

Wandsworth Older People's Forum

NEWSLETTER NEW YEAR 2020



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‘Let’s prioritise OP wellbeing’

Wandsworth now has three Labour MPs in the borough: **Rosena Allin-Khan** in Tooting, **Fleur Anderson** in Putney and **Marsha De Cordova** in Battersea (*below left*). Notwithstanding the party’s triumph in this part of London, the Conservatives won a decisive victory in the UK.



Commenting on the result, **Deborah Alsina** of Independent Age, the older people’s charity, said: “We are urging the newly elected government to prioritise the wellbeing of older people.”

On social care, she urged the Prime Minister to fulfil his promise to make sure no one should have to sell their home to pay for care. She also urged action on Pension Credit to change the situation where two in five eligible households do not receive it, meaning £3.5bn goes unclaimed every year. “Pension Credit can make an invaluable difference to the lives of our poorest pensioners – many of whom are having to make choices between heating and eating.

“We look forward to working with the newly elected government and returning MPs across the political spectrum to ensure that everyone in the UK can grow older with dignity, be connected to their communities, and live with good physical and mental health in later life,” she said.



... to all our readers. And don't forget if you're walking on snow or icy pavements that you should avoid heels or shoes with smooth flat soles. Non-slip rubber soles are particularly good for this. Snow boots and hiking boots tend to be the best footwear to go for when it's cold and icy outside because of their grippy soles. And wrap up warm!



Return of the Treblemakers

Some Forum meetings are noisier than others. But December's was definitely the most musical, due to the return of the Treblemakers who came back to sing to the members. Here were all the old festive favourites from “I’m Dreaming of a White Christmas” to “Jingle Bells”.



Age-friendly Wandsworth

By the time one of Wandsworth Older People's Forum's most successful conferences ended, it was clear that the words uttered by **Cllr Ravi Govindia** were spot-on: the conference on turning Wandsworth into a more age-friendly borough was already beginning to make this happen. This was happening not only by ensuring that the views of older residents were being heard by those determining policies but by bringing so many of the prime movers in that endeavour together in the same room as speakers and thus able to hear from each other.

The conference was led by **Tony Tuck** of the Wandsworth Older People's Forum, who began by explaining how the idea of age-friendly cities started in 2002, when the World Health Organisation launched its policy framework on Active Ageing – with a large number of cities across the world now working towards that goal. As most of us now live in cities, it is important to make sure people of all ages can actively participate, regardless of their age, in the life of the city. Age-friendly cities are places that make it easy for older people to stay connected, healthy, interested and active, even the oldest who can no longer look after themselves.

The speakers at the conference were:

- ❑ **Leonie Cooper**, Member of the London Assembly for Merton & Wandsworth;
- ❑ **Cllr Ravi Govindia**, leader of Wandsworth Borough Council;
- ❑ **Natalie de Silva**, CEO, Age UK Wandsworth;
- ❑ **Sarah Dowson**, deputy health and wellbeing manager, Enable Leisure and Culture;
- ❑ **Cllr Paul White**, Tooting's representative on Wandsworth Borough Council;
- ❑ **Manuel Button**, managing director, Wandsworth Community Transport;

❑ **Robert Molteno**, secretary at Wandsworth Living Streets;

❑ **John McGeachy**, campaigns, Age UK London;

❑ **Maggie Jones** of Wandsworth U3A (University of the Third Age);

❑ **Fiona Wright** of Wandsworth Adult Social Services.

The conference will itself help to make Wandsworth more age-friendly

Topics ranged from how to help older people forced to live in the private rented sector as rents soar, to creating more traffic-reduced streets, more trees, more seats and less noise, to the benefits of Social Prescribing (see box opposite), to getting the best out of Community Transport and to the sheer range of activities older people can get involved in at U3A, the University of the Third Age.

Lilias Gillies

What happens next?

