

A force to be reckoned with



www.espopf.org

EASTLEIGH SOUTHERN PARISHES OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUM

NEWSLETTER 58

MARCH 2011

HCC KEEPS ITS PROMISE TO PROVIDE TRAVEL VOUCHERS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE WHO CANNOT USE BUSES

The new scheme will be introduced on April 1. Application forms will be available in Hampshire from most libraries, bus stations, council offices, information centres. The vouchers are worth £32 and may be used in full or part-payment on taxis, dial-a-ride and voluntary car schemes. No change will be given. Journeys must start or finish in Hampshire. For more details, phone **0845 045 8355**. Textphone **0845 6035635** or email concessionary.fares@hants.gov.uk

ALL IN THIS TOGETHER?

- ◆ Pensioners are up to £170 a year worse off than other households as a result of the rising cost of living and the increase in VAT.
- ◆ Annual rises in the basic and second state pensions are to be reduced by linking them to the Consumer Price Index rather than the Retail Price Index.
- ◆ The Government intends to reduce the winter fuel allowance by £100 for the over-80s and £50 for the under-80s later this year, despite the fact that over 25,000 pensioners died of cold-related illnesses last winter.
- ◆ Pension Credit for the poorest pensioners is being frozen for 4 years from 2011 meaning that about 1.7m pensioner households will lose an average of £3.20 a week.
- ◆ Cuts to local authority funding means loss of care services, increased charges for day centres, loss of mobile library services etc.
- ◆ 20% cuts in grants to bus services will mean more cuts in services.
- ◆ Cuts in Housing Benefit will affect 25% of pensioner households who live in rented property.
- ◆ NHS cuts will prevent operations on knees, hips, varicose veins and cataracts

UNACCEPTABLE!

Now, another damning report about the NHS treating elderly, vulnerable patients without care, compassion, dignity and respect, this time from a Health Service Ombudsman, Ann Abraham. She investigated 226 complaints of patients and relatives not dealt with properly by hospitals, GP's and other health services and criticised Southampton General Hospital, in particular, for a string of failures relating to one elderly patient. This is too close to home for comfort. What can we do about it?

Following a complaint we made last year after witnessing the insensitive and demeaning treatment of an older patient at an outpatient clinic, we were invited to meet staff in charge, but were really unimpressed by their complacent attitude. We invited a senior nursing officer of the Trust and a matron to speak to an Open Meeting about the *Respect* campaign at the Southampton General Hospital and we were impressed by their determination to raise standards.

However, it is the day-to-day, hour-to-hour relationship of nurses with patients and the ward culture that are under the spotlight here. Who is monitoring this? Who is responsible for ensuring that staff respond to individual patients with the sensitivity, and care we expect? Is this now not part of nurse training? Are nurses really so busy that patients' needs may be ignored so blatantly? Should willful *neglect* of any patient become a criminal offence, as in France, to ensure that lack of care is punished? A change in attitude towards older people must start - right at the top, and in society generally. Do NHS staff, feel cared for? It is difficult to care for others if you, yourself, are not valued and your own values are undermined; it must be difficult to focus on individual patients, even when they are dying, if you, yourself, are not treated as an individual.

**SUBSCRIBING MEMBERS PAID FOR THIS
INDEPENDENT NEWSLETTER**

ESPOPF NEWS

COMMITTEE MEMBERS 20010/11

Chair: Patience Sambrook (Hedge End) 01489 782552

Vice Chair: Jackie Charles (Hamble) 02380 453296

Hon. Sec./Newsletter Editor: Diane Andrewes (Bursledon) 02380 403311 diane.andrewes@virgin.net

Hon. Treasurer/Membership Secretary: Betty Lawrence (Netley) 02380 453680 betty@jwlawrence.plus.com

Web Master: David Andrewes (Bursledon) david@espopf.org

Consultation/ Engagement Officer: Judith Cam (Hound) judithcam@hotmail.com

John Taylor (Butlocks Heath) Susan Moody Maureen Hunt (Botley) Margaret Phippard Gloria Bowles (Hamble)

Pat Rose Erica Andrews (West End) June Watson Dottie Vickers (Hedge End) vacancy (Bursledon)

JANUARY OPEN MEETING

A miscellany of speakers produced some added spice to our meeting on a variety of topics. The speakers were available for one-to-one advice and some brought stalls and handouts. In the afternoon, we had our ESPOPF Review, an opportunity to ask our members what they think about the services we provide. Although there was widespread satisfaction, we were concerned by the revelation that many members seem to have little appreciation of how much ESPOPF takes on and how much influence it has through its research and campaigns, locally and nationally. We are not sure how much this is due to our failure to communicate and how much to failing memories, but we intend to try harder to report back regularly – not just at AGM's. Thanks to all who brought prizes and bought tickets from Sue Taylor, the raffle earned £58 for ESPOPF.

