to send our very good wishes to Jean and the Committee also wish to convey their thanks for all the pre planning and organising by Jean, to make such a successful day.

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### THE LEWES SHOPMOBILITY SCHEME

Some of you may be interested to learn that the above project was generally approved by members of the public who signed a petition of support at the Fume Free Day during March.

Following this event, the scheme was given write-ups in both the Sussex Express and Lewes News. An article was also in the last edition of this newsletter.

The Lewes Town Partnership scheme director ex councillor Jim Sinclair has been appointed to motivate the project. Jim is a registered disabled person, user of a mobility unit and is heavily involved with the Oyster Group. The present steering committee will continue to give its support to the scheme. On the committee, are Sheila Kay who first introduced the concept of *ShopMobility* and David Glen as technical advisor working closely with the Orange Badge Mobility Company, out at Rise Farm, Cockshut Lane.

There are also representatives from both ESCC and LDC. It is hoped that a steering group meeting will be convened soon so as to finalise matters.

If there are any Forum members who are particularly interested in this scheme, then please call **David Glen** on **07930 951 564** or Email [dgreameglen@aol.com](mailto:dgreameglen@aol.com).

Your support is vital and any further ideas or suggestions will always be very welcome.

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***My grandmother is well over 80 and still doesn't need glasses. She always drinks straight from the bottle!***

**Henny Youngman**

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## INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICE, EAST SUSSEX

East Sussex LINK has highlighted in their July newsletter the establishing of a single point of access for people who require Simple Aids for Daily Living, i.e. chair raisers, bath boards and perching stools. They are able to provide a telephone or personal home visit to give holistic advice on health, housing and social care issues. Their service is free.

Their Independent Living Advisors will be able to offer the following:

- (a) Carry out a qualified assessment through a personal home visit or a telephone assessment (whichever is preferred).
- (b) Work with the individual to develop their self management plan.
- (c) Identify goals to be achieved.
- (d) Problem solving with the service user and carer.
- (e) Navigate people to support their need to achieve these goals and
- (f) Refer on to low cost Handy person Services

The Independent Living Service also advises on welfare benefits and falls prevention. Their goal is to enable people, especially older people, to retain both their dignity and independence and have informed choices on a wide range of options.

To contact the Independent Living Service please telephone **01424 464 890** or on Freephone **0800 917 45 69**. They are on Email [ils@intouchsupport.co.uk](mailto:ils@intouchsupport.co.uk). Postal address is ILS, First Floor Offices, St Leonards Warrior Square Station, St Johns Road, St Leonards-on-Sea, TN37 6HP

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### FORUM NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

Further to our article in the last newsletter, those of you on e-mail will have already received notification of events via this method.

However, we did receive over 20 returns due to either wrong or discontinued e-mail addresses and had to urgently resend by Royal Mail. If you are still willing to receive newsletters and invitations, etc by e-mail, then please tell us by sending a message to:

**[chairman@lewesdistrictseniors.org.uk](mailto:chairman@lewesdistrictseniors.org.uk)**

We would again remind all members that each e-mailed newsletter sent will save LDSF over £1. In 2011/12, East Sussex County Council's grant to all seven county forums has been cut by some 10% and for the year 2012/13 by a further 5%. In LDSF's case, this represents an overall loss of £263. We must add that we appreciate that the ESCC are keen to protect the forums and ensure that funding was available for running costs over the next 3 years.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Senior Citizens are constantly being criticised for every conceivable deficiency of the modern world, real or imaginary. Yes, we know and take responsibility for all we have done in the past and we do not blame others. HOWEVER, upon reflection, we would like to point out that it was NOT the senior citizens who took:-

- The *melody* out of music,
- The *pride* out of appearance,
- The *courtesy* out of driving,
- The *romance* out of love,
- The *commitment* out of marriage,
- The *responsibility* out of parenthood,
- The *togetherness* out of the family,
- The *learning* out of education,
- The *service* out of patriotism,
- The *civility* out of behaviour,
- The *refinement* out of language,
- The *dedication* out of employment,
- The *prudence* out of spending, or
- The *ambition* out of achievement.

