



GREY MATTERS



A Pyramid Theatre Production

A play about heart disease and stroke

By Pete Lawson

Supported by:



The Wealden Senior Citizens' Partnership



East Sussex Downs and Weald



We would like to offer you a unique opportunity to see this "Theatre In Health Education" production **FREE** at 2pm on Friday, 20th March 2009 in the Pavilion Theatre, George Street, Hailsham (please note change of time and venue).

Big Little Heart is suitable for anyone 12 or over. Thoroughly researched, professionally written, and full of warmth and humour, it takes a compassionate and honest look at heart disease and stroke, highlighting the physical, emotional, psychological and social issues surrounding it. It looks at how - and why - we should all look after our hearts.

The 40-minute play is followed by a unique and powerful chance to interact with the characters, to explore the issues further, look at lifestyle decisions and see how life could be different. A question and answer session with local health professionals brings the whole performance to an end.

If you haven't already, order your tickets NOW by completing and returning the reply slip on the back page. Tickets are **FREE OF CHARGE**. Anyone needing help with transport to Hailsham, please let us know. We have booked a mini bus from Uckfield and can arrange lifts from other areas if needed. Any enquiries, please contact the Secretary, Linda Graham (contact details on page 3).



adult learning
daytime & evening courses

NEW ADULT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The WSCP Committee have been talking to Cari Hopkins from ACRES (Adult College for Rural East Sussex), a consortium of local community colleges in Crowborough, Hailsham, Heathfield, Uckfield and Wadhurst, who have been given funding by the Learning and Skills Council to try to reach hard-to-reach learners such as those isolated in rural areas, young mothers and the isolated elderly and to set up courses in small communities, sometimes in partnership with Age Concern. One example is a ten-week starter course on computers held in a sheltered housing complex in Hailsham.

Courses have also been run for carers in partnership with Care for the Carers on dementia, with the British Red Cross providing "sitters" to enable carers to go to the courses. Funding is also available to pay for venues. 10-week starter courses, which are free of charge, can be followed up by a further course of 10 hours for which the charge is only 50p per person per session, and then if there is a demand by a further 10-week continuation course at 75p per person. Mobile tutors can sometimes be provided for the housebound. Fitness courses are also available.

Recent research has found that while more than half of older people between the ages of 65 and 75 have knowledge of computers, there are far fewer between the ages of 75 and 85. There might also be interest in courses on dealing with the digital TV changeover and on shopping online for the housebound.

If you belong to a group that might be interested in setting up a course, telephone the ACRES office on 01825 761820 or visit the website: www.acreslearning.org.uk

Cari Hopkins will also be speaking at the Community Lunch at the Luxford Centre in Uckfield on Friday, 27th February.

PLEASE JOIN OUR COMMITTEE!!!

Although we were delighted to appoint four new Committee Members at our last AGM, we still have room for more and want to co-opt some more members. We would love to hear from you if you are interested: please do consider whether you have some spare time to commit to this very valuable and interesting voluntary work. The Committee meets approximately once every six weeks, usually in Heathfield, and committee members also attend workshops and consultations on many topics of interest to older people such as health and social care services, transport, housing, healthy finances and quality of life. You would be remunerated for any out-of-pocket expenses. If you would like to learn more, please ring our Secretary, Linda Graham on 01892 770487, email lindagraham@wealden-scp.org

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP BEECHWOOD UNIT REPRIEVE

Last June we reported our concerns about proposals to close 16 in-patient beds for patients with mental health problems at the Beechwood Unit at Uckfield Community Hospital. This was the subject of a consultation in July, and the Chair of our Health and Social care Special Interest Group, Ivy Elsey, who also serves on the Older People's Partnership Board, made clear our concern about the impact these proposals might have on patients with dementia and their families living in the Wealden area. We are now pleased to report that, partly as a result of Ivy's efforts, assessment beds at Beechwood will continue to be accessible to local residents, who will be admitted according to whichever unit is closest to their or their relatives' home address. There has also been an undertaking that assessment beds will not be relocated without a further consultation being carried out by the PCT.

PHARMACIES

In the Pharmacy White Paper published in April, 2008 the Government proposed that where there is a chemist within a village or market town the doctor should be compelled to cease dispensing, so that patients both in the town and the outlying area would have to obtain prescriptions from the chemist and no longer from the doctor's surgery. The ESSA Health and Community Care Theme Group recently discussed the effect of these proposals on rural communities which is potentially serious, as the loss of dispensing revenue could make many rural practices non viable in their present form and is likely to result in closure of many rural GP surgeries. There is considerable concern that changes proposed in the consultation paper could greatly reduce patient choice and convenience and force patients to travel a greater distance to the nearest pharmacy, whatever the weather or their health.

