

The Pensioner

Networking for Health Pensioner Action Event

Pensioner Action organised an event in November 2011 to bring together people and organisations concerned with the provision of health care to older people in the local area.

Speaking at the event by Pensioner Action were Annie Alexander of the NHS Public Health department, Dominic Osman-Allu from the Pharmacy service, and Dr Xavier Nalletamby, GP and Chair of the new Clinical Commissioning Group which is responsible for seeing through the local changes to Primary Care in the NHS. We also welcomed Dr Anne Miners (CCG Lead on Elderly Care) and Juliet Warburton (CCG Chief Officer) who responded to further questions from the audience.

Annie Alexander explained that from a public health point of view, key factors in healthy aging included a good support network,



Gully, the Albion in the Community Mascot

playing a valued role, enough income, good health, enough time and independence. She said that personal relationships and community links are key, and the Public Health Service role includes encouraging involvement in volunteering and learning. These bring benefit to the community, help address isolation, and provide links between organisations.

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What's happening to the State Pension? Act Now! *By Sue Howley*

The good news is that in April 2012 the full basic State Pension rises by £5.30 per week to £107.45 – the biggest percentage rise since 1908, when the full State Pension (which was means-tested) was worth five shillings, or 25p.

This good news is, of course, balanced by the increase in the pension age – for women, to 65 by 2018, to 66 for both men and women by 2020 and then to 67 for both men and women by 2026.

During the course of 2012 we can expect developments on the proposals first suggested in the Green Paper "A State Pension for the 21st Century", published in April 2011.



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**BE CLEAR
ON CANCER**

nhs.uk/breastcancer70

**NHS & Albion in
the Community
Breast Cancer
Awareness
Campaign**



**Digital Switchover
Help & Advice**



**Healthy Living
Activities
and Tips**

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No. 41



Editor's Letter

Welcome to the Spring edition of The Pensioner. I hope you all had a good Christmas and that 2012 has been good so far. Thankfully the early winter passed without the

snow and the bitter cold we experienced last year, and the buds are beginning to bloom at last!

Here at Pensioner Action, we are pleased to announce that we have received funding for another year which means we can keep up the good work engaging with older people in Brighton and Hove to find out your views on issues that affect you and to help give you a voice.

Sadly we had to say goodbye to our Group Facilitator, Myfan Jordan, after she did a brilliant job organising the very successful 'Networking for Health' event. Myfan has now returned to her native Australia and all of us at Pensioner Action wish her and her family a very happy future over there.

We are pleased to welcome Sue Goodwin who came on board in November 2011. Sue has been running the neighbourhood groups and is working hard to prepare the next Public Meeting; '*Bright and Healthy Minds - Managing our Mental Health in Older Age*', to be held on March 13th. I hope you will come along! (See page 3 for details)

We are lucky that Albion in the Community (the charitable arm of Brighton and Hove Albion) and NHS Brighton and Hove have sponsored this issue; we are helping them to promote the 'Be Clear on Cancer Campaign' which will be focusing on breast cancer awareness in women over 70 between January and March 2012.

(For more information, please see page 9)

**Write to: Mandi Sherratt, Pensioner Action,
1st Floor, Intergen House, 65 - 67 Western
Road, Hove, BN3 2JQ. Tel: 01273 229 004
Email: mandi.sherratt@bh-impetus.org**

Getting a regular copy of The Pensioner

We print 4,000 hard copies of each issue - one tenth of the number of older people in our city. Most of these are delivered via libraries, sheltered housing schemes or by community nurses and care workers: it's all a bit hit or miss! There are three ways of making sure you receive each issue - see right for details.

1. For a subscription fee of £3 per annum, a copy will be posted to you on publication day. Complete the form below and send it to Mandi at the above address.

2. Request an email version which will then be mailed to you free of charge - just email your request to mandi.sherratt@bh-impetus.org

3. Past issues in PDF format are also available by email on request or on the Impetus website at www.bh-impetus.org/pensioner_action

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Data Protection Act: The information you have provided on this form will be used to keep you up-to-date with Forum activities. On occasions, the Forum may decide it is appropriate to pass your contact details on to other organisations who wish to make contact with older people (i.e. Health Service, City Council, arts or community organisations). If you DO NOT wish your contact details to be passed on, please tick here

Signed _____ Date _____

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Older People's Council News

by Jack Hazelgrove

It is now almost 5 years since I retired from the City Council in order to stand for election to the OPC. I do not envy the current Councillors having to struggle with the biggest cuts in the recent history of local government. We at the OPC are non party-political and so do not engage in the ritual of condemning whichever party is in power. At least this year's budget proposals were announced much earlier than usual, giving ample opportunity for input and consultation from all and sundry.

Skeptics will say that your opinion carries little weight, but this time round some revisions were made following lobbying about toilet closure and the music and arts service, to name but two. Of course those of us who remember the austerity of the 40s and 50s know what doing without is all about - not to mention rationing, power cuts, and waiting for the coal man to deliver a bag of coal in the middle of winter.

The OPC consultation was by a joint briefing of the Chairs of Age Concern (Age UK), Pensioner Action, the Pensioner's Association and the Older Peoples' Council. The four Chairs intend that we will work together on important issues as they arise in the future. There was much concern about the provision of Social Care, the funding for which is desperately in need of decisive Government action, but so far has been the victim of drift and delay.