At the end of the conference, participants were urged to complete the **evaluation form** on ways to make Wandsworth more age-friendly. A **report** is to be produced and the Forum will be following up on all the points raised both in the **Q&A discussions** and on the forms. During the tea and lunch, participants also enjoyed an opportunity to connect with the speakers.

Social Prescribing

What is it and how will it affect your relationship with your doctor?

What is Social Prescribing?

Many vulnerable and/or lonely people go to the doctor when they really need an improvement in their lifestyle rather than more pills. Instead of writing a prescription, the GP can now direct people to a link worker who can listen to their problems and refer them for relevant help and support, which is often run by charitable organisations.

How does the scheme work?

A charity called Enable (which provides leisure and culture services on behalf of Wandsworth Borough Council) won the contract from the local NHS (Clinical Commissioning Group) to recruit, train and support seven link workers who will be placed in GP surgeries across the borough.

What if someone doesn't want to be referred?

If the link worker cannot refer the person straight away, they can offer up to six one-hour sessions, gaining their trust and understanding their situation. Sometimes just having someone to talk to will be enough.

Does it work?

Evaluations of similar schemes indicate that people gain a better quality of life and have less need of NHS services.

How will hard-pressed voluntary bodies cope?

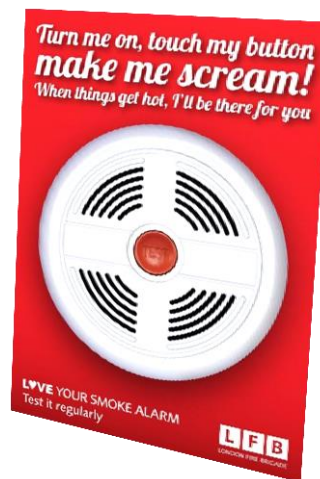
Enable will have a pot of money to support voluntary organisations to increase or expand services to meet the needs of Social Prescribing.

When does it start?

Things started getting off the ground from late last year. Ask your surgery about it.

Let's book your fire safety check now!

"Roll, don't fold your electric blanket up when you put it away for the summer"; "be very careful about paraffin-based emollient creams and ointments especially if you're a smoker"; "don't bother with a smoke alarm in the kitchen"; and "don't call the fire brigade if your cat gets stuck up a tree".



These were just some of the tips the audience were given at Age UK's October conference with the London Fire Brigade on how the two organisations could better help older and vulnerable Londoners reduce their risk of fire, especially those with mobility problems, sensory impairments, and cognitive and mental health issues. A discussion afterwards looked at ways the message could filter out to the wider community. Inviting a speaker from the LFB to speak at the Wandsworth Older People's Forum was clearly the next step (*see below*)!

Beverly Higgins from the **London Fire Brigade** tells the audience how to keep safe at home



The event was chaired by Age UK London's trustee, **Elizabeth Sparrow**, and had presentations from deputy mayor **Fiona Twycross** and members of the LFB. The main subject the fire teams stressed was their preventative approach. Last year, LFB firefighters and community safety teams made 80,559 fire safety visits in London homes. It's totally free and available 24/7 – and homeowners can have free smoke alarms fitted during the visit. Call free on **0800 028 4428** or text **0786 002 1319** to fix up a visit.

See the back page for details of the forthcoming talk to the Forum from **Beverly Higgins** on how to be safe in your own home

Dance to the music



Line dancing beats walking or cycling when it comes to exercising our brain

People who take up line dancing later in life could find it offers more than just an enjoyable activity. Those who learn new moves are better protected from dementia than those that walk or cycle, new research shows.

Scientists at the German Centre for Neurodegenerative Diseases tested a variety of forms of exercise and found that line dancing, jazz and square dancing were the best.

Some 62 people, with an average age of 68, took part in the tests,

which involved measuring the size of the hippocampus, the part of the brain responsible for memory and learning as well as keeping one's balance, over a period of 18 months.

Volunteers were assigned a weekly course of traditional fitness training of mainly repetitive exercises like cycling or Nordic walking, or challenged with learning a new dance routine each week.

