

the pensioner

The magazine for and by the older people of Brighton & Hove

issue 49
winter 2014

new & improved!

LET'S MAKE OUR VOICE HEARD!



The date of the next General Election has been fixed for 7 May 2015.

Politicians from all parties are feverishly pushing forward with their pet policies and projects. Big business, charities and hundreds of lobbying groups are gearing up to make sure their messages and interests are represented in party manifestos - and it will get more and more frantic as 7 May approaches.

Does the "grey vote" matter? Depending on how interested you are in politics, all this will fill you with tremendous excitement and anticipation, or with horror, or with complete indifference. But *The Pensioner* believes older people ought to be making sure that their voices are heard - loud and clear - and that their voices are heeded. We know that the grey vote can decide the outcome in many constituencies - probably about 320 at the last General Election and likely to be more at this one. (This is not just a matter of growing numbers but also of the greater likelihood that older people will vote.)

Local candidates need to be lobbied. The Brighton and Hove Action Group of the National Pensioners' Convention, working in conjunction with other local organisations, such as the Older People's Council, will be doing its bit to make sure that the local candidates remember the importance of the grey vote and that the successful candidates take that message to Parliament. (More on page 3.)

Don't forget that opportunities to make our voice heard don't just happen every five years or whenever there are General Elections. At local level, the City is brimming with such opportunities and we don't just mean elections for local councillors. Organisations exist to collect and pass on the views of different groups of people and virtually all service providers (for example, the Council, the local NHS and the bus companies) have created ways for our views on these services and their development to be heard. (We focus on a number of examples on pages 6 to 7.) However, some of these are not as effective as they might be. (Peter Lloyd has more to say on this in his article on page 5.) In particular, an over-emphasis on online communication is just not appropriate for many older people.

But, in general, with the rise of the "Baby Boomers", gone are the days when older people were seen and not heard and prepared to put up with anything.

Let's age loudly!



What's been going on in our City?



Yes, Minister for Older People



Parks and gardens of Brighton & Hove



Could foster caring be for you?

EDITORIAL TEAM LETTER - welcome to the latest issue

Welcome to the Winter 2014 issue of *The Pensioner*! The theme of this issue is "Making our voice heard" - both at national and local level – and, as well as sharing with you some general insights into this matter, we will be looking at a number of organisations in the City which can help us older people make sure that our views are heard and are also acted on. We are not powerless!

In addition, this issue contains items about a number of events which have happened recently, on some developments in service provision and on some groups and activities which are available to us. It also includes reviews of a couple of very relevant publications. In fact we hope you will find it so crammed full of useful information that you will want to keep it!

If you really want to help older people's voice be heard and acted on, why not stand for election to the Older People's Council? See page 8 for the item by its Chair and the OPC's contact details.

As this is our last issue of 2014, we want to wish all our readers a safe and healthy winter and a happy 2015. We are run by a very small number of older volunteers and our finances are very precarious, but we do hope we will be able to be with you again with a March 2015 issue. And, if it is not to soon – Season's Greetings!

Contact details

Following the arrival of our website at www.bhpsonioner.co.uk, we now have a new email address: info@bhpsonioner.co.uk. Our previous email (thepensioner@ageuk-bh.org.uk) has been discontinued. So the contact details now are:

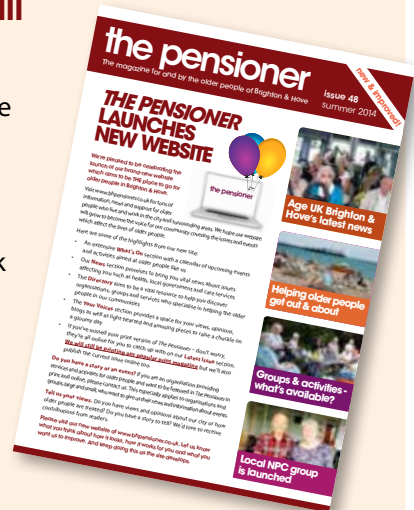
ADDRESS: The Pensioner, c/o Age UK Brighton & Hove, 29-31 Prestonville Road, Brighton, BN1 3TJ.
TEL: 01273 720 603 (mention *The Pensioner* so the Age UK volunteers will understand what your enquiry is about). **EMAIL:** info@bhpsonioner.co.uk
WEB: www.bhpsonioner.co.uk

Availability of *The Pensioner*

We distribute 4,000 copies of the printed magazine to sheltered housing, various older people's groups and other places which older people visit. Brighton & Hove City Council kindly distribute for us to libraries, GP surgeries and a number of other locations. Age UK Brighton & Hove distribute to their visitors and via their service providers.

Postal and email subscriptions

Current and back issues are available via the website. To receive the magazine digitally (for free), email us at info@bhpsonioner.co.uk and ask to be added to our email list. If you want to receive a posted copy of the magazine, at a cost of £10 per year, please get in touch (see contact details above).