At least our briefing was able to confirm that there are no proposals locally to raise the threshold for access to social care via a higher means test. And there are no plans to change free access to the buses from 9am. A later time (as is the case in West Sussex) would make getting to medical appointments difficult. However, the Budget does contain cuts to the money available to support non-commercial routes which the companies would not run without Council subsidy. The extent of this will be revealed in the autumn when the new contracts are awarded.

For your interest our next public meeting of the OPC will be on the 20th of March at 10am in the Jubilee Library, Brighton on the future of social care for the elderly. All are invited and refreshments will be provided.

Until then, as the saying goes, "keep calm and carry on"!

www.olderpeoplescouncil.org

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olderpeoplescouncil@brighton-hove.gov.uk

The Pensioner is the magazine of Pensioner Action and is produced by an Editorial Committee:

Chair - Peter Lloyd
Editor - Mandi Sherratt
Francis Tonks
Clive Taplin
Connie Fraser
Sue Howley (Chair of Pensioner Action)

Other regular contributors include local older people and representatives of organisations who work with older people. If you would like to contribute an article or a letter, please get in touch with the Editor (see p2 for contact details).



Welcome to Sue Goodwin!

I am writing to introduce myself as the new Group Facilitator for Pensioner Action.

I am 53 years old, (or is it '53 years' young'?) Many years ago I was involved with several projects within Age Concern Brighton. In the past I have also worked in Brighton with the voluntary organisation; Homeshare, and the Older People with Mental Health team.

I believe it is important to have friends of all ages to keep a balanced perspective on life. I appreciate the challenges of the different phases we experience, the adjustments which need to be made in each phase and the potential richness of life experience to be gained along the way.

I look forward to meeting you, and finding out your news and views. I work part-time at the beginning of the week. If you want to contact me, please call 01273 229 004.

Pensioner Action Public Event *Bright and Healthy Minds - Managing our Mental Health in Older Age*

Tuesday 13th March, 10am - 1pm

Friends' Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton.

The event is intended to provide you with information and get feedback on your experience of mental health and well-being support for the Primary Care Trust, who directly and indirectly fund many services aimed to support you. If you have views on these, it is our job to represent them to the PCT. You can do this by attending a local Neighbourhood Group (see page 4), coming to a public event, or writing to us at Interger House.

Who will be there?

Participants from the Neighbourhood Groups, Pensioner Action, the Primary Care Trust, Adult Social Care, MIND, the Carers Centre, Age Concern (ageuk) PALS/LINK, Alzheimer's Disease Society, Neighbourhood Care Scheme, carers, retired volunteers, grandparents, veterans, active citizens, contributors and survivors!

Just come along on the day, you are all are very welcome!



Pensioner Action -
Empowering
Older People

WWII Veterans' Grants Available

Many of you may not be aware that in 2011, financial grants (entitled "Heroes Return II"), were available to World War II veterans. These were granted by the Big Lottery Fund to enable them and/or their widows to pay a visit of remembrance to the theatre of war that they were involved in.

It appears that the number of veterans claiming these grants were far less than anticipated resulting in these grants being extended to December 31st 2012. We hope that veterans, who will now be aged 80 and over, may still take advantage of these grants and plan a visit.

Veterans, male or female, widows, and widowers of veterans, can all apply. The offer also extends to Merchant Seamen, as well as WAAF's and ATS who worked closely with active personnel.

The grants range from £150 to cover travel and accommodation for veteran, spouse and carer, within the UK, to £1,300 for Northern Europe and £5,500 for the Far East.

To apply, contact: BIG advice line 0845 4 10 20 30 or visit the Lottery website at: http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_heroes_return

One of our readers who received a grant in 2011 has also kindly offered to give more details about the claims process - just contact Ted Cachart, Chairman of the 49 Squadron Association - tel: 01773 853 181 / email: ted@49squadron.co.uk.

Neighbourhood Groups Diary

Pensioner Action runs meetings for older people in five neighbourhoods across Brighton and Hove. Anyone can join in - get in touch by calling Sue Goodwin on Tel: 01273 229 004

Central Hove Group. St John's Centre (next to Cornerstone Community Centre, Church Rd, Hove). 10.30am-12.00pm • Wednesday April 18th •

Craven Vale Group. Craven Vale Resource Centre, Queensway, Craven Vale • 2pm-4pm. • Wednesdays March 28, April 25, May 30, June 27 and July 25 •

Patching Lodge Group. Patching Lodge, Eastern Road • 2.30 - 4pm. • Tuesdays May 15, July 10 •

PLEASE NOTE: the March Patching Lodge Group meeting will be combined with the 'Bright and Healthy Minds – Managing Our Mental Health in Older Age' event at the Friends' Meeting House, Ship Street, Brighton on Tuesday March 13, 2012, 10am to 1pm •

West Hove Group. Muriel House, Ingram Crescent West, Portland Road, Hove. • 2.30 to 4pm. Tuesdays March 20, May 22, July 17 •

Moulsecoomb Group. The Orchards, Moulsecoomb Way, Moulsecoomb • 2.30 - 4pm. March 6th, May 1st •



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Unlocking the potential of people and places

What are the Pensioner Action Neighbourhood Groups?

The Neighbourhood Groups work together to enable older people to tackle issues which affect our everyday lives, such as:

Hospital and GP Services - Public Transport - Social Services - Benefits - Community Safety - Environmental Issues - and anything else which may be affecting you as an older person in Brighton & Hove.