100 Club January Winners:

£50 Don Cam (13) Netley Abbey

£25 Mrs Mitchell (61) Hamble

£25 Mr & Mrs Hand (5) Hamble

60 Club January Winners

£30 Patricia Cain (42) West End

£15 Mrs Read (29) West End

£15 Eileen Rhodes (55) Netley Abbey

NB 160 members signed up for the 100 Club – not quite enough for 2 X 100 Clubs, but enough for a 100 Club and a 60 Club, which will contribute £160 per meeting to ESPOPF funds. Fantastic!

NEWS

1 Age UK invited us to participate in some research they were doing across the UK to discover the concerns of older people with high medical needs about the proposal to end **cheques**. 14 members enjoyed an informative, stimulating day at Bursledon Hall.

2 Diane Andrewes attended a meeting with other groups representing **Blue Badge Holders** at the Royal Victoria Country Park on February. We discovered that HCC had not completed the required Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) before making a decision to charge BB Holders for parking their cars at Country Parks. This means that the Council has failed to comply with the requirements of the Equality Act and are open to censure unless

they start the process again. We understand that the Government is to clamp down on the widespread abuse of Blue Badges by able-bodied people. About time too!

3 We have responded to the Consultation on the **Bitterne NHS Walk-In Centre**, by calling for the Centre to be available during normal surgery hours, as GPs are not offering sufficient appointments. We accept that GPs have contracted with the NHS to provide consultations to their patients when required, but this seems not to be happening. Patients report that it is increasingly difficult to consult their own GPs – even if they know who he/she is. Even that seems to be rare, these days.

4 We continue to keep close watch on the Review of **Mobile Library Services**. EBC have responded to the Consultation, pressing the cause of older people in Eastleigh. We have asked for a revamp of the service to make it more responsive to customer needs. We also doubt that a full EIA was implemented.

5 Diane attended a National Pensioners Convention **Concessionary Transport Seminar**. The principal speaker, Norman Baker MP, the Transport Minister, assured us that his priority was to support buses. He said that if local authorities had other priorities and cut services, then that was their decision!

6 Macmillan Cancer Support is commissioning our next research and we are recruiting members for the team. Please contact Diane (Tel. 02380 403311) if you are interested in joining us. No experience is necessary. We had our first brainstorming in February and hope to send out a Questionnaire for all members with the May Newsletter.

FAREWELLS

Jean Norton (90) and Margaret Bevis (80) died at the beginning of 2011. Both had served with distinction, as representatives of Bursledon, on our ESPOPF Committee. We shall miss them.

NEXT OPEN MEETING MAY 17th

TOPIC: HEALTH

NOTICE BOARD

SPOTLIGHT ON PEVERELL

The Saturday (12/2/11) edition of the *Guardian* newspaper featured residents' complaints of excessive fees and poor service from Britain's biggest property management group. Peverell owns or manages thousands of properties and looks after 65,000 retirement homes, largely at McCarthy & Stone developments – some in Eastleigh. Leaseholders complain about increased service charges, poor service provision, expensive insurance costs, transfer fees, late charges. They are winning tribunals in spite of having to take on the legal firepower of Peverell. It responds to these charges by saying that charges are dictated by the lease, which should be explained by the buyer's solicitor; when it is not, the property manager is the client's first port of call. The *Guardian* advice on how to challenge a service charge was published in the next edition and is available on their website.

JOHN LEWIS, TOO

The week before, *Guardian Money* covered the John Lewis "never knowingly undersold" policy, following complaints by readers that it had been changed, following the advent of internet shopping. However, though this change in policy had not been notified to customers, lots of them have rushed to the store's defence, stating that the excellent customer service more than compensates for the extra cost, but it pays to shop around.