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MAKING OUR VOICE HEARD

THE BRIGHTON & HOVE ACTION GROUP OF THE NPC - TAKING ACTION!



Image: NPC

We reported on the formation of this Group in our last, Summer, issue (page 15) and listed the main concerns of the National Pensioners' Convention (NPC):

- Raising the basic state pension for all above the poverty level of £175 a week, and ensuring existing pensioners are not penalised by the new single-tier state pension
- Reintroducing the Retail Price Index (alongside the Consumer Price Index, earnings and 2.5%) as a measure for increasing pensions each year
- Maintaining universal pensioner benefits (bus pass, winter fuel allowance, free TV licences for the over 75s and free prescriptions) without any means-testing
- Creating a National Health and Care Service which is free at the point of use and funded through taxation (merging the NHS and social care)
- Introducing a legally binding Dignity Code to improve the quality and standards of care for older people in hospital, care homes or their own home.

On 30 October, the Group organised a hustings event, supported by the Brighton & Hove Independent Newspaper and involving candidates from three parties. This happened just as this issue went to the printers - so we cannot tell you about it here, but we will report on it on our website at www.bhnpensioner.co.uk.

Those of you who receive our magazine hot from the printers may read this just before the follow-up meeting, which will be in the Stanmer Room at the Brighthelm Centre, North Road at 2.30 to 4.30 on Monday, 17 November.



By Della Cheshire

Anchor Trust is asking older people to lobby their MP to appoint a Minister for Older People following the General Election in 2015. Anchor is a not-for-profit provider of housing and care, including seven sheltered housing schemes in Brighton & Hove.

The campaign for a dedicated Minister and Commissioner, called 'Grey Pride', was launched in April 2011. Anchor believes that these appointments would help to combat increasing polarisation, suffering and loneliness amongst the over 65s by providing a holistic approach.

However the national Age UK, which submitted a briefing for a House of Commons debate on the matter in 2012, sees potential risks as well as opportunities in the creation of these posts. Would existing Government Departments abdicate their existing responsibilities for older people?

The campaign has so far been endorsed by various celebrities and politicians, including Dr Caroline Lucas, the Green MP for Brighton Pavilion. Simon Kirby, the Conservative MP for Brighton Kemptown, says "the request to appoint a Minister responsible for older people has a lot of merit". But he hasn't officially backed the campaign yet. Nor has the Hove MP, the Conservative Mike Weatherley, who has announced he will be standing down in 2015.

If you want to lobby your MP to appoint a Minister for Older People, you can email them using a pre-worded email via the Anchor website: <http://greypride.anchor.org.uk/lobby/email-your-mp> - or you can contact your MP directly (details in box below).

Why not give *The Pensioner* your views on whether or not there should be a Minister for Older People? Our contact details are on page 2.

Contacting Your MP

You can write, phone, fax or email. MPs will generally only act on behalf of their own constituents, so please check you are contacting the MP who represents your constituency. Find your MP at <http://findyourmp.parliament.uk> or call the House of Commons Information Office on 020 7219 4272.

Advertise in *The Pensioner* and reach our growing audience - website and/or hard copy packages available. Get in touch - see contact details on page 2.

Access to your local healthcare is changing



Extended Primary Integrated Care (EPiC) is a 9 month pilot dedicated to improve access to primary healthcare services in Brighton & Hove. It is one of the pilots in the Prime Minister's Challenge Fund and ends in April 2015.

There are a number of different services being offered under EPiC for participating doctors' surgeries and ways in which we are aiming to increase access to the right care that you need.

What is Community Navigation?

New and innovative, the Community Navigation service is being offered as part of EPiC. Community Navigators are volunteers that your GP is able to refer you to. Face-to-face or over the telephone, Community Navigators offer non-judgmental, in-depth conversations and are trained in being able to offer you exciting activities or services that you may not know exist in your local community for you to choose from.

Getting the right care for you

Under EPiC, how you make an appointment with your doctor will be changing. This is to help you get the right care for your needs. If you are registered at any of the doctors' surgeries below and call up to make an appointment, you may be asked if your doctor can call you back. You will then get to speak to your doctor over the phone and explain what is troubling you that day. Your doctor will be able to offer you advice over the phone and make a decision as to whether coming in for an appointment is the best option for you.

We are working together with your local pharmacists, who are able to offer care and treatment for a wide range of conditions. In order to make a full and safe clinical decision about your treatment, pharmacists will be able to access your medical records. This would be after you and your GP have consented. If your doctor thinks that you would benefit from seeing your local pharmacist for any of these conditions, they will let you know and be able to refer you and book you in for a consultation at a time and day suitable for you.

The reason we are offering this service is so that you can receive the care that is right for you and at a time and place which meets your needs. These services are for routine health care.