We have regular speakers, give information on services, encourage debate, friendship and work together to get the changes we want for our neighbourhoods.

For more details, call Sue on 01273 229 004.

Well-Being in Old Age

We are living longer, but what is our quality of life in our later years?

Increasingly, it seems, the media feed us stories of abuse – physical, verbal and financial - which is suffered by older people in their own homes and in residential care. We hear too, of hospitals where meals are delivered to older patients, but little help is given to assist older people to eat them. Such incidents are clearly unacceptable, and it is easy to recommend better training for carers, more supervision and monitoring.

Increasingly, too, is a more positive attitude towards ageing, we are expected to be more independent, in control of our lives, living with dignity, enjoying feelings of well-being and so on. However, these concepts are highly subjective; we differ

greatly in our personalities and circumstances. What is highly important to some is less important to others. So how does one define, or measure well-being and these similar concepts?

Recent research by members of the University of Brighton and Age Concern Brighton and Hove attempts to provide answers. (See the article below for more information)



Launch of a new research on well-being in old age

Research into older people's well-being was carried out over the last 3 years in Brighton and Hove by researchers from the University of Brighton and Age Concern Brighton, Hove and Portslade. Professor Marian Barnes, professor of social policy, and research fellow Dr Lizzie Ward, both from the School of Applied Social Science carried out the work in partnership with Dr Beatrice Gahagan, senior manager at Age Concern and a team of older peer researchers from Age Concern volunteer base. There was a commitment to enabling older people to think and talk about their experiences of well-being rather than to use pre-defined measures.

During this time 30 older people aged between 67 and 97 took part in interviews that were designed so that they could talk in their own terms about what well-being means to them, and how this is produced. The interviews explored common themes such as money; where people lived; their health and relationships with others. A further 59 people took part in focus groups and staff and volunteers working for Age Concern were interviewed to explore their views on what well-being means to older people. All the interviews and focus groups were carried out by the older peer researchers.

The research found that, whilst many older people were enjoying their lives, some said they found it hard to sustain a sense of well-being, either because of the loss of friends and family, health issues or loss of identity and structure that they enjoyed when working. Some found it hard to adjust to personal changes and to changes in the world around them.

The research also highlights the importance of different types of relationships to older people's well-being. The quality of relationships not only with family and friends, and with health and social care providers, but encounters with GP receptionists, people at the bus stop or at checkout

counters in shops, can make a difference to how people feel about themselves, because they indicate how others feel about them. For those who are either/both giving and receiving care because of illness, disability or mental health difficulties, the quality of caring relationships is especially significant.

Practical things make a difference and the research confirms other work that suggests well-being is not straightforwardly associated with having lots of money. But feeling secure in having enough, and being able to deal with unexpected expenses is important. And those who are financially comfortable do have more choices when it comes to deciding things like where to move to if looking after a big house becomes too difficult, or getting about is problematic because of restricted mobility.

The research findings will contribute to developing local knowledge and understanding of older people's needs and be used by Age Concern, and local authority service providers in thinking about how to meet older people's needs and support their well-being.

There will be a public event on 3rd April at the Brighthelm Centre where the research report and a booklet for older people written by the peer researchers will be launched. If you would like more information about the research or the launch please contact Lizzie Ward at Brighton University 01273 643903 or email e.ward@brighton.ac.uk. Both the research report and the booklet are available to download at www.brighton.ac.uk/sass/publications - or contact Lizzie for a copy of the report.

Networking for Health - Pensioner Action Event (Continued from front page)

Dr Xavier Nalletamby explained that he is a GP and wants to see the best plans made for local health services. He reminded us that there are lots of good things about the NHS; for example, it sits in the top 3 countries for cancer care and access to a GP.

He explained that the CCGs are intended to replace the previous structure for organising Primary Care services, the proposed bill "Equity and Excellence in the NHS Health and Social Care". The changes include: Public Health moving from the NHS to local councils, and the NHS National Commissioning Board to be placed under the control of the Secretary of State.

Other proposed changes include: the current rules on limited GP boundary areas are to change so that patients can live further away and still access the GP of their choice; there will be an introduction of Personal Health Budgets (akin to Direct Payments in social care, where an assessment of need unlocks an agreed amount of spending to manage a health condition); more competition where health service providers may compete to provide services (after an amendment, the principle on which this was to be based was to be based on quality rather than price); GPs to be joined by all types of clinicians as members of Local Commissioning Groups.

The local picture: There will be one CCG for Brighton and Hove local authority area, comprising 184 GPs in 47 practices; the population served (i.e. registered with a Brighton and Hove GP, not necessarily resident in the geographical boundary) is 299,000 in 3 areas, East, West, and Central; the CCG will be made up of 17 people and a LINK-like representative. GPs sitting on the CCG will be elected by local GPs for a period of one year. The overall budget will be about £350 million for Brighton and Hove. Older people and mental health services will be prioritised.

Dr Nalletamby said that the provision aims to be more personal, with many services being delivered at home. This is after a 15 year period where investment in hi-technology has led to there being more consultants based in hospitals.

He felt that there were advantages to switching to home-delivered services but that there may be resistance from consultants, and any 'Save Our Hospital' campaigns need to be properly informed about the advantages of moving those resources to home delivery. He felt a public debate on this would be required.

