

GREY MATTERS

FUN, FIT AND FIFTY PLUS



Our event in celebration of Older People's Day 2010 in Heathfield Community Centre was a great success. Over 50 members and friends attended and thoroughly enjoyed visiting the information tables, taking part in the activity sessions and finding out about keeping fit in later life.

The day began with a talk by Keith Hinkley, Head of Adult Social Care for East Sussex County Council, who was subjected to some hard questioning about possible cuts in services as a result of the Government's spending review (see page 3). There followed sessions on Staying Strong, Dance and Movement and Walking for Health, talks on Energy Management and Advocacy and

opportunities to try Reiki, Reflexology and Wii Fit. During lunch we held our 5th AGM and reported on our activities over the past year. Many thanks are due to Committee member Carol Hodge for organising this

THE FUTURE OF CONCESSIONARY BUS FARES IN EAST SUSSEX

Since April 2008, people aged 60 or over, and those registered disabled, have been entitled to free off-peak bus travel throughout England. Nationally, off-peak travel is any time between 9.30am and 11pm Monday to Friday, and all day at weekends and bank holidays. At the moment, funded by a Government grant, district and borough councils in East Sussex allow people who have a pass to travel from 9am. Now County Councils across the country have been instructed by the Government to take over this scheme, so from 1 April 2011, East Sussex County Council will take over responsibility for running the concessionary fares scheme.

Although details are not yet clear, it is likely that there will be a cut in the 2011/12 financial year in the Government grant to run the scheme, so the County Council are having to look at ways of reducing this cost and are considering withdrawing the discretionary 9am start when they take over, with the result that passengers would only be able to use their passes from 9.30am, which could mean a saving of approximately £160,000 per year. In rural areas, where services do not run so regularly, it is possible that passes would still be accepted on some journeys before 9.30am.

The Council are holding a consultation on this topic. There are just two questions:

"Q1: What impact would the proposed removal of the 9am start have on you?"

and **"Q2: "Are there any other comments or suggestions you would like to make about this proposal?"**

If this proposal is likely to affect you, you need to let the County Council know by 20 December 2010. Consultation forms are available in your local library, or you could ring the council on 0345 60 80 190 to ask for one.



NEW WEBSITE TO SUPPORT GRANDPARENTS

One in four grandparents looks after their grandchildren on a regular basis - from occasional babysitting to full-time care while parents are at work.

Grandparenting is rewarding and beneficial, but it's a big responsibility. In a survey for BeGrand.net, more than half of adults in the UK said they had learnt respect and manners from their grandparents. Almost as many said their grandparents had shown them the difference between right and wrong.

BeGrand.net is a new website that offers information, advice and support to grandparents on a whole host of topics, from helping children to learn at home, through to fun activities that grandparents and children can do together. It has expert advice on caring for children and keeping them safe, as well as guidance on everyday issues around growing up:

- Information and support about everything to do with grandparenting
- Confidential online advisors trained to deal with legal and social problems
- A place for grandparents to talk to each other about the issues that matter

All the information on the site is free and it's free to join.

BeGrand.net wants to make sure that grandparents are getting all the support they need, whether they're dealing with serious benefit issues or just want a way to entertain toddlers on a rainy afternoon. Check out the website at <https://begrand.net>



THIS WINTER, MAKE SURE YOU USE THE FULL RANGE OF NHS SERVICES



Getting the right care in the right place is better for patients and better for the NHS as it helps to make the best use of resources: That's the message for people in East Sussex this winter, the time of year when local health services are at their busiest.

There are lots of different ways people can access a wide range of NHS services and make sure they get the treatment they need, when they need it, at a place that is convenient for them. For example, if you have a minor injury, such as a mild burn, you can get treated more quickly at a local Minor Injuries Unit or Walk In Centre, rather than going to a hospital Accident & Emergency Department where there are likely to be much more serious and urgent cases to be dealt with first.