All of these services are now available in the evenings and weekends too. You will be able to see a doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or Community Navigator in the usual hours and also from 6.30 - 8pm weekday evenings and 8am - 2pm Saturday and Sunday.

Practices involved

- Ardingly Court Surgery
- Beaconsfield Medical Centre
- Benfield Valley Healthcare Hub
- Brighton Health and Wellbeing Centre
- Brighton Station Health Centre
- Charter Medical Centre
- Hove Medical Centre
- Mile Oak Medical Centre
- Sackville Road Surgery
- St. Peter's Medical Centre
- Stanford Medical Centre
- The Practice PLC, Boots, North Street
- The Practice PLC, Hangleton Manor
- The Practice PLC, Whitehawk Road
- The Practice PLC, Willow House
- Warmdene Surgery



MAKING OUR VOICE HEARD: SOME THOUGHTS FROM PETER LLOYD

Gone are the days when we older people were seen as a burden on society, to be ignored and neglected. Today we are expected to seek a good and dignified quality of life, to be in control and make choices, to make a contribution to society.



Peter Lloyd

The buzz-words change; it used to be “participation”, then came social exclusion/inclusion; now it’s “engagement” – a misunderstood word.

On the one hand it connotes being an active member of society – belonging to associations, having a supportive network of family, friends and neighbours. This can be a passive view.

But one can play a more active role: expressing what one values most in one’s quality of life, what one needs most, and having a voice in policy making.

Organisations which make policies and provide services are forever “consulting their clients”; but the response is often feeble. Few attend open public meetings or respond to consultation requests. Why is this so? Why do we seem so apathetic? We are asked not only to complain when things seem to go wrong, but also to suggest what might work better.

What stops us from being engaged?

- When we seek information we are told that it exists on the web; but which site? How long will it take us to find it?
- We do not know how to put forward our views; by what route will they reach higher authorities?
- We fear that no-one will listen to us; media reports of scandals disclose that reports were made of injustices – but were later ignored or suppressed.
- We receive no response to our voiced opinions; they seem to have no effect.

So why waste our time?

The fault lies with us – we remain silent. But it lies too with the service-providing organisations – they do not acknowledge our suggestions, they do not tell us what they are doing or have achieved. They do not really try to engage with us.

How then can we make our voice heard?

- Speak to the person providing a service, or their line manager.
- Within a social group – a lunch club or support group – discuss with others present. Ask the group leader to take the matter further, possibly through one of the facilitating organisations described on pages 6 and 7.
- Many of these organisations now have a website, not only providing information but also enabling you to set out your own views and inviting others to comment.
- Every organisation should have a formal complaints procedure; if you wish to make a complaint, ask about it.

The following pages (6 to 7) contain information about local organisations working to help make local older people’s voices heard.

BOOK REVIEW

By Peter Lloyd

A Review of: Penelope Wilcock, Learning to let go: making the transition into residential care. Lion Hudson 2010, pp159.

This book is a must read.

Articles in *The Pensioner* have repeatedly urged us to plan ahead, to consider our options in different situations; this book develops these themes at much greater length.

The author has considerable experience – as a chaplain in hospices and hospitals and as a worker in care homes. Her text is illustrated with scores of case studies of different situations. She explores not only the views of older people themselves (fearing the loss of independence and adapting to a new environment) but also of their children (feeling guilty that they are not able to care for their parents as they would wish). If it all seems a bit overwhelming, each chapter ends with a “Points to Remember”.

The book was published four years ago; it is now out of print and the publishers have no plans to reprint. They state however that the book is most easily available from Amazon as a Print on Demand title (price is £6.67). The Kindle edition can be downloaded for £6.34.

MAKING OUR VOICE HEARD: some channels of communication

By Peter Lloyd



Age Friendly City Forum

Since 2012, the City has been a member of the World Health Organisation's Age Friendly City network, with age friendly principles now affecting all areas of Council work, and related planning still continuing. The over-all direction of the programme is determined by a Steering Group, whose members include representatives from the Local Authority, Public Health, and local voluntary sector agencies working with older people. It is the job of the Age Friendly City Forum to gather the views of older people and to feed these views to the Steering Group through its own representative. So why not join the Forum and get your views heard via this route? Age UK Brighton & Hove hosts regular monthly meetings of the Forum, which are very friendly and informal.

If you are interested in joining or just want to know more, contact Jackie Duncan at Age UK Brighton & Hove on 01273 720 603 or jackied@ageuk-bh.org.uk.

Healthwatch

Healthwatch is a national organisation, established by statute. But each large local authority has its own branch, which is independent of its council. It exists to monitor the provision of health and care services. Our local unit has, as its buzz-phrase, "Your voice matters".

Brighton & Hove Healthwatch has a small paid staff and a Governing Body of experienced volunteers. Its work, which has been introduced in previous issues



Fran McCabe, Chair of Healthwatch Brighton & Hove

of *The Pensioner*, is supplemented by volunteers undertaking a range of tasks – helping with the newsletter, engaged in Enter and View projects, monitoring the media and so on.