Health and Wellbeing Boards will be created within the local council to provide patient feedback (creating HealthWatch instead of PALS, LINKs, and the Community Health Council). Lay members will sit on CCGs and a 'Lay Board' is to be created; all GP practices must form Patient Participation Groups, and a Health User Bank of 1600 people will be set-up, aiming to reflect all sections of the community.

What's happening to the State Pension? Act Now!

(Continued from front page)

This put forward two options for the future of the State Pension, with the Government's favourite being the introduction of a new flat-rate State Pension worth roughly £140 (in the prices of April 2011) and to be introduced in 2015/16. This would imply the end of means-tested top-ups such as Pension Credit. At first sight, the suggestion seems a good one, removing some of the complexities and confusion of the present system. Some 1.6 million pensioners do not claim Pension Credit, despite being eligible, and they would certainly benefit.

However, there are concerns about the proposals – the £140 figure is still below the official poverty line and for some it could mean a levelling-down rather than a levelling-up, since the proposals are meant to be cost-neutral. Most of all, the proposals, as currently described, would only apply to older people who become pensioners after the due date in 2015/16 and not to existing pensioners or those who become pensioners between now and then. There is obviously going to be anger amongst those who will lose out because of this – perhaps through being born just one day too soon! There is also going to be anger amongst those existing pensioners who are currently excluded from Pension Credit by having a small private pension or savings beyond the threshold whilst a younger person who reaches pensionable age in

or after 2015/16 could be in the same financial situation and yet obtain the full £140.

The Government says that the cost of introducing the new system for all would be too high. But it has also said that the new system should be "fair" and "less confusing". A situation whereby British pensioners are separated by a two-tier system – some on £140 flat and some on the current credit-based top-up system, with an arbitrary divide between the two – would not be fair or straightforward at all!

At one time towards the end of last year, it looked as if the Government might be shelving these proposals, but we gather that the Department for Work and Pensions is currently working out the details and they will emerge later this year. The Government will no doubt then find itself with a fight on its hands. You may well want to join that fight by writing to your MP, or supporting the organisations (such as AgeUK and the National Pensioners' Convention) who lobby at national level on behalf of older people.



City's top pharmacist as voted for by you

Medicines can often be confusing, which is why having a helpful pharmacist at hand to answer questions about them is not only re-assuring, but vital.

To honour those pharmacists who go that extra mile for their customers, Brighton and Hove Local Involvement Network (BH LINK) launched the 'OK to Ask' Award, encouraging people in the city to vote for the pharmacist they felt most deserved the accolade. The results of the vote were announced at an awards ceremony with the city's best pharmacist being announced as James Butler of Harpers Pharmacy, in Hollingbury Place, 2nd was Nasim Ladak, Fields Pharmacy, 38-40 Eldred Avenue, and 3rd place went to Manish Suchak, of Coldean Pharmacy, 10 Beatty Avenue, Coldean.

As one of the customers who voted for James said: *"He is professional, polite and very willing to explain the use and effect of the medication I'm taking. I feel that no matter what question I have he's always happy to take the time to answer it. James is the best!"*

On receiving the award, James said: *"I feel honoured to have received this award and it's great to get the recognition. I love my job and enjoy speaking to customers. I also feel it's my duty, as a pharmacist to make sure my customers get the best treatment from their medicines."*

Every day around 1.8 million people visit a pharmacy for prescriptions and other medicines as they are easily accessible and open longer hours than most GP surgeries. You can speak to a pharmacist without making an appointment and their advice is based on an expert knowledge of medicines. Many are even undertaking health checks designed to help keep you fit and well. Pharmacists also deal frequently with carers, both paid, such as nursing staff or professional carers, and unpaid, such as devoted family members.

Pharmacists know and appreciate the contribution made to healthcare by such carers and many go out of their way to help by arranging delivery of medications, or by special packaging to ease the task of taking medicines. So whether it is advice about sleeping, or how to ensure an elderly relative can remember to take their medicines, ask your pharmacist – you will be taking good advice! If you've got something you'd like to say about the treatment you've received from health and social care services or would like to find out more about BH LINK visit www.bhlink.org or call 01273 810 234.

Left to right: Manish Suchak (3rd place) Coldean Pharmacy, Nasim Ladak (2nd place), Fields Pharmacy, James Butler (1st place), Harpers Pharmacy.



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Clearwell Mobility is the leading supplier of mobility and homecare equipment in Sussex with showrooms throughout the area.

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Pensioner Action - Making Connections - by Sue Goodwin

Older people's responses to the NHS changes presented by the Primary Care Trust at the November public event "Networking for Health" were mixed: one Neighbourhood Group (Patching Lodge) liked the enhanced role for Patient Participation Groups, but was concerned that local treatment centres would be unable to deal with some conditions adequately, and that precious time would be lost waiting for re-referrals.

Another, (West Hove), was worried that medics' time would be spent travelling rather than treating patients.

A third, (Craven Vale), liked the idea that patients would be able to stay with their GP if they moved out of that area. Participants at the Public event felt that they wanted doctors to make well-informed healthcare choices rather than to make those choices themselves.

As a 'Gateway' organisation through which the Primary Care Trust consults with older people, Pensioner Action run Neighbourhood Groups, public events and produce "The Pensioner" magazine. Pensioner Action is run by older people as part of the voluntary organisation 'Impetus'. See page 4 for dates of the next Neighbourhood Groups in your area. See the front cover for a full report of the Networking for Health event.