**YES, I AM A SENIOR CITIZEN AND VERY PROUD OF IT!**

**Thank you Janet Skeef for reminding us of these often forgotten and important words in life.**



**HANDYPERSON GRANT SCHEME 2011-12**

Do you need help with small jobs around the home? Do you find it hard to pay for this help and are you 65 or over? If you answer yes to all 3 questions and you live in East Sussex, the County Council may be able to help.

They are able to offer grants of up to £200 to help towards the cost of small domestic jobs.

To apply, contact Social Care Direct in Eastbourne, on **0345 60 80 191** or email:

**socialcaredirect@eastsussex.gov.uk**

**HOW THE DISTRICT SENIORS' OPERATES**

Like its six sister forums, Lewes District Seniors' Forum receives an annual grant from East Sussex County Council. In 2010/11, as in previous years, the annual grant was £2,630, but owing to economic cut backs, this amount will be cut by 10% over 2011/12 and another 5% over 2012/13.

A Forum management committee is elected at annual general meetings. The committee chooses its officers. It plans and organises public meetings, coffee mornings in the District and several other events. It discusses the issues referred to it by Forum members and takes them up with relevant local, regional or national

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organisations.

Members of the management committee represent the Forum at meetings of East Sussex Seniors Association (ESSA) and at other meetings organised by East Sussex County Council, National Health Service Primary Care Trusts, East Sussex Hospital Trusts, Voluntary Organisations, Supporting Older People (VOSOP) in Lewes and Wealden and many other provider bodies. There is also a regional and national involvement in South East Network of Seniors (SENS) and South East England Forum on Ageing (SEFEA))

The Forum has now been operating for nearly five years achieving many successes through the dedication of the committee. It is now a recognised organisation within the community that continually seeks the support of its many loyal members. The management committee openly invite and encourages any Forum member to attend committee meetings so as to observe and to see whether they would like to join. For dates and venues of meetings please contact **Jean Gaston-Parry on 01273 603 576.**



**SWITCHING OVER TO DIGITAL TV**

During next year the traditional terrestrial TV signal will be switched off in our Meridian region and be replaced with a digital signal. This is not generally a concern for most people but some of us may find it harder to make the switch than others. The Switchover Help Scheme has been set up by the Government and is run by the BBC. Its purpose is to make digital TV easy for older and disabled people by converting one of their televisions to digital in the run-up to digital TV switchover in our region. The following people are eligible for help if they are (a) aged 75 or over (b) have lived in a care home for more than 6 months (c) get or could get, disability living allowance (d) attendance or constant attendance allowance, or mobility supplement and (e) are registered blind or partially sighted.

The service is free for people who are eligible and also get pension credit, income support, income-based jobseekers allowance or employment and support allowance. Those not eligible will be asked to contribute £40 towards the help.

Transmitter Groups have been allocated various dates for switchover starting with Whitehawk Hill covering the Brighton area between 7 & 21 March 2012, Heathfield Group covering much of East Sussex & SW Kent, between 30 May & 13 June 2012 and the Dover Group serving S&E Kent and parts of East Sussex between 13 & 27 June 2012. It is understood that those of us being served by satellite and free serve will not be affected. We do recommend that if you are not sure of your position please contact 0800 40 85 900.



## WARNING OF LOAN SCAMS

As many of us already know, unscrupulous credit businesses are cashing in on people's desperation for loans during these tough economic times.

This is the latest warning from the East Sussex County Council's Trading Standards team following a significant number of complaints about these scams. Many people have reported receiving unsolicited text messages or telephone calls from firms offering to find them unsecured loans. Those who accepted were then charged large up-front fees for little or no service in return.