Both groups showed an increase in the hippocampus,

the area that can be affected by diseases like Alzheimer's.

Dr Kathrin Rehfeld, from the German Centre and lead author of the study, said: "In this study, we show that two different types of physical exercise [dancing and endurance training] both increase the area of the brain that declines with age. In comparison, it was only dancing that led to noticeable behavioural changes in terms of improved balance."

The social side of such a habit could also be good for the elderly, many of whom complain of feeling lonely and out of touch.

Line dancing for the over-55s

Diane runs an over-55s class on Thursdays from 11.30-12.30 at Rambler Close, North Drive, SW16 1RL. Call 0795 636 0010 first for details

Over-55s line dancing class on Tuesdays at Corpus Christi Church Hall, Trent Road, SW2 5BJ from 11.30-12.30. Lunch club after. Email **paulsandwell@yahoo.co.uk** or tel 0784 395 1750/020 3729 2799 for prices

Reports from Forum meetings

Cllr Melanie Hampton, cabinet member for health and social care, came to the October meeting to talk about Wandsworth's Health and Care Plan. This brings together the NHS, the council, Healthwatch and the voluntary sector. She was pleased that the Health and Wellbeing Board, responsible for identifying local needs, now

includes a representative from the voluntary sector.

Recognising that loneliness is a continuing problem, she reported that the council has now engaged a leading psychology expert to help advise on tackling social isolation and loneliness.

A lively discussion on hospital transport and more places for older people to meet ended in Cllr Hampton promising to write to the Forum.

Leonie Cooper, London

Assembly member for Merton & Wandsworth on the Greater London Authority, came to the November meeting. £200m had been spent on improving accessibility to Tube stations.

She singled out the Northern Line's Balham and Tooting Bec as disappointing, since getting rid of the steps from the street to the escalators had proved impossible. In answer to questions, she said would see if escalators could have more horizontal steps for a gentler getting on and off.

Farewell from Jenny

Dear WOPF members

After seven happy years editing your newsletter, it is time to say goodbye and hand over to my esteemed colleague, Vicky Hutchings.

Now in our early seventies, my partner and I have finally confronted the D word – Downsizing. Most of the family now lives outside London but when our grandchildren were small they would love to come and visit. Now they are older, they are much too busy with their football, sleepovers, parties etc to spare a weekend to come to London. If we want to stay part of their lives, we have to go to them – and so we are leaving London for the Sussex village of Hassocks.

It is a huge wrench to leave our busy London lives and the wonderful community where we have lived for over forty years. But we won't miss the traffic, the pollution, the struggles to park the car and the Tube. We are looking forward to seeing the grandchildren after school and at weekends; having a garden with space for growing fruit and veg as well as flowers; living in a smaller space and being able easily to get to the sea and countryside without spending hours travelling.

While my son is already planning the Saturday nights when we will be babysitting and the Sunday lunches that I will be cooking, it will also feel more secure for us having him so nearby as we age. Hopefully, we won't need him as much as he needs us for a long time yet. Keep well and keep active.

Love

Jenny



Quality home care for Wandsworth



From companionship to outings to engaging with old hobbies, our Caregivers deliver high-quality care services that you can trust.

We also provide:

- ♦ Dementia care ♦ Personal care ♦ Companionship
- ♦ Home help ♦ Overnight & 24-hour care ♦ Respite care



CALL US TODAY 0208 0225238

email: wandsworth@homesinstead.co.uk
website: www.homesinstead.co.uk/wandsworth

Fit, Active, Involved and Interested

Active Lifestyles

For information on even more fun low-cost physical activity classes and sessions, call 020 3959 0033 or email activelifestyles@enablelc.org

Keep Fit (50+) Friday 10.30-11.30 and 11.45-12.45 at St John's Hill Community Centre, SW11 1TY. £3

Keep on Moving (50+) Friday 10-11 and 11.15-12.15 at The Penfold Centre, 1 Neville Close, SW18 4TJ. Also **Tuesday** 10.30-11.30. £5