Healthwatch operates a helpline (tel: 01273 234 040) open from 10 am to 12 noon; they welcome calls to seek advice or report experiences.

Personal experiences are also received through contact maintained with a large variety of local voluntary organisations and through projects.

Healthwatch will take up issues with appropriate bodies – either by seeking information or asking for an explanation.

It publishes a monthly magazine which gives details of policies and services, coming events and accounts of its own activities.

The success of Healthwatch will depend largely on its engagement with the public. So do get in touch and express your opinions.

Contacting Healthwatch: to register to receive an e-mailed or posted copy of the magazine, telephone: 01273 234 041, or visit the website at: www.healthwatchbrightonandhove.co.uk Facebook: Healthwatch Brighton & Hove Twitter: @HealthwatchBH



Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)

Two thirds of Brighton & Hove's 45 GP practices already have a PPG and more are being formed. Some hold face-to-face meetings in addition to using email. A few are extremely active – though some seem to feel that an annual questionnaire on patient satisfaction is sufficient. PPGs report directly to the practice's partner doctors or practice manager. A representative of the PPGs now sits on the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) Governing Body (which coordinates all GP practices in the City) to raise issues of wider interest. A tool kit of ideas etc. is about to be published, and small grants will be available to facilitate PPG activity.

When you are next in your surgery, ask how you can be involved in its PPG.

The CCG holds a quarterly public event to discuss an aspect of its work. In alternate months the CCG Board meeting is open to the public; the monthly Healthwatch magazine gives dates.



One of Age UK Brighton & Hove's volunteers

Age UK Brighton & Hove

Many of us, perhaps, used to see our local branch of Age Concern as mostly concerned with providing services to older people, whilst the national Age Concern (and Help The Aged) were concerned with campaigning on their behalf. But now many branches of Age UK have adopted a greater campaigning role. So not only does Age UK Brighton & Hove provide a wide variety of services (regularly described in *The Pensioner*) but is also concerned to find out "what older people need and want". It welcomes all contributions – whether you are a user of one of its services or not - and has created a senior post to foster "engagement".

Age UK Brighton & Hove is well-placed to collect the views of older people and pass them on. For example, it gathers much evidence of what older people need and want through the operation of its Information and Advice Service. It is well-represented on and works closely with statutory bodies and other voluntary organisations involved with older people across the City.

It is also conducting a number of projects, one of which is on behalf of the Clinical Commissioning Group, to examine the needs of those who are housebound – the isolated and hard-to-reach. It is in a position to draw from and contribute to the national Age UK's own campaigns on a range of issues, including winter warmth.

The strength of bodies such as Age UK Brighton & Hove is enhanced by those who engage with them. So – do share your views with them. You can do this by telephone (01273 720 603) or email (info@ageuk-bh.org.uk) or via their website at: www.ageuk-bh.org.uk They also have a thousand followers on Twitter.



Sheltered (now Senior) Housing Action Group (SHAG)

A specific but outstanding example of engagement!

Most of the City Council's 23 schemes have a tenant association. One or two representatives attend the monthly SHAG meetings; SHAG elects its own officers.

In addition to a host of items deriving from the agenda, each meeting closes with a 'round robin' when all present may express issues of concern. All of these are noted in the lengthy minutes; at the succeeding meeting under "matters arising" a report is made of action taken, problems resolved.

Most of the issues, as one might imagine, concern maintenance and repairs; one might expect confrontation with housing staff. But the meetings are most cordial, with housing staff (which include participation officers) working in collaboration with tenants. SHAG is extremely active and engaged; its members know that their voices are heard.

For more information about SHAG, contact the Sheltered Housing Administration Office, Brighton and Hove City Council, tel: 01273 293 255.

Older People's Council (OPC)

When the Older People's Council was launched over a decade ago it was hailed as one of our City's great innovations. It has many achievements to its credit, but its full potential is still to be realised.

To the nine councillors, each representing three adjacent wards and elected every four years by the over 60's, are now added a few co-optees. Currently meetings are held monthly and a presentation is given on some aspect of Council policy by one of its officers; this is followed by a discussion. A quarterly meeting held in the Jubilee Library is open to the public.

The OPC takes up any issue affecting older people. It has the advantage of direct access to the Council; (many of its elected members are, in fact, ex-councillors themselves). Individually the Older People's Councillors are members of a very wide range of associations through which they access the views of older people.

A report of OPC activities is a regular item in *The Pensioner*.

To get in touch with the OPC, see contact details at the bottom of the article on p8. Read on for a view from the Chair of the OPC on its role in "making our voice heard".



**Brighton & Hove
Older People's Council**

OLDER PEOPLE'S COUNCIL NEWS

MAKING THE VOICE OF OLDER PEOPLE HEARD

by Mike Bojczuk – Chair, Older People's Council, Brighton & Hove

OPC voices have made a difference.