AgeUK – New Publications and Support

AgeUK is producing some exciting publications and new services. They produce many free information guides packed with information about services for older people. To request the free guides please call AgeUK Brighton & Hove, your local AgeUK on 01273 720603.

The LifeBook

This is a free booklet published by AgeUK where you can record important and useful information about your life - from who insures your car to where you put the TV licence.

Sometimes it is easy to mislay important documents and information, so, the Lifebook has been produced to help you find exactly what you need without searching.

The LifeBook will not only help you to be more organised but could also be invaluable to a family member or a friend if they need to find important information about you in an emergency.

To use it follow the step-by-step instructions to fill in the various sections with your details, contacts and locations of important documents. You don't have to do it all at once - just complete it at your own pace.



The LifeBook is available in a booklet or AgeUK can email you a copy to complete and store on your computer.

How to order a LifeBook

To request a printed copy of a LifeBook, or get an emailed version for you to store and complete on your computer, call 0845 685 1061 and quote reference ALL 721.

If you have any questions, please contact AgeUK Brighton & Hove, who also provide a range of services for older people. You can call on 01273 720 603, email info@ageuk-bh.org.uk - or visit your local branch at 29-31 Prestonville Road, Brighton BN1 3TJ.



Be Clear on Cancer: Breast cancer in women over 70 years

The NHS in Brighton & Hove, and Albion in the Community (Brighton and Hove Albion's charitable arm) have teamed up to help older women across Brighton and Hove become more aware of the possible symptoms of breast cancer.

Martina Pickin, Public Health Specialist in Brighton and Hove explained:

"Older women with breast cancer are more likely to be diagnosed late which lowers their chance of survival. Research shows that women over 70 years are less aware of their risk and often delay seeing their doctor when they develop symptoms, particularly non-lump symptoms."

"We are asking women to be more breast aware and to notice any changes. The key message being: 1 in 3 women who get breast cancer are over 70, so don't assume you're past it."

Possible signs of breast cancer include:

- A lump in your breast or armpit
- Nipple changes
- Changes to the skin of your breast
- Changes in the shape or size of your breast
- Pain in your breast or armpit

If you have any of the above symptoms, go and see your doctor immediately."

Cath Smith, 84, from Seven Dials did exactly that. In May 2009 she noticed something different about one of her breasts when in the shower.

"I noticed that I had a strange indentation there so I got out of the shower, called my GP surgery and persuaded the receptionist

that I needed to see the doctor straight away. It was probably the most important call I've ever made."

Cath's doctor referred her to a specialist and ten days later she was diagnosed with breast cancer. In August that year she had an operation to remove what her surgeon described as 'a slow growing cancer' from her breast.

Now fit and well, Cath has a clear message for older women who may find themselves in a similar situation.

"A lot of women my age will leave it for a couple of months but that's no good. As my surgeon told me at the time, the earlier we can catch cancer the better chance we have got of helping people survive."

For more information and advice, go to www.nhs/breastcancer70 - or call Steve Cole or Catherine How at Albion in the Community on 01273 878 262.

Breast Cancer Screening

Women between the ages of 50 and 70 are currently invited for screening, which can detect breast cancer at a very early stage. Automatic screening invitations are being extended to those aged between 47 and 73. If you're over 70, you can ask for a free screening every three years. Just get in touch with your local breast-screening unit to make an appointment on 01273 664966. Whatever your age, it's important to keep on checking for changes to your breasts.

NHS
Brighton and Hove



Brighton and Hove's Three Score Dance Company for the over 60's limbers up for 2012!

Following a successful funding campaign earlier in 2011, South East Dance is delighted to announce the official formation of Three Score Dance Company. The ambition to create a performance company that offers contemporary dance opportunities for men and women aged 60+ has been made possible with funding from The Big Lottery Fund.

Three Score Dance Company is the vision of Saskia Heriz and Christina Thompson, who were inspired by the work of The Company of Elders, a dance company for the over 60's resident at the internationally renowned Sadler's Wells Theatre. They approached leading dance development organisation South East Dance about establishing a similar company in Brighton and, with their guidance, the company has transitioned from idea to reality.

Three Score Dance Company have worked with South East Dance to appoint local dance artist Jason Keenan-Smith as Rehearsal Director, and are delighted to have been offered a home at Brighton Dome, with technique classes and rehearsals taking place every Monday.

Interest in the company has been very high with more than 35 local residents applying for a place. Twenty people were selected from a process that included both a written application and a practical audition. The company will work with Jason to develop their skills in preparation for working with a professional choreographer in spring 2012.

The company will prepare for a premiere performance at the Brighton Dome in the summer. "Besides the social and fulfilling aspect of producing collaborative creative work, I just know we can dance our way towards improved health and happiness" said Saskia Heriz, founding member.

Although many members have had no prior dance training, their wealth of life experience brings a unique quality to their work. The company is keen to offer dance opportunities to those who were not chosen during the selection process, and additional places for non-company members will be offered in weekly technique classes and one-off workshops with guest teachers.

For more details, call 01273 696 844.



Health Tips from Tessa McCarthy

Practice Nurse, Mile Oak Medical Centre, Portslade

Making the best of our health can be achieved by making small changes in our lives. We all know the importance of a balanced diet including a good selection of fruit and vegetables, lean meat, fish and eggs and calcium rich, low fat dairy foods like milk and yoghurt. Keep fats to a minimum for heart health and managing cholesterol.