Tone & Stretch (50+) Friday 11-12. Roehampton Methodist Church, Minstead Gardens, SW15 4EB. £4

Keep Fit for Life (50+) Tuesday 11-12 and 12-1, Tooting Junction Baptist Church, Longley Road, SW17 9LD. £4

Tai Chi Monday 12.30-1.30, St John's Hill Community Centre, SW11 1TY. £4

Asian Women's Association

offers a drop-in service Tuesday and Wednesday for older women who want to meet up or seek advice. Call 020 8875 9465 for further information

Autumn Rose Club for the over-60s offers cooked lunch on Tuesdays. Email autumnrose@balhamsda.org.uk and speak to Joan or Esmie

Bingo Tuesdays and Fridays at Furzedown Project (see below for address and tel no), 2pm. Transport provided within catchment area

Elays Senior Club Monday - Wednesday- Friday, 11- 2pm at Elays Senior Club 68 St Rule Street. Battersea, SW8 3ED

Expert Patients Programme runs courses for self-managing long-term health conditions. Call 020 8812 6750 or email

expertpatients@wandsworthccg.nhs.uk

Forever Flexible Tuesdays, Balham Leisure Centre. Elmfield Road, SW17 8AN. Exercise class for over-50s – 11.30-12.30. £3

Furzedown Project is open every weekday for a range of activities. 91-93 Moyser Road, SW16 6SJ. Call 020 8677 4283 for more information

Hestia Age Activity Centre for older adults. 966 Garratt Lane, SW17 0ND. Every weekday except Thursday, 10-4. For more information, call 020 8767 8426

Katherine Low Settlement offers a meeting place, advice, support, exercise & activities for older people. Call 020 7223 2845/6471 for details

LGBT Elders coffee morning every Thursday 10.30. Furzedown Project (see above for address and information)

Roehampton Men's Shed Drop-in activities every Wednesdays, 12-3.30. Roehampton Methodist Church, Minstead Gardens, SW15 4EB. Call David Peers on 0795 093 1626 or email david.peers@ageukwandsworth.org.uk

Monday Club 2-3.30 on Mondays at St Barnabas Church, Lavenham Road, SW18 5EP. Opportunity for over-50s to share refreshments and entertainment. Contact: Margaret on 020 8870 5364

Open House in Southfields Age UK-run session every Monday from 10.30-12.00 offering a range of activities and outings. Ackroydon Hall, 26 Montfort Place, SW19 6QL. Tel 020 8877 8955 for further details

Perambulators Fortnightly walks 6-9 miles. Contact the Furzedown Project (see left)

Regenerate RISE open access day centres with lunch, advice and activities for the isolated elderly. 22 Felsham Road, London SW15 1DA, tel 020 8780 9330; and St Michael's, Cobham close, SW11 6SP, tel 020 7228 0245.

50+ Restart exercise, discussions, games and music. Monday, 12.30-4.30. Contact Furzedown Project (see above)

Swim Club Monday mornings in Balham. Contact Furzedown Project (see above)

Swimming for women only. 5-7pm, Tooting Leisure Centre, Greaves Place, SW17 0NE. Call 020 8333 7555 for info

Sunday afternoon tea parties for people aged 75+. Call Alison Minney on 020 8150 3154 if you want to go

Tooting Graveney Centre activities, exercise classes and lunch for older people, from 11-3, Mondays and Thursdays at 14-16 Lynwood Road, SW17 8SA. Tel 020 3602 8251 for details/prices

U3A (University of the Third Age) Offers a range of courses. Tel 020 8878 5783 for details

Walk4Life Free walks in **Battersea Park** (Monday 10.30), **Clapham Common** (Monday-Thursday 7.30am), **Wandsworth Common** (Tuesday 11.15), **Tooting Bec Common** (Thursday 10, and Saturday 8am & 10). **Southfields** (Thursday 10.30). Call 020 3959 0033 to doublecheck time and find out meeting place, or email activelifestyles@enablelc.org



Identical twins Jackie and Gillian – one of whom weighs six stone more than her sister

Sprouts: not just for Xmas!