Key advice and information:

- Minor ailments such as upset stomachs, headaches, sore throats and coughs can all be treated at home with a well stocked medicine cabinet and plenty of rest
- It is important to remember that you can also get expert advice from your local pharmacy.
- You can go online to www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk or call NHS Direct on tel 0845 4647. NHS Direct is open 24 hours a day and can give you help and advice, as well as opening times for all out-of-hours NHS services and local pharmacies.
- Your local GP surgery is the place to go for general medical advice, examinations and prescriptions for illnesses you just cannot shake off.
- The Minor Injuries Units at Lewes, Uckfield and Crowborough Hospitals are open from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week and can treat minor injuries, such as cuts which cannot be treated at home.
- Call 999 for emergencies such as loss of consciousness, bad chest pain, serious accidents or loss of a lot of blood.
- If you or someone else suddenly gets very ill or has a serious accident you can go to your nearest Accident & Emergency Department

For further information please visit the website www.eastsussex.nhs.uk or ring: 01273 485300

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST FLU THIS WINTER

The seasonal flu virus is a serious illness, not to be confused with a common cold.

It can take weeks of recovery time. For some people with existing conditions and for older people it can be life-threatening.

Seasonal flu is not to be underestimated, and can increase the risk of more serious illnesses such as pneumonia. It is responsible for the deaths of around 8,000 people a year in England and Wales - many of them elderly.

See your GP about the flu jab if you're 65 or over, or if you have any of the following problems (however old you are): a serious heart or chest complaint, including asthma; serious kidney disease; diabetes; lowered immunity due to disease or treatment such as steroid medication or cancer treatment; or if you have ever had a stroke.

CARE FOR THE CARERS NEEDS YOU

Care for the Carers, a charity supporting unpaid carers throughout East Sussex, has an ever-growing waiting list of carers (both male and female) requiring a befriender - and a shortage of volunteers.

They would like to hear from anyone who might have some time to spare and be interested in this type of volunteering. It can be as little as a couple of hours a month and you just need to have warmth and be a good listener.

Volunteers are required to attend an day's induction training before they start and this training will cover carers' issues, boundaries and listening skills. In return for this very rewarding role Care for the Carers offer volunteers continual support, training and expenses.

If anyone is interested and would like to discuss this further or would like further information, contact Carole Gregory on: tel: 01323 738390, email: caroleg@cftc.org.uk

50 plus activity morning
at freedomleisure
crowborough

every thursday
9.30 - 11.30am
starting 4 november

£2.50 drop in sessions
new age kurling
boccia
table tennis
badminton

followed by pilates
at 11.30am
cost: £6.00

phone 01892 665488/9 for
more information

Bridge Road, Crowborough TN9 7TE



HOW MUCH WILL THE SPENDING CUTS AFFECT OLDER PEOPLE?



According to Age UK, the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) represented, on the whole, a fair deal for older people, with good news on social care, benefits and the National Health Service. However, the announcement of the rise in the State Pension Age will disappoint many people moving towards retirement.

Social care: The Chancellor said that there would be an extra £2bn of funding for social care. This is very welcome, as modelling done for Age UK before the CSR suggested that a potential 25% cut in social care would leave 500,000 people entitled to personal care at home without any provision by 2014. Half of this £2bn will come from the NHS budget, which makes sense, as health and social care are inextricably linked.

Given the 26% government funding cut that councils face and the rising needs represented by an ageing population, spending on care will undoubtedly fall in real terms over the next four years, but it could have been far worse.

Universal benefits: It's good to see that the full range of universal benefits for older people has been retained, including free eye tests, free prescription charges, free bus passes, free TV licences for those over 75, and the Winter Fuel Payment. The temporary increase in the Cold Weather Payment last year will now be made permanent.

Pensions: The Coalition Government is restoring the link between the basic state pension and earnings from April 2011. From now on, your state pension will rise by the highest of: prices, earnings, or 2.5%.

However, the Chancellor has announced that the State Pension Age for both men and women will rise to 66 by 2020 - six years earlier than planned. This will particularly affect female workers, as it means that the rate of increase of the female state pension age (to equalise it with men at 65) will now be faster than planned. The rise in the State Pension Age will hit the poorest hardest, as it will shorten the retirements of those living in areas with lower life expectancy.

NHS: It had already been announced that NHS spending would be protected from cuts. In total, the NHS budget will rise from £104bn to £114bn by 2014. However, the NHS will make £20bn in efficiency savings by 2014 by cutting administration costs, and all of this money will be re-invested into health care.

The Chancellor argued that these savings needed to be made to 'deal with our ageing population and the rising cost of new medical treatments'. The budget for health research will now be protected, and the Chancellor announced that dementia research would be a top priority within this. Furthermore, access for older people to psychological therapies will be extended.