As we get older grazing on food, eating 4 or 5 light meals a day is sometimes more manageable than three large meals. Drink plenty of water (including tea or squash) to prevent dehydration which can affect your kidneys and cause problems such as constipation, drowsiness and confusion.

Regular exercise will help strengthen joints and muscles. Walking with a friend, swimming, gardening - even housework is exercise. Sometimes when we have aches and pains it's tempting to sit in a chair and become inactive, which is bad news for your health and independence. Think about joining



a gentle exercise class, yoga group or green gym to help you get back in the swing of regular exercise. Being involved with a group can help to keep you motivated and offers extra opportunities to meet with other folk.

Make an appointment to see your doctor for vital health checks such as blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol, asthma and kidney function. If you take medicines be sure to have these checked, at least once a year. Be sure your medication is reviewed by the doctor. The pharmacist at your chemist will also check your medication with you.

Remember to have your flu jab every year; this will give you cover against the most active flu virus each year. You should also have a pneumonia vaccine - for most people, this is only needed once in a lifetime for protection.

Sometimes physical health is affected by other problems. Loneliness, depression, isolation and grief will be a part of many peoples' lives at some time or other. Often the older generation are the least likely to seek help or support for these problems. There is no need for you to suffer alone. Your GP or Practice Nurse can offer support. It may be that you just need someone to talk to or to help you connect with social groups, lunch clubs, adult education courses or refer you to support organisations.

If mobility, self care or caring for a loved one is proving more difficult, your GP can discuss what help is available to you and help you to access it with ease.



Are You a Retired NHS Employee?

The NHS Retirement Fellowship has recently formed a new Brighton & Hove City Branch. We plan to meet on the 2nd Thursday in the month for discussions, talks and arranging social events for members throughout the year.

For membership details please contact: - Branch Secretary Chrissy Yellow. Tel: 01903 713 073 or email crissy.yellow@gmail.com



CLEAN, CUT & FILED



A new and unique fingernail cleaning, cutting and filing service in your own home or in hospital for older people and the disabled, promoting good hand hygiene practices to assist in infection control management. Of the combined 10 and 5 year knowledge, skills and experience of working in Health & Social care, we aim to ensure that the service is affordable, beneficial and, will meet the needs of each individual. We are a fully insured and CRB checked provider.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND APPOINTMENTS PLEASE CONTACT ANNA BROMHAM OR VERITY DELO ON: 01273 507 726.

We are pleased to be a member of the Fed's Business and Services Noticeboard - for more information on this and other Fed Services please go to www.thefedonline.org.uk



Whither, Adult Social Care by Peter Lloyd

The budgetary cuts are beginning to bite. Local authorities are said to lose 20% of their funding over the next few years. Adult Social Care, as a major spender, must inevitably be affected.

Politicians are often claiming that front-line services to vulnerable people need not be cut; savings can be made in management costs; but service providers say that they have already trimmed these costs extensively. All of this is happening at a time when numbers of older people are increasing and their life expectancy is rising; we should be spending more not less!

So – how is our own city council coping?

I was able to discuss these issues in November with Councillor Rob Jarrett, Cabinet member for Adult Social Care and Health, and Denise De Souza, Director for Adult Social Care.

The main thrust of council policy is to enable more vulnerable older people to live in their own homes rather than in institutional settings. They will thus maintain much of their independence; and domiciliary support is usually less costly.

In recent years the Council has closed several of its residential care homes – they were unpopular, under used and costly. Day Centre service has been amalgamated creating further substantial savings. Payments for services contracted out to care service agencies and care homes have been frozen.

How is the policy to support independent living being achieved?

- **Personal budgets (or Direct Payments):** These have been available for many years, but bureaucratic procedures have limited take up. However, almost one third of Adult Social Care clients now have a Personal Budget, administered by themselves, a family member or care staff.

The individual negotiates a care package with care staff, selecting the services which they most value; the agreed cost is paid to the individual. Clearly there must be limits to what we can ask for; care staff calculate the cost of meeting specific needs using conventional services, and this then becomes the limit, savings can be made – thus a visit to a lunch club of ones choice will be made cheaper than a few hours in a Day Centre.

- **Better co ordination of services:** Utilise the services of family and friends, voluntary agencies etc to support people, for instance on return from hospital, helping them to regain independence. Support voluntary bodies providing such services.

- **Sheltered Housing:** Explore the potential for sheltered housing to promote support by managerial staff, residents themselves and care workers visiting on-site. A care package for a resident in extra care at Patching Lodge can cost a third of that of a place in a care home. Explore the possibility of neighbourhood care teams, based perhaps in sheltered housing, these can provide more flexible support over longer periods and may be welcomed by service users, although, the personal choice of care workers will be limited.
- **Assistive technology (or telecare):** We don't yet have robots who can dress or cook; but there are a wide variety of devices to activate alarms, with falls, lack of movement, wandering, gas or fire dangers. Such tailored systems give a sense of security to the individual (and his or her family) and also reduce the cost of surveillance.
- **Pharmacist:** Will give advice on medicines and provide weekly boxes to facilitate regular taking of pills etc.
- **Transport:** How can we get a person with impaired mobility from home to community based activity? Develop collaboration between community transport, dial a ride, volunteer driver services etc.
- **Co-ordinated working:** Improve communication between Adult Social Care, the NHS, Voluntary agencies etc. challenging job description boundaries.