To make your voice heard on a subject you need to be in the right place at the right time, and to make a difference you need to have the right people listening as well as having compelling evidence to back you up.

Where do you want to make a difference? There are many issues that affect us older people, but we have to be sure to focus on what is important and then to narrow it down further to areas that can be changed or where change is about to happen.

The Older People's Council are proving adept at making our voices heard, in the right places, and at the right time to make a difference. We are set up to have access to city councillors and Council officials. We can attend Council meetings and are often consulted on proposed changes



Mike Bojczuk – Chair of the OPC

before decisions are made. We have relevant senior officers at our meetings and also meet regularly with the Leader of the Council where we discuss matters of concern. Membership of national bodies such as the National Pensioners' Convention also extends the OPC influence, and I attend the South East England Forum for Ageing policy panel which has held meetings in Westminster with MPs and Government policy makers on topics including care and housing. We need to continue to build on these contacts so our opinions are sought when needed by decision makers.

Issues come from proposals and decisions in Council meetings, consultations on proposed changes, and from partners such as Age UK Brighton & Hove as well as experiences brought directly to OPC members themselves. Campaigns and proposals of other bodies such as the NPC's Dignity Code are also taken up by the OPC.

Well, what difference has the OPC made in the last few years? Perhaps the biggest is our success with the Council joining the WHO Age Friendly City network. I spoke for the OPC to propose this at a full Council meeting in 2012 where it was adopted, with age friendly principles now affecting all areas of Council work, and related planning work still continuing.

We have just had a second Older People's Day after campaigning for several years to revive this day of celebration. We are campaigning for better care services, more and better housing suitable for the elderly and have forged close links with housing and planning managers. Representation on planning committees such as for the Level give us the opportunity to influence changes. We have also been promised a place on one of the new health committees to represent the older person.

Elections to the OPC are due to be held in July 2015, so make sure you register to vote, and if you have the energy and want to make a difference over the following four years, why not stand for election? Details are on the OPC website, or speak to us at one of our public meetings.

Sing for better health NEW GROUP TIMES!



Our friendly singing groups' aim is to improve health and wellbeing, no singing ability is required, all are welcome!

Apart from having a lot of fun singing songs together, we offer our members breathing and relaxation exercises, plus a tea break and opportunity to make new friends.

- Mondays: 1.45 - 3:15pm (£3) Patching Lodge, Eastern Rd, Brighton
- Tuesdays: 10.45 - 11.30 Salvation Army building, Bevendean
- Tuesdays: 1 - 2.30pm (£2/£3) St. Richards, Egmont Rd, Hangleton
- Wednesdays: 11 - 12.30, Mental Health group, contact T: 01273 56 5049
- Fridays: 11.30am - 1pm (£3), Elizabeth Court, 65 Wilbury Rd, Hove
- Saturdays: 12 - 1.30pm (£3), Health & Wellbeing Centre, 18-19 Western Road/ Upper Market St

Contact group leader Udita Everett for more info – tel. 01273 55 6755, or visit the website www.singforbetterhealth.co.uk

For more info on the OPC, visit the website:

www.olderpeoplescouncil.org / tel: 01273 296 427 / email: olderpeoplescouncil@brighton-hove.gov.uk



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RECENT EVENTS

What's been going on?

September and October are always busy times for older people's groups and organisations in the City, many of which hold their Annual General Meetings or other annual events at this time of year. In general, everyone was back in full swing after the summer holidays and not yet running down to Christmas! Here are just a few of the significant events that took place:

The Annual Hangleton and Knoll 50+ event, held on 13 October, was, by all accounts, a great success, with 200 people attending. It had a vibrant and friendly atmosphere, with lots of networking going on.

The Mayor and his wife joined the event and spoke to many present about local activities and groups. There were demonstrations of seated gentle exercise by Susan Ralph and her local group, and singing led by the Sing for Better Health group (see their advertisement on page 8). There was also a diverse range of 30 stall holders from local community groups and service providers. This is a well-established City event, but this year, there were some new faces such as: Silver Strings (a music project for older people), demonstrating string instruments; Sussex Guide dogs; the Hangleton and Knoll Multicultural Women's Group; Toy Memories Community Project (Brighton & Hove Toy Museum); LGBT Switchboard; and a Cookery Demo by Andy Barnett, specially tailored to the 50+ audience.

Lots of bacon butties and home-made cakes were eaten, and all enjoyed the day!

For more information about the Hangleton and Knoll 50+ groups and activities for older people please contact: Clare Hopkins. Telephone: 01273 410 858, email: clare.hopkins@hkproject.org.uk

The Lifelines Open Morning took place at Patching Lodge on 22 October. There was a wide variety of stalls, with Somerset Day Centre, Buy with Confidence, Healthwatch and the Carers' Centre being just a few of the many organisations represented. Staff from East Sussex Fire and Rescue ran a very popular stall, giving out much advice and good humour and having arrived in style in a splendid fire engine. *The Pensioner* also had a stall, shared with our friends from the Older People's Council, and we really enjoyed chatting about the magazine to those who visited us.