One victim reported that she was called by a trader offering her an unsecured loan of £10,000, but that she would need to pay £150 to insure the loan. The consumer paid this money and the trader said the funds would be in her account within 20 minutes: the loan money was never paid.

As loans fail to materialise, scam victims are often only given a premium-rate telephone number to call to complain, usually with no positive outcome and leaving the victim further out of pocket.

Cllr. Carl Maynard, County Council lead member for Economy, Transport & Environment, said: *"In this current economic climate, people are very financially vulnerable and these companies are preying on these individuals. The Office of Fair Trading estimates that roughly 1 in 20 people fall victim to scams every year, but fewer than 5% of victims report their experience. We are urging people to be wary, to use our 'How to spot a loan scam' guide and to report any suspicious loan offers."*

### How to spot a loan scam:

- [a] Loan scammers often target people who are already in debt.
- [b] Avoid loan companies that say you have been pre-approved for a loan: legitimate lenders base their decision on whether you will be able to repay.
- [c] Legitimate loan companies do not request money up front.
- [d] You should also be concerned if the loan application involves 'wiring' or sending money as soon as possible by Western Union, Moneygram or similar methods.
- [e] Stay away from loan companies that pressure you for an instant decision.

If you think you have been the victim of a loan scam, contact Consumer Direct for advice.

For those who are having trouble meeting existing payments on loans or you are having money worries generally, speak to Direct Debt line or your local Citizen's Advice Bureau.

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For further general information about Trading Standards please visit the County Council's Website at: [www.eastsussex.gov.uk/consumeradvice](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/consumeradvice)

The direct line to the Trading Standards Dept., is to Louise Baxter on 01323 463446. The Forum Editor has received approval from ESCC to enter this article, as we older people are naturally considered vulnerable to these types of insidious scams in our community.

### HAVE YOU BEEN VACCINATED?

***Please remember to get your annual Flu injection done. This is the time of year to receive this free service from your surgery especially if you are a pensioner. Call now and make an appointment.***

### LOCAL TRANSPORT NEWS

The Forum is delighted that the County Council has retained the 9am concessionary bus pass timing. Many of you will remember that prior to the restrictions and cut-backs, the Forum was responsible for petitioning the District Council to abandon the original 9.30am for pensioners and handicapped persons, as this caused problems with clinical appointments. We are also pleased that, contrary to rumours, the free bus passes have been retained.

It is also understood that the County Council and the British Railtrack Executive have at last, agreed to split the cost to inspect and where possible re-enforce the steel structure of the Lewes Station bridge. Work has been programmed to start in September 2012 and hopefully will allow heavier double-decker buses and other heavier transport to be routed from East of Lewes to the station and from the station up Station Road. For several years there has been a weight restriction for many heavier types of vehicles.

The Forum also wishes to thank **Mr Norman Baker MP** for his assistance on behalf of all bus pass holders, especially those in the Lewes district.

### WINE & CHEESE PARTY JUNE 2011

We made our first venture into an evening event; a wine and cheese party "To prepare for and celebrate retirement" in June. Background music and candles set the tone and a happy evening was evident from the chatter and laughter.

I want to take this opportunity to thank those who kindly sponsored us for cheese, wine or beer which contributed so much to a successful event and was so appreciated by our Committee members and guests:

**Sam Hasan**- Village Cabs Ringmer and Lewes.

**Harvey's Brewery** – Cliffe High Street.

**Beckwiths** – High Street, Lewes.

**Waitrose** – Eastgate Street, Lewes.

## FALLS AWARENESS & ADVICE

As we get older, the thought of having a fall is a worry for many of us. Although falls are not age related, getting older does increase the risk of having a fall and the results can be more serious. Fear of falling, lack of confidence, broken bones or a few cuts and grazes are just some of the outcomes following a fall. Sadly, getting older can have a huge impact on staying steady and without regular exercise it is even more difficult to maintain strong bones, strength and balance.