DIAL-A-RIDE

This door-to-door service is for anyone who finds it difficult or impossible to use ordinary bus services, so you can use it if you have a mobility or sensory impairment. Most wheelchairs can be taken on the buses. There are some disadvantages,

including having to book three days in advance and restricted times of operation. You need to register by calling **02380 902450** or **02380 902432**. More information is available on www.1community.org.uk

CREDIT CARD SURCHARGES

Which? magazine is to launch a super-complaint against the surcharges that many companies impose when customers pay with a debit or credit card. The consumer champion is to ask the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) to investigate card surcharges, which are often sprung on the customer at the point of payment and can be far in excess of what it costs the retailer to process the transaction.

Low-cost airlines are among the worst offenders, with some charging a fee per passenger, per leg of the journey, in spite of the fact that they only have to process one transaction. *Which?* has also found that local authorities, estate agents, cinemas and even the DVLA are now beginning to levy excessive charges for paying by card.

The super-complaint is *Which?*'s first since 2007 and kicks off the consumer champion's new campaign against rip-off charges, which consumers can support: www.which.co.uk/ripcoff.

ENERGY-SAVING TIPS

- 1 Turn down room thermostats by just one degree centigrade and save 10% off your fuel bill.
- 2 Switch off televisions – don't leave them on standby.
- 3 Turn off the lights as they account for 10-15% of the average domestic electricity bill.

CHEQUE UPDATE

The Payments Council's target date for ending cheques may be October 2018, but this will be

reviewed in 2016 and "will only go ahead if cheque alternatives are in place, are acceptable and are actually being used".

OLDER DRIVER ASSESSMENT

Confidential and enjoyable, this is not a driving test, but an opportunity for help and advice for those over 55. The route is planned to suit your requirements and the assessment is delivered from your own home using your own car. It costs £25.

Tel. the Road Safety Team on **01962 846888** or email road.safety@hants.gov.uk

ADVICE TO CARERS

- 1 Look after yourself
- 2 Take a break: contact HCC, the Princess Royal Trust for Carers or Crossroads Care
- 3 You are not alone
- 4 Tell your doctor
- 5 Get a Carer's Assessment
- 6 Claim your financial entitlements eg carers' allowance, income support, carer premium, tax credits, Disability Living Allowance, housing benefit, carer's credit.
- 7 Get a grant
- 8 Get a Direct Payment
- 9 Consult your Job Centre about help with replacement care
- 10 Contact the 1Community Carers Centre 02380 902421 or the Princess Royal Trust for Carers www.carers.org

CUT THE JUNK

To reduce unsolicited mailings and letters, register free with the Mail Preference Service at www.mpsonline.org.uk

or tel. 0845 703 4599
To reduce the number of unsolicited phone calls, tel. 0845 070 0707

You can also ask your telephone company to block callers who withhold their number

YOU WRITE...

Dear Editor

It is very heartening to learn that so many members and supporters are rallying to ESPOPF's support during these difficult times with donations, grants, subscriptions, and letters urging the organisation to "Keep up the good work".

We want ESPOPF to continue to support issues relevant to us; to raise points of discussion and dissent; to actively seek to inform; to improve the lot of older people.

It is clear to me that politicians in general do not see things as we do. Many of them have not yet reached an age where issues relevant to older people are apparent to them.

They think they know better and have the correct answers to our problems and difficulties and do not bother to consult those who really know and understand our problems. They actually believe they are helping older people when they are not.

Last year's report of the Local Government Ombudsman upholding ESPOPF's complaints about EBC demonstrated this attitude. It is to be hoped that, in future, ESPOPF will be consulted on all decisions that affect older people and I repeat "Keep up the good work!"

John Lawrence Netley Abbey

Dear Editor

We are a group of volunteers who give good neighbourly help to people who do not have neighbours or relatives nearby to support them. Our group offers transport to hospital and GP appointments; transport to other health services eg dentist, chiropodist, optician; shopping; visiting; helping with pets; minor repairs/DIY. If you need help with any of the above, would like to volunteer with us or to find out more about us, please tel. 0845 644 706

Bursledon Good Neighbours

Dear Editor

Each year, in the United Kingdom, over 330 million pairs of new shoes are bought – and a similar number discarded. Some will be incinerated. Most end up in landfill sites. Please bring your unwanted shoes to one of our collecting points, for most of the shoes are re-usable. By re-cycling your shoes, you are also helping the Variety Club's Children's Charity (Reg. No. 209259) It exists to improve the lives of

sick, disabled and disadvantaged children throughout the UK. Learn about our work on www.varietyclub.org.uk or freephone 0500 827198.