Delicious cupcakes were the order of the day on the catering front and much information was exchanged. The organisers reckoned about 85 older people attended and a good and lively time was had by all.



Francis Tonks at the Lifelines Open Morning



Volunteers on *The Pensioner's* and Older People's Council's stalls at the Lifelines Open Morning



East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service also had a stall

For more information about Lifelines and the activities it provides, contact them on 01273 688 117 or email Lifelines@csv.org.uk or visit www.lifelinesbrightonhove.org.uk.

The first day of October was **International Older People's Day!** On and around this date, a range of events took place in the City under the banner of Older People's Day, with the highlight being an Older People's Awards Ceremony. A number of people have told *The Pensioner* how moving this was and how gratifying it was to see older people's contributions being recognised.

The theme of the events was "Do Something Different". A *Pensioner* reader tells us that she did just that – having seen the publicity for volleyball instruction on the beach she went along and, at the age of 72, played volleyball for the very first time. She says: "I was so delighted that I enjoyed it and could do it!"

The entire initiative was managed by local charity Impact Initiatives and received very positive press coverage. But what are your views on the Day? Did you know about the Day? Did you take part in any of the events? What did you think of it all? Do you think an Older People's Day is a good idea? If so, what form should it take? Let us know by contacting us – our contact details are on page 2.

Redevelopment for the RSCH



**by Duncan Stewart,
a retired local GP**

The big open wards in the Barry Building of the Royal Sussex County Hospital admitted their first patients in 1828, 20 years before Florence Nightingale began her nursing career. Only one hospital in the UK currently admits its patients to older accommodation than this.



Fortunately, after many years of negotiation, the Treasury has finally agreed to release in excess of £400 million to fund an extensive redevelopment of 45% of the total hospital site. The old wards will be demolished and replaced by patient accommodation, 65% of which will

be in single rooms with en-suite bathrooms.

The hospital management plans to minimize confusion and the disruption of patient care whilst buildings are demolished and replaced. The contractors are committed to a code of practice which, if adhered to, should prevent all but a small amount of inconvenience to the public in general and local residents in particular. Working hours during the week, and the inevitable associated noise, will be limited and there will be no external work after 6pm and very little activity at weekends.

It is planned that the entire project will be completed by 2023 but the new general in-patient

accommodation in stage 1 should be opening its doors in 2019. The second stage, which will create a much larger Cancer Treatment Centre serving a population of 1.3 million people, is expected to be fully functional by 2022.

The hospital will become home to the Neuroscience Unit currently based at Haywards Heath giving the advantage of it being located on site with the Major Trauma Centre and the Stroke Unit. You will be hearing more about the “3T’s” which is the title of the whole project and stands for Trauma, Training and Tertiary Care over the coming years.

Our City is clearly going to have magnificent new hospital facilities. As people in our older age group make up most of the patients receiving treatment for cancer and on average occupy over 60% of hospital beds at any one time, we will, eventually, have much for which to be grateful.

Macmillan launches Brighton Buddies

No one should face cancer alone! So Macmillan Cancer Support has launched a home befriending service for people affected by cancer.

The service, called Brighton Buddies, provides a weekly hour-long visit from a trained volunteer for 12 weeks or longer. It can:

- provide emotional support – a ‘listening ear’
- point to other local services
- possibly help with chores

Visits can take place at home, or somewhere close by.

Brighton Buddies is a type of Direct Volunteering Service, which is a relatively new venture for Macmillan, which already runs Team Up, a volunteer service with a more practical focus.

By connecting people affected by cancer directly with equipped volunteers, Macmillan aims for the best possible support.

If you are affected by cancer and would like to find out about getting a Buddy, or if you’re interested in volunteering to be a Buddy, call Michaela Rossmann, the Direct Volunteering Services Manager for Macmillan in Brighton, on 07971 007 182 or email DVSBrighton@macmillan.org.uk

Parks and gardens - the green lungs of our City

A personal view from Francis Tonks

In the 18th Century, Dr Johnson said you could not find a tree in Brighton to hang yourself on. Now we have a collection of 10,000 elms that is nationally famous. They have survived Dutch Elm Disease and the Great Storm of 1987, when the trees that came down were speedily replaced by the Council.

Brighton & Hove have parks and gardens to be proud of. Coming into Brighton from the North, you pass flowers and trees that line our main roads. Though I do regret we no longer have the flowerbeds in Preston Park which were based on layouts in other towns and cities and there was a competition each year for the best.