Exercise helps to improve balance and co-ordination, reduce falls and increase independence – just a few good reasons! There are many other benefits to exercising: healthy heart, weight management, better sleep, improved mood, more energy and of course, less falls. Try to be active every day. Find an activity that you enjoy doing and most importantly, **have fun!** Exercise with a friend or family member and, if you are able, walk to the shops or take a stroll around the local park.

**Be careful!** If you have a health condition or are new to exercise, check with your doctor before starting a new exercise routine. For those already diagnosed with osteoporosis, your doctor may recommend you avoid certain types of exercises. For example, people with this condition should avoid exercises that twist or bends the spine. **What to do if you fall.** People of any age can have a fall. If you do fall it can be a very frightening experience. So what shall we do? Firstly, **do not panic.** Remember to take several deep breaths, assess the situation and determine if you are hurt. If you are injured do not attempt to get up. Instead call 999. If you feel strong enough to get up, follow these steps:

- a) Roll over on your side by turning your head in the direction of the roll.
- b) Once on your side ease yourself up onto your elbow.
- c) Move onto your hands & knees and make your way to a firm surface.
- d) Hold onto the firm surface e.g. A chair to support your weight.
- e) Face the chair and ease yourself to a standing position.
- f) Turn yourself gently and sit on the firm surface.
- g) Tell your GP or health professional about your fall.

If you do become unsteady and are worried about falling it is a good idea to have a lifeline of some kind you can press to summon help. A mobile 'phone is also a quick way of getting help if you fall. When we fall, it is natural to feel embarrassed and so we try and rush getting up off the floor. Please don't! Remember, it is more important to take your time and prevent further injury.

**Ellen Cranton**

**Fall Prevention Trainer**

## MORE DAYS OUT AND ABOUT?

Out of the success of the Forum's visit to Charleston House some months ago, Jean Gaston-Parry, is investigating the possibility of us making this type of event more often for our members. Several places have been looked at including the National Trust establishments located in and around East Sussex.

In spite of County cut-backs to forums, the Committee will also be looking at other kinds of days out, but at very minimal cost to our members. These could include theatre visits to London, Brighton and Chichester and trips to the Spinnaker Centre in Portsmouth, also the Chichester and Guildford Cathedrals and many other interesting places. These are being looked into for the 2012 programme and, as and when Jean and her committee have investigated this idea, then we shall be delighted to let members know. If any member has any ideas or comments, please let Jean know on **01273 603576.**

## WAITROSE COMMUNITY AWARD

It may be of interest to members, that after an application was put forward during late 2009, the Forum was awarded £333 in June of this year. Those of you who shop at Lewes Waitrose are warmly thanked for putting your *green buttons* into the LDSF part of the shop collection containers. We have set aside this money to make up the deficiencies in administration costs after the County Council cuts-backs in our annual grant. Thanks again to those who gave us your 'tiddlywinks' support!

## SUPPORT THE 'PHOENIX' DAY CENTRE BY USING IT

The Phoenix Centre, Lewes, run by Adult Social Care, provides a day service for people who need support to help them live independently, including respite carers. It is staffed by a highly skilled team which provides care in a safe & homely environment. Referrals can be from health professionals, including GPs. and self referrals.

The activities which can be enjoyed at the Centre include gardening, cooking, bingo, quizzes, sing-alongs, board games, darts, snooker, arts & crafts. The Centre can also be hired for public use and serve the wider community. This means that it is used as much as possible, helping to ensure its future. Currently there is a variety of groups who do just this, including *Pro Musica*, the *Oyster Project*, *Parenting Groups*, *Slimming World*, *Pilates & Extended Exercise Classes*. We also use it once a month for our *Lewes Seniors* meetings. Any member of the public or organisation can hire a room to use it as a community centre, for business meetings, charitable events, social evenings and much more. It is available from 5pm every weekday & any time weekends at very reasonable prices.

For further details on room bookings, please contact either **Ken Muddell** or **Janet Cogan** on **01273 488444.**