European Recycling Co. Ltd.

Dear Editor

Our visit to the ESPOPF Open Meeting In November was profitable and enjoyable. Thank you and your Committee for inviting us and supporting the RNLI so well. Kind regards and best wishes for your continued success.

Evelyn Ingram Hamble

Dear Editor

Open Sight, a major Hampshire charity, is offering a new Visiting service for those who are isolated in our community. Visiting is not restricted to those with sight loss, though many of our clients do have sight problems. The service aims to reach those who live alone and are unable to get out of their homes, those who have experienced mental health problems, recent illness or bereavement. The visits are undertaken by very enthusiastic and experienced volunteers.

Referrals come mainly from health or social services, but if you know of someone who might benefit from this service, don't hesitate to tel. 02380 641244

Leonie Mountney

Open Sight Bishopstoke

Dear Editor

Living alone, I am still sometimes pestered by cold callers, although I have a deterrent sticker on my door, so I asked my brother to attach a small safety chain connecting my front door to the door post. It allows me to open the door about 4 inches - quite enough to see quickly whether it is 'friend or foe' on the doorstep. It also makes the door so much easier to close, if it is yet another person trying to separate me from my money! It is much safer too than opening the whole door and being fully exposed, alone, to some stranger. I use it all the time now. The chains can be purchased from any locksmith.

Also, though I have registered my phone with the Telephone Preference Service, which is supposed to filter

out cold calling, it doesn't. Infuriated by these people - often with foreign voices - who think they can invade my home and time, often in the evening, to hard-sell, I monitor my calls. I have learned that as my ansaphone clicks in, so I wait nearby, and, if I hear a friend's voice start to speak a message, I lift the receiver. If it is not a friend, I gain a certain satisfaction at having 'won'! Invariably, if I then dial 1471 to check, sure enough, my phone says, 'The caller withheld their number'!

Name supplied to Editor

Dear Editor

I wonder if you can help me as my mother subscribes to ESPOPF. My parents are both over 80 and increasingly find day-to-day living a problem. They live in their own home with my brother, who has recently become very ill. He has asked whether there is any help or support available for our parents. They have some help with cleaning and maintenance. My father has lost the confidence to drive further than about 4 miles and he is diabetic. My mother is unable to walk without aids, as she is very unstable and frightened of falling. She also gets very upset if things disrupt her routine. I think my mother and brother are showing signs of depression. As a family, we need someone who knows what benefits are available and what they could apply for. I would be delighted if someone could and assess the situation for us.

Name and address supplied

(We suggested HISP (tel. 023 80 90 2405) for help with benefits and Adult Services (tel. 0845 603 5630) for assessments – Ed.)

Dear Editor

To read the e-newsletter, try clicking the icons above the newsletter to turn it into one column. You can then click *View* on the Menu Bar and *Zoom* in the drop-down box to choose any magnification you want. For help, please phone me on 023 8040 3311.

David Andrewes Webmaster

Contributions may be edited to meet space requirements.

EASTLEIGH SOUTHERN PARISHES
OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUM

INTRODUCTION
TO
EASTLEIGH BOROUGH COUNCIL
& HUSTINGS

(DETAILS OVERLEAF)

TUESDAY MARCH 15 2011
HILLDENE CENTRE HIGH STREET
WESTEND SO30 3DU

COFFEE/TEA & BISCUITS 10.15AM

MORNING PROGRAMME 10.45AM- 12.30PM

LUNCH 12.30PM - 1. 15PM

RAFFLE/100 CLUB DRAW 1.30 -1.45PM

AFTERNOON FORUM SESSION 1.45 - 3.30PM

ALL WELCOME

RSVP Betty Lawrence 8 Rookley Netley Abbey SO31 5PH Tel.023 8045 3680

Name(s).....Tel.....

Address.....