RESPIRE CARE AND DAY OPPORTUNITIES

The ESSA Health and Community Care Theme Group, which includes our committee members Ivy Elsey and Sally Butler, is keeping a close eye on the availability of day respite care services and day opportunities for carers (e.g. training courses, work opportunities, leisure activities, social events etc) throughout East Sussex. This is very important in a county where, according to the 2001 census, 10% of the population are carers.

WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM ANYBODY WHO HAS EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS OVER THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SERVICES THEY RECEIVE. DO LET US KNOW IF YOU HAVE AN ISSUE IN THIS AREA THAT YOU WOULD LIKE US TO TAKE UP FOR YOU.



WSCP HITS THE AIRWAVES!

If you live in Uckfield, and happen to have been listening to your local Community Radio Station, Uckfield FM, on Thursday, December 18th, you will have heard two of our committee members, Sally Butler and Linda Graham, being interviewed about the work of the Wealden Senior Citizens' Partnership. Uckfield FM was on the air for three weeks in December, and will be back again in July supporting the 10th Annual Uckfield Festival. Don't forget to tune in to 87.9 FM again then if you are an Uckfield resident.

UCKFIELD RED CROSS COMMUNITY ACCESS POINT

Call in for a chat if you want help with:

- * Equipment Loan
- * First Aid Training or Services
- * Carer's Respite
- * Transport and Escort

or any of a large range of practical services
... or if you want to help out as a:

- * Service Volunteer
- * Fundraiser
- * Supporter
- * Donor

Open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday
10:00am to 1:00pm at the Uckfield Volunteer and Information Centre, 79 High Street, Uckfield TN22 1AS
Tel: 01825 765302 Email: uckfield_cap@redcross.org.uk



OUR COMMITTEE

Jo Bentley (Chair) 01323 840386 jo.bentley@ukonline.co.uk
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John Collins (Age Concern Rep) 01825 762910 johncollins@jackcoll.plus.com
Jan Cooper (Treasurer) 01323 483483 jancey31@hotmail.com
Ivy Elsey (Vice Chair, ESSA Rep, Health & Social Care SIG*) 01435 863719 ivy@ivywe.eclipse.co.uk
Linda Graham (Secretary & Transport SIG*) 01892 770487 lindagraham@wealden-scp.org
Sheila Guest 01825 761621 sheila.guest@gmail.com
John & Rosemary Jones (Community Network Reps) 01825 749720 john23.jones@mypostoffice.co.uk



*SIG = Special Interest Group

TRANSPORT SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP ESSA TRANSPORT THEME GROUP

Committee member Linda Graham and her husband, David, who both take a keen interest in local transport issues, recently attended the inaugural meeting of the East Sussex Seniors' Association Transport Theme Group. Present were representatives from most of the East Sussex Seniors' Forums, who spent some time identifying a number of specific problems connected with public transport - or the lack of it - in our largely rural area. All agreed that the current strategy for providing public transport throughout East Sussex is not working well, particularly in the rural areas, and that one function of this group could be to engage in discussion and debate with those responsible for Transport policies at East Sussex County Council to ensure that our voice is heard by those making decisions about transport that profoundly affect the lives of older people.

Last year the Council commissioned a firm of consultants, Peter Brett Associates, to conduct reviews of bus and community transport services in East Sussex: we ourselves put forward a submission, and one or two of the points we raised were included in the resulting reports. One report concludes that community transport, rather than expensive scheduled bus services, could be the solution to many of our transport problems - yet community transport currently only accounts for only about 3% of the East Sussex County Council bus budget.

The new Theme Group, which Linda was invited to Chair, will be looking closely at this report, and endeavouring to ensure that its recommendations are implemented by discussing the implications with Transport decision makers.

"EASYLINK" COMMUNITY BUS SERVICE IN NORTH WEALDEN

One Community bus service in the North Wealden area is provided by the North Wealden Community Transport Partnership (NWCTP) Ltd, a charitable Trust Company, and funded by a group of the parish councils where the service operates, with additional funding from Wealden District Council. The service provides a door-to-door shopping service to Crowborough and Tunbridge Wells on certain days of the week for people who for any reason have difficulty accessing public transport. The current service is operated by Community Transport (Brighton and Hove) Ltd under the name EasyLink.

There has been speculation that the service will cease operating after the end of March, but while it is true that the current EasyLink bus and driver are to be recalled to Brighton at the end of March, NWCTP Ltd is confident that the service will continue, provided all the anticipated funding materialises, and they are in the final stage of negotiating a contract with a new operator.