A lot of work is done by volunteers. The St Nicholas Green Spaces Association has planted daffodils and bluebells around the old church and helped to maintain the nearby children's playground and the Rest Garden.

Another success has been the restoration of the Level at the historic heart of Brighton. This is now a really lively area with a variety of activities for skate-boarders as well as toddlers. Because it is well-used there are fewer problems with street-drinkers.

The Council's next big project is the restoration of the Stanmer Estate. There has already been some consultation; but there are ambitious plans to restore the Long Barn, Grade II listed. Also, the Walled Garden is to be restored. Thankfully Stanmer House is a thriving place with a bar and restaurant after years of neglect and decay. I believe there are exciting possibilities here to maintain our local farming heritage. I would like to see a more frequent bus service. It is a long hike from the Lewes Road and we do not all have cars.

Our parks and gardens are particularly valuable for older people. They are the green lungs of the city, places of rest, relaxation and beauty.

What do you know about older people as foster carers?



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Brighton & Hove City Council

Brighton & Hove City Council are recruiting foster carers.

But did you know that the average age of foster carers in the City is 51 and the Council's oldest foster carer is 79 years old?

The Council are looking for older people who want to make a positive difference to a child's life. Qualities they look for in any prospective foster carer are: maturity, patience, flexibility and the ability to care for children – qualities many older people possess in abundance!

If you have a spare bedroom and think you could offer a child a safe, caring home then the Council's fostering team would love to hear from you. They offer excellent support, local training and financial allowances of up to £1,400 per month per child to all their foster carers.

Please see the advertisement on the left and use the 'phone number and website for further information. Or you could email the team at: fosteringrecruitment@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

The team hold fostering information mornings. These provide a great informal opportunity to meet the team and its foster carers and to talk to them about fostering. Those of you who see *The Pensioner* soon after publication may be interested to know that the next one will be on Saturday 29 November from 10am to 11.30am at the Southwick Community Centre, 24 Southwick Street. Please phone 01273 295 444 to find out more and to book a place.



50+ Tai Chi Group in East Brighton

The 50+ Tai Chi group, which has been running for 10 years now, is looking for new members for its weekly classes in East Brighton. Tai Chi is a combination of deep breathing and relaxation with slow and gentle movements.

Betty Field, 82, of Tillgate Close, a member for 6 years, says "It reduces your blood pressure, it's good for your balance and your mobility, and it's not strenuous."

Age is no barrier! Aimed at people aged 50 or older, most current members are in their late 60s and several are in their 80s.

Kate Eason, 82, who lives on Carlton Hill and has also been going to classes for 6 years, says: "It's where my friends are, and it keeps me going, to be honest. It's very beneficial and therapeutic."

The group is led by Ghislaine Picchio, a qualified teacher with almost 25 years' experience, who plans exercises suitable for the group. It won an Active for Life Participation Award from Brighton & Hove City Council in 2012.

Their Treasurer, Frances Low, says: "We...have become well known amongst local community and health workers who refer clients (e.g. from Falls Clinics) whom they feel might benefit from participation." Other activities are tried out from time to time, including belly dancing and hula hooping, and croquet and cream tea every summer.

There are two classes every week during term times, both on Thursdays:

- The 10.00am-11.00am Whitehawk class takes place at Walter May House on Whitehawk Road.
- The 2.00pm-3.00pm Kemptown class takes place at Evelyn Glennie Court on Somerset Street.

Both classes are followed by tea and cake – provided each week by a different member – and a chat. Loose clothing and socks or slippers are recommended. The cost is £3 a class.

You can contact Ghislaine Picchio on 01273 679 514.

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Yoga for all ages in Tarnar



Photo: Gscene (Val is the one waving the flag!)

Older and Out

by Val Brown

Ahoy there! Sunshine, sea breezes, and great views for the members of Older and Out, the monthly social club and meeting space for older, retired, and always cheerful LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) local residents. Now up and running for over 6 months, Older and Out meets from 1pm – 3pm on the 2nd Friday of each month at the Somerset Day Centre with both a hearty lunch and all round good company provided.

All enquiries welcome: call the Somerset Day Centre on 01273 699 000, or email: info@somersetdaycentre.org.uk

The Somerset Day Centre is at 62 St James's St, Brighton, East Sussex BN2 1PR, next to St. Mary's Church. Fully wheelchair accessible, ground floor only. Garden and parking spaces.

Older and Out is funded by The Rainbow Fund.

The Tarnar Yoga Group is keen to attract readers of *The Pensioner* to their weekly 'drop in' yoga class at The Phoenix Centre in Brighton. Yoga is a gentle type of exercise that focuses on movements and breathing, and aims to boost physical and mental wellbeing.

At the moment the members are mostly aged between 55 and 70, but you are never too old for yoga!

The NHS recommends yoga for older people as it:

- strengthens your lower body, which improves balance and so reduces the chance of a fall
- may even reduce pain and mobility problems caused by arthritis.