Preventative care, for those with low levels of dependency, is relatively cheap – though it can add up to a considerable total cost. Savings, through reduction in acute dependency, will be realised in the years to come. In the meantime, increasing numbers of older people are experiencing acute needs (e.g. with severe dementia) and specialised provision must be made for these.

Our vision is of a future when older people will be able to live for more years in their own homes, fairly independent and in control, receiving support from a variety of co-ordinated services. We cannot expect the government, or local authority, to provide everything – we could never afford to pay for it!

Footnote to the above: Local Authority funded social care is available only to those with low incomes and savings, however, the principles outlined above apply to all of us, as we attempt to reduce cost whilst retaining the quality of care.

Health or social care...

Is something bothering you?

Tell Brighton and Hove's LINK all about it.

We have powers to make change happen.

We're here to help you get the health and social care services you want. Be part of the LINK, it is your voice that will make a big difference.

**Contact us on: 01273 810 235 or
visit www.bhlink.org**

Advertise In The Pensioner We print 4,000 copies, three times a year, and we estimate that we reach 10,000 readers. The Pensioner is a major means of communication for older people in Brighton and Hove, providing information and representative news. We rely heavily on advertising and sponsorship to cover our production costs and keep our publication going.

Advertising rates are as follows: -

- ¼ page advert - £75 (A6: 98mm W x 134.3mm H)
- ½ page advert - £150 (A5 = 200mm W x 142.5mm H)
- Full page advert - £300
- Sponsorship of an issue - £475 (Full back page advert/advertorial plus editorial thanks/acknowledgement)

To enquire further, contact Mandi Sherratt on 01273 229 004 or email mandi.sherratt@bh-impetus.org

Apologies for an error printed in the last issue

We apologise for some incorrect information printed in the Autumn 2011 issue of *The Pensioner*, in the 'Transport of Delight' article (page 9). It was suggested that the Bluebird Community Partnership provide hospital transport - however this information was out of date and the service no longer operates. We apologise for any confusion this may have caused.

The 50+ Tai Chi Group



The 50+ Tai Chi and Chi Kung group meets every Thursday at Evelyn Glennie Court, Somerset Street, Brighton from 2-3.30pm. (Eastern Road, across from the Gala Bingo). We have an hour of Chi Kung followed by tea and a chat! In addition, for those wanting to pursue the Tai Chi form (Yang style), there is a class following at 3.30pm until 4.30pm.

There is also a class on Tuesdays at 10 -11am, at the Vale Community Centre, Hadlow Close, Queensway, Brighton (the no. 2 bus stops outside).

The cost is £3 per class (payable half termly in advance if possible) - if you want to come and try it please do!

The group enjoys gentle exercises to help maintain a healthy body and mind. The Instructor is Ghislaine, who adapts the exercise programme from the Tai Chi and Chi Kung methods which are beneficial in many ways: they reduce muscle tension; they improve balance and flexibility; they help improve digestion; they improve sleep and calm the emotions. The exercises help improve concentration and focus and help you to live life to the full!

Do come and have a go and see if it suits you. Just ring Ghislaine on 01273 679 514 or 07795 109 131 to obtain more information, or drop in to the Community Centre any Tuesday at 10am, or Evelyn Glennie Court on Thursday at 2pm, and see what it is like! We can assure you of a friendly welcome!

The group is funded by Brighton and Hove City Council, the Sussex Community Fund, and is supported by Active for Life.

Patient Participation Groups

– By Peter Lloyd

Amongst the changes within the NHS being made by the Coalition Government, is the abolition of Primary Care Trusts and the transfer of their powers to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) – locally based groups made up of GPs and health professionals which will decide how NHS funding is allocated. The take-over is planned for April 2013 and CCGs are already in place, planning their future role and mode of operation.

One effect of the changes is that decision making will move one step closer to patients themselves. Hence the need for much closer communication between GPs, their practices and their patients – that is the establishment of patient participation groups (PPGs), as we outlined in our article in last summer's issue of *The Pensioner* (Reforming the NHS, Issue No 39, pg 11).

The setting up of PPGs is being actively supported by PCT management staff; a toolkit is available and a financial reward to those practices which complete a series of processed developments.

So, how much progress has already been made? Almost three quarters of the practices in our city are setting up PPGs, though with varying success; some have attracted a hundred patients whilst others seem to be finding recruitment more difficult. Perhaps this reflects their proposed mode of operation. Some plan for meetings – the surgery waiting room is not the most attractive venue! Others plan to rely exclusively on e-mail, which many patients might prefer, though it is likely to exclude many of the highest users of GP services.

It is up to the staff and patients of each practice to raise, and perhaps prioritise issues that they tackle. Most are expected to focus on local issues – the location of the surgery, car parking, surgery opening hours and ease of making appointments etc. Some may wish to discuss practice management – the services available within the surgery. Some may raise national issues of health policy. PPGs are expected to work in conjunction with local community groups involved in health and care issues too. The practice websites should include regular reports of its PPG activities.

PPGs are important elements in a society which, increasingly, promotes participation engagement, control etc. If we feel unhappy about our GP services, we should assert our views through the PPG.

So, contact your own practice, ask what progress is being made for a PPG and indicate your wish to participate. A strong and active PPG will result in better services for all. Training will be offered to PPG members.