A leaflet with full details of the routes and times is available from various locations and libraries.

Community bus services such as "Easylink" and its successor may well be one solution in the future to the shortcomings of public transport in Wealden.

2015: CREATING A REGION FIT FOR ITS OLDER POPULATION

This is the title of a major conference to be held at Gatwick Airport on 10th March 2009, hosted by the South East Regional Forum on Ageing (SERFA), who want to use the conference to launch a series of discussions across the South East Region in 2009 about how we can help shape a better future for our older population to 2015 and beyond, focusing particularly on Active Citizenship, Housing, Skills & Employment and Health & Wellbeing. It is hoped that issues raised at this regional event will be taken up in local areas by groups such as ours.

Members of our committee will be attending the conference and will keep you informed on the outcomes.



REDUCE YOUR HOUSEHOLD WASTE BY COMPOSTING

Composting is a great way of reducing the amount of household waste you produce: not only will your rubbish bin become lighter and less smelly, but also the compost you end up with will benefit your garden in numerous ways.

Up to two-thirds of the average rubbish bin's contents can be composted. One third of this is made up of cardboard and paper, which are important 'brown' ingredients in the standard composting recipe. The 'green' ingredients include vegetable peelings, tea bags, and grass cuttings.

Composting is nothing new – the Roman statesman Cato was advocating it more than 2000 years ago – but it has become a 'hot' issue in the UK recently as landfill space runs out and the Prime Minister urges us not to throw so much food away. There are financial as well as environmental considerations: under EU law there are penalties for councils if the amount of compostable waste going to landfill isn't reduced.

This is where the Compost Doctor Service comes in. It was set up by East Sussex County Council to provide residents with free advice and practical assistance on composting, as well as reduced-price compost bins (including a food waste digester). The Compost Doctors attend events around the county and also give talks and presentations.

Do you belong to a club or association which might like a Compost Doctor to come and talk? There will be guidance on what sort of compost bin to buy and tips on getting the most out of it, and it's sure to interest both novices and more experienced composters.

If you would like to discuss a possible Compost Doctor visit, or need further information, please contact the Service on 01273 482995 or by emailing compostdoctor@eastsussex.gov.uk. There is also a website – www.eastsussex.gov.uk/composting.

A WARNING FROM HM REVENUE & CUSTOMS



HM Revenue & Customs

HM Revenue & Customs has warned taxpayers not to respond to emails or telephone calls saying they are eligible for a tax refund and asking for personal, bank and/or credit card details. HMRC **only** communicates by post with people who are due a tax refund; it **never** uses emails, telephone calls or external companies in these circumstances. Anyone who receives a phishing* email should forward it unopened to phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk Details: www.hmrc.gov.uk/security/fraud-attempts.htm

* Phishing involves email or pop-up messages appearing on your computer screen that claim to be from a business or organisation you may deal with, for example, an internet service provider, bank or online payment service. The message may ask you to 'update', 'validate', or 'confirm' your account information.

The messages direct you to a website that looks just like a legitimate organisation's site. But it's a bogus site that exists simply to trick you into revealing your personal information so the operators can use your identity.

Never respond to email or pop-up messages that ask for your personal or financial information, and don't click on links in the message. Don't cut and paste a link from the message into your web browser - phishers can make links look like they go to a genuine site, but then actually take you to a look-alike site. If you are concerned about your account, contact the organisation using a phone number you know to be genuine, or open a new internet browser session and type in the company's correct web address yourself. Using anti-virus software and a firewall, and keeping them up to date, can also help.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.wealden-scp.org

IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS NEWSLETTER IN THE POST, YOU ARE ALREADY A MEMBER! IF YOU HAVE OBTAINED IT SOME OTHER WAY AND WOULD LIKE TO GO ON OUR MAILING LIST, PLEASE LET US KNOW BY COMPLETING AND RETURNING THIS REPLY SLIP. YOU CAN ALSO USE THIS SLIP TO ORDER YOUR **FREE** TICKETS FOR "BIG LITTLE HEART", FRIDAY 20TH MARCH AT THE PAVILION THEATRE, HAILSHAM AT 2pm

NAME..... No of Tickets required.....

ADDRESS.....

TELEPHONE/E-MAIL.....

Do you need help with transport on March 20th? Yes/No

Detach and return this slip to the Secretary: Linda Graham, Wealden Senior Citizens' Partnership, 5 Rectory Field, Hartfield, TN7 4JE. Enquiries to: 01892 770487, e-mail: lindagraham@wealden-scp.org