(Not all yoga moves are suitable for everyone, so check with your doctor first.)

Supported by the Sussex Community Foundation, which awarded the group a grant in March 2014, each session costs £3 for Tarnar residents. Helen Rowsell, the Treasurer, says "We can also visit groups and offer a taster class. We would also be interested in coming to events and offering a session or to do a stall."

If you would like to try yoga, the classes run every Thursday from 6.30 to 8.00pm at The Phoenix Centre, 2 Phoenix Place, Brighton BN2 9ND. For more information, call 01273 621 794.

Enjoy singing? Then the Sing for Better Health groups could be for you! See page 8 for more details.

Thirty years of CAMEO in Hove

A diverse weekly group for the over 50s, which runs at Bishop Hannington Church Centre in Hove, recently celebrated its 30th anniversary with a special meal.

CAMEO, which stands for Come And Meet Each Other, was started to reach out to people in the community, and is inviting readers of *The Pensioner* to join them.

CAMEO meets every Thursday morning from 9.30am for a chat over coffee and biscuits, before the main event begins at 11am. This could be a speaker, a quiz, a discussion or a members' morning - topics are varied so there should be something for everyone. The cost is £1.50. The autumn programme ranges from a talk about L.S. Lowry to a Christmas shopping trip.

Katy Bourne, the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, will also be visiting the group.

The group is usually well attended, with 40 to 50 people, both men and women. Some of them are regular churchgoers, but there is no obligation. Every 3 weeks, about half the group stay on for a two-course meal and a Bible study session. The cost for this is £2.50.

The full autumn programme for CAMEO is available via *The Pensioner's* website at <http://www.bhpensioner.co.uk/whats-on/> (click on a Thursday in the calendar and then on CAMEO) Or phone 07909 918 796. Bishop Hannington Church Centre is on Neville Avenue, Hove, BN3 7NH. Why not come and meet the group sometime soon?



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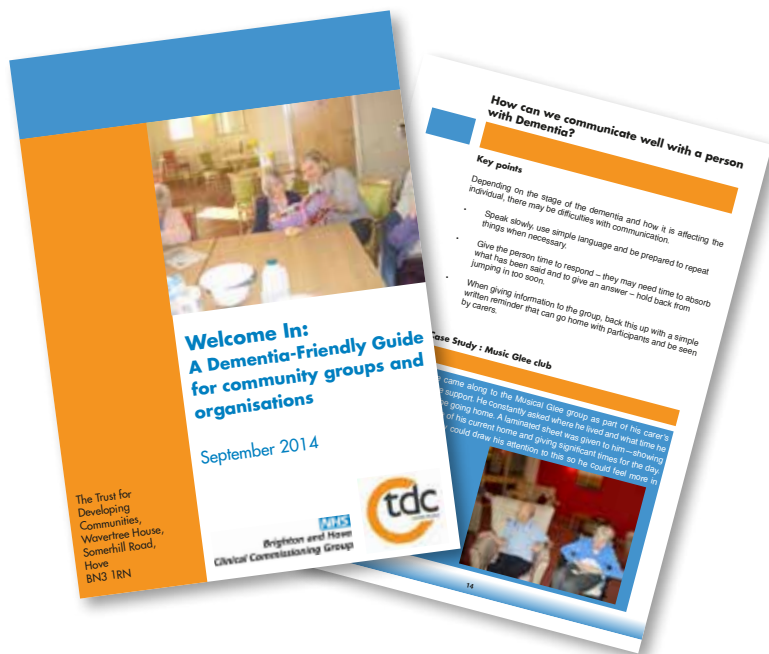
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REVIEW

A Review of: **Welcome In: A Dementia-friendly Guide for community groups and organisations**

This 46 page document was produced by the Trust for Developing Communities and commissioned by our local Clinical Commissioning Group. About 800,000 people in this country, predominantly people over the age of 65, have dementia and this guide contains useful practical advice about how best to include them in group activities. It also contains advice for people who care for dementia sufferers and encourages us all to consider how we approach and help those who have this problem.

Almost all the advice is around trying to entertain without causing stress. When in conversation, we are advised to speak slowly, be prepared to repeat what we say and not expect a rapid reply. As long term memory often remains largely intact, listening to the music of their younger years and being encouraged to reminisce is comforting. When organising events for people with dementia, attention to the surroundings is important. These should be uncluttered, safe, comfortable and not be made unfamiliar by rearrangements of the furniture.



The Guide can be viewed or downloaded from: <http://www.trustdevcom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/dementia-guide-sept-14-3-final-email.pdf>.

Copies of the printed version of the Guide have already been snapped up, but the Trust for Developing Communities is now looking at ways to fund a second print run.

If you want to find out more, their address is: Wavertree House, Somerhill Road, Hove BN3 1RN; telephone: 01273 262 220; and email: info@trustdevcom.org.uk

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