Overview: Overall, the announcements on October 20th were better than expected for older people, with significant benefits and services protected and further funding announced for social care.

(Adapted from a press release from AgeUK)

NEW HOUSING AND CARE ADVICE SERVICE LAUNCHED FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN EAST SUSSEX

In an exciting new development, East Sussex County Council has joined forces with FirstStop, a national one-stop-shop for older people and their carers on housing and care, to launch a new advice service in East Sussex. This is a significant step towards older people having more control over their own lives.

FirstStop will provide specialist telephone advice for the county, referring callers to local services. This joint service will help people maintain their independence and live comfortably at home in later life.

East Sussex County Council has worked with Eastbourne Borough, Hastings Borough, Lewes District, Rother District & Wealden District Councils to provide county and local information to add to the national information held by FirstStop.

This is now available for older people, friends, families and carers to access over the telephone, through leaflets, booklets and briefing sheets and on the FirstStop website (www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk). If you have questions about your care, housing or finance, you can ring 0800 377 7070 and speak to a specialist advisor about services in East Sussex, receive personalised reports on your housing and/or care options, be referred on to the County Council's Social Care Direct and find out about local services.

FirstStop is a service run by EAC (Elderly Accommodation Counsel), which has developed the most comprehensive library of information on housing and care for older people in the UK over the last 30 years.



2011 CENSUS: HELP TOMORROW TAKE SHAPE



Your 2011 census questionnaire will arrive in March. It's vital that you complete your confidential census questionnaire as the statistics are used to make decisions about our community. Our area receives funding from government, based on the number of people living here, funding that can be used for schools, hospitals, transport and refuse collection. Everyday facilities like play parks, water pipes and even where your local supermarket branch is located, are based on census statistics. It's all confidential, so no one will see your personal information. Find out more at www.census.gov.uk.

RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN LAUNCHED FOR 29,000 CENSUS COLLECTOR ROLES

One of the largest current campaigns in the UK has begun as recruitment gets underway to fill over 29,000 temporary part time and full time vacancies to make the 2011 Census a success - and YOU could help!

We have been asked to help in recruiting local people by spreading the word about the vacancies and directing people to the dedicated recruitment site: www.censusjobs.co.uk

A total of 35,000 people will be required to deliver the census, which will take place on 27 March 2011. The majority of vacancies are for Census Collectors who contact householders to collect completed census questionnaires and assist where required. Over 29,000 of these roles are available in 2,000 locations across England and Wales.

These roles provide flexibility around working hours - there is the choice of working 15, 25 or 37 hours a week, so individuals can fit the work around their current commitments.

There are still vacancies for Census Coordinators to lead and motivate a team of approximately 15 field staff and for Special Enumerators to deliver questionnaires to organisations such as care homes, hotels, prisons etc. and help with their completion.

These are great opportunities to earn some extra cash close to home, as well as helping out the local community. Information from the census will be used to make important decisions around future policies, planning, services and funding for local communities for years to come.

There are a number of ways you can help with recruitment:

- if you are looking for extra work, particularly during the evening and at weekends, register your interest and apply at www.censusjobs.co.uk
- tell your friends and family and direct them to www.censusjobs.co.uk
- display posters and postcards (available on request) on your notice boards

Please consider whether you could help with the 2011 Census to make a difference to your local community.

If you want to discuss the roles or the recruitment process please contact Capita Resourcing on 0845 304 0960

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.wealden-scp.org

IF YOU HAVE RECEIVED THIS NEWSLETTER IN THE POST, WE REGARD YOU AS A MEMBER! IF YOU HAVE PICKED IT UP AND WOULD LIKE TO GO ON OUR MAILING LIST, PLEASE LET US KNOW BY COMPLETING AND RETURNING THIS REPLY SLIP. YOU CAN ALSO ASK US TO REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM OUR LIST. WE PROMISE NEVER TO PASS YOUR DETAILS ON TO ANY OTHER ORGANISATION. PLEASE ALSO INDICATE IF YOU ARE WILLING TO RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL.

PLEASE ADD THIS NAME TO/REMOVE THIS NAME FROM THE MAILING LIST (delete as appropriate)

YOUR NAME.....

YOUR ADDRESS.....

TELEPHONE/EMAIL.....

TICK HERE IF YOU WOULD BE HAPPY TO RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

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