CHOOSE :

DEADLINE: 10/3/11 Roast

Chicken with fresh vegetables... Cottage Pie ...Vegetarian Pasta with Cheese...(£3.50)

Peach Crumble with custard... or with cream...Banana SplitDiabetic option..... (£2.50)

I/We wish to book lunches @ £5 (2 courses) or Main Course (£3.50) Sweet (£2.50)

I/we wish to book ... seats on the door- to-door One Community Bus

PLEASE INFORM BETTY OF CANCELLATIONS PRIOR TO THE EVENT.

ALL ORDERED MEALS TO BE PAID FOR ON THE DAY

SUBSCRIPTION: I/we wish to pay ESPOPF ... £3/£5 annual subscription

Hon. Secretary: Diane Andrewes, Orchard Hill, Old Bursledon, Southampton, SO31 8DH

OPEN MEETING DETAILS

District Council elections are due on May 5. In addition, we shall be invited to vote for new parish councils in some villages and, in the REFERENDUM, on changing the voting system – all on the same day!

We are very pleased that Eastleigh's Chief Executive, Bernie Topham, will open the proceedings and lead a team of officers to enlighten us about what Eastleigh Borough Council actually does for us. In the afternoon, the Referendum and Postal Voting will be explained. Then the councillors, as spokespersons for their political parties, will provide the opportunity for us to distinguish between them in the **Hustings** – a task rather more difficult this year! We have invited the Leaders of the parties, but who will turn up? **Please send in your questions for the councillors on the form below.**

FORMAT

The format will be the same as for our General and European Elections hustings. Patience will offer your questions to the councillors and David will use the gong to ensure that no one speaks longer than anyone else. Here is your chance to ask about Coalition politics and cuts!

In addition, the **Home Information Support Project (HISP)** Workers will attend to answer your questions and Diane Rodaway's **Extend Exercises** will start at 11.30am, as usual.

We should like to see more members turning up to Open Meetings. Come for the morning or afternoon, if you cannot spare the whole day. There is the opportunity to meet new people and catch up with old friends. Bring visitors to join us.

FOOD

We are delighted to announce that **Teresa Noguera, who used to prepare mouth-watering dishes for us at the Underhill Centre is returning to cook for us.** Now that the new Hilldene kitchen is complete, we are able to dispense with the fish and chips and return to Teresa's delicious recipes.

After lunch, there will be the usual **Raffle** - please bring prizes - and the **100 and 60 Club Draws.**

TRANSPORT

Michelle will be collecting passengers in the *One Community*, wheelchair-friendly mini-bus and in delivering the usual door-to-door service. Please wait patiently to be picked up. The charge is £2.

ESPOPF'S FINANCIAL UPDATE

We are most grateful to individuals and organisations for contributing so generously to our funds this year.

Our largest grant has come from Saxon Weald, the housing association which took over Rosebrook, formerly the Bitterne and Woolston Rotary Club, which provided a great deal of housing for older people in the southern parishes as well as Southampton. We worked with them in the development of their new housing complex in Netley Abbey and we have their tenants in membership. They have awarded us a grant of **£1,000**. The successful application was made by Michelle Rice, our volunteer driver from Woolston, and we thank her for that and all her work for us. We also thank Erica Andrews, our committee member and tenant of Saxon Weald, for suggesting that we apply for a grant.

We also received **£500** from the Brook House Masonic Lodge - thanks to the good offices of one of our members, Victor Hugo, from Hedge End, who put ESPOPF forward for consideration.

Age UK paid us a fee of **£500** for organising a research day for them to investigate alternatives to the cheque, with members with high medical needs. We were delighted to do that and enjoyed the day very much.

We owe these large windfalls to our supporters who have come to our aid. We have also received smaller grants from many other members and local councils - no less appreciated!

At our review day, we discussed whether we could afford to send an individual newsletter by post to people who are not paying subscriptions. It is on our website and we will send it by email if you give us your address. **It was recommended that subscribing members only should receive the Newsletter after the July AGM.**

Please, if you want a Newsletter by post, pay your sub. If you haven't paid a sub. since July 2010, please fill in the form overleaf, and send it off with your cheque. If you are not sure whether you have paid, ask Betty (Tel. 02380 453680). Why not pay for this year and next at the same time?

HUSTINGS QUESTION TO COUNCILLORS

Name.....
Tel.no.
Question.....
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