Christmas and New Year are over and a lot of us will be counting the cost of our festive-season overindulgence.

If you're about to start cutting calories or exercising more, that's brilliant news. But if not, there are other ways to try to lose weight

The first is to change *what* you eat. How we know this was explained in a TV programme last year on the BBC featuring Professor Tim Spector who has spent 25 years tracking those on the Twins Research UK Study.

Jackie and Gillian are identical twins – but one weighs over six stone more than the other, even though they live very similar lives in terms of the amount they eat and the exercise they do. The only difference is that Gillian eats more fibre. .

He believes a lot of their weight differences are down to the microbes that live in all our guts. "Every time you eat anything, you're feeding a hundred million microbes. You're never dining alone," says Professor Spector

Stool samples revealed that Gillian, the thinner sister, had an extremely diverse range of

microbes, whereas Jackie had very few species living in her gut.

Every time you eat something, you're feeding a hundred million microbes

"The greater the diversity, the skinnier the person," says Professor Spector, who found the same pattern throughout his study of 5,000 people.

Professor Spector warns that most Britons eat only half the fibre they should.

The second way to lose weight is to change *when* we eat. Obesity expert Dr James Brown says the later we eat, the more likely we are to gain weight. This is because of the way our internal body clocks work.

"The body is set up to handle calories much more efficiently during the daytime period when it's light than it is at night when it's dark," he says.

Good dietary fibre

- Wholegrain breakfast cereals and wholegrain bread
- Fruit such as berries, pears, melon and oranges
- Green vegetables such as broccoli and sprouts, as well as carrots and sweetcorn
- Pulses such as peas & beans
- Nuts and seeds

AND FINALLY...

We've had a result!

The Forum, which attends the monthly Crimes Against Older People forum co-ordinated by Age UK, has long been pressing for something to be done about the rising number of "parking meter" scammers in the borough. We can now announce that Parking Operations at Wandsworth Borough Council have agreed to pay for warning stickers on meters – which will also hopefully discourage the fake traffic wardens and police officers who perpetrate these crimes.

Wandsworth Older People's Forum regularly attends meetings of other bodies in the borough, raising and reporting back to our members on matters close to their hearts – on areas such as transport for older people, air quality on our streets, healthcare ... and crime.

There are lots of variations on the scam, but they all end up with the victims being approached by people dressed up as traffic wardens or police, who in various ways get them to pay with their debit or credit card at a meter under their direction, then using sleight of hand to make it appear their card has been "swallowed" by the meter after the conman has noted their PIN number.

See the back page for details of the talk by **Tom Lee** of the Metropolitan Police on scams, fraud and cyber-crime



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WOPF Privacy Statement

We only use your data to send you the newsletter or information about activities. We do not share your data with third parties. We hold your data securely.

Speakers for forthcoming Forum meetings

14 January

PC Tom Lee from the Met Cyber-Crime Unit

11 February

James Isaacs from Adult Social Care

10 March

Beverley Higgins from the London Fire Brigade

All meetings take place at the **Anchor Church Centre**,
273 Garratt Lane, SW18 4DU, 2-4pm

Tea and biscuits afterwards

Membership Application/Renewal Form

If you would like to join or re-join the Wandsworth Older People's Forum, please complete the subscription form below and return with your payment of £5 (annual subscription for individuals or organizations) to: **Membership Secretary, Wandsworth Older People's Forum, c/o WCEN, DRCA Business Centre, Charlotte Despard Avenue, London SW11 5HD.**

I wish to join the Wandsworth Older People's Forum:

Name (individual or organisation)

.....

Address

.....

.....Postcode.....

Phone Home..... Mob.....

Email.....

(This is important because, in future, because of funding, we may need to communicate with you by email, not post.)

I might be interested in being a volunteer ☐

I am a UK tax payer and would like my subs to be gift-aided. ☐

Signed Date\.....\.....