Walk on the *Wild Side*

By Paul Gorringe B&H Park Ranger

This project by the Craven Vale Community Association – and funded by the National Lottery - is moving along well.

With the help of Brighton and Hove City Council, Brighton Conservation Volunteers, Green Gym and members of the local community, we have been steadily clearing the local woodland at Craven Vale of bramble and old rubbish, and removing around 80% of the sycamore trees along the strip to be regenerated. This is to make way for over 350 native trees and shrubs, consisting of around 20 species, which will be planted over the next couple of months. 40 hazel trees have already been planted in the section nearest The Causeway.

The cut wood has been processed into logs, some of which will be used to create bug habitats and to line the steep paths and steps on-site, the rest are free to be taken by whoever may desire them.

A small hedge has been planted at the entrance from The Causeway, linking up a few scattered hawthorns and fruit trees. This will be allowed to grow for several years before it is laid traditionally, as along Wilson Avenue.

Several bird boxes have been installed on some of the remaining sycamores across the work site, so look out for nesting tits and other small birds this spring.

The glade clearance further down has had an immediate and dramatic impact. In 2009/10 only 5 species of butterfly were recorded here – this year 15 species were seen, including the beautiful and not-so-common white-letter hairstreak. This will now be managed as an open grassland glade.

A local carpenter has completed the 3 large and 5 small info boards, which look great and will be accompanied by an info/instructions board. He has also finished two of the three exercise stations - the chin-up bar and parallel bars with a sit-up bench still to come. We're also hoping to make a finger sign, pointing to local interest features such as the Neolithic Camp.

A local first-year art student has painted a selection of wildlife found in the woods, as an aid to identification - butterflies, birds, mammals, reptiles etc. They will be shown on one of the large boards and sited near a bench or picnic table and will include a snippet of info for each species.

We are currently looking to purchase around 20 fruit trees to plant as a local 'orchard' in the centre of the site. The Sussex species have been hard to get hold of, so we may have to source the trees from further afield such as Devon or similar.

Over the next three months we'll be planting all the remaining trees, as well as some native bluebells in the hazel area, building benches/picnic tables, installing the exercise apparatus and notice boards, levelling paths for safer access, putting up more bird boxes, creating hibernation houses and other habitats, carrying out wildlife surveys, and much more to be sure.

This exciting project is the first of its kind in the city, bringing together local professionals, volunteer groups and the local community to improve both the access and wildlife potential in the woods, whilst encouraging folk to get outdoors and get in shape!

DON'T BE TAME ... WALK ON THE WILD SIDE!



To get involved contact Craven Vale Community Association by emailing us at usethevale@aol.com or leave a message on 01273 571 573. You can also view the notice boards around the estate for upcoming work days and events.

Meridian TV region gets set for digital

Digital TV switchover is the biggest change in television since the introduction of colour. In 2012 analogue television will be switched off across the Meridian TV region. If you don't have digital TV by the time of switchover, you will lose your TV channels.

If you are still watching analogue TV (five channels or fewer) on any of your sets, you need to convert them to digital. Virtually any existing TV can be converted using a Freeview box, a digital satellite service or digital cable.

Almost everyone will be able to watch Freeview after switchover – even homes currently out of coverage. You can check the options for going digital in your area, and what channels will be available through an aerial, using the postcode checker at www.digitaluk.co.uk.

If you're 75 and over or eligible disabled, the Help Scheme will write to you directly and in plenty of time to ask if you want help.

For older and disabled viewers who may find making the switch difficult, the BBC-run Switchover Help Scheme is at hand to provide everything you need to switch one TV set to digital.

Most eligible people will be asked to pay £40 towards the standard option of help. For eligible people on income-related benefits, it's free. This includes easy to use equipment, an approved installer to supply and install the equipment, and a 12 month aftercare service including a free helpline.

Further information on the Switchover Help Scheme visit www.helpscheme.co.uk or call free on 0800 40 85 900. Textphone users can call 0800 40 85 936.

If you have any questions about the switchover, you can call the Digital UK advice line on 08456 50 50 50 or visit www.digitaluk.co.uk



Singing Groups For Health & Wellbeing

No singing ability is required!

We have two weekly "BetterBreathing" Singing Groups, one in Brighton and one in Hove. They are for older people in general, and for people with long-term health conditions, e.g. asthma, depression, stroke, Parkinson's, heart conditions, cancer etc. We have a lot of fun singing songs together!

Singing is very healthy - when we sing all areas of our brain are stimulated!

People leave feeling uplifted, their general health and well-being improves, and often they sleep better. Their posture is more upright, their lung volume increases. People with long term health problems report that they are more able to manage their disease and cope with daily life.

We sing songs that our members suggest: a mixture of show/ film tunes, Beatles, Elvis Presley, Vera Lynn and many more. We are fortunate to have a fantastic pianist, Polina Shepherd, who greatly contributes to making our sessions uplifting.

We offer our members some relaxation / singing / breathing exercises, plus gentle physical exercises and stretches which they can do while sitting down.

The groups are very friendly and supportive, and welcome newcomers. We laugh and chat a lot – a brilliant way of making new friends! We have a break with tea and biscuits halfway through our sessions.

We meet up about once a month for lunch, which is very popular.

If you would like to attend, or want more info, please ring Udit on 01273 556 755.

Or visit our website at www.singforbetterhealth.co.uk

Locations and times:

Mondays - 1.45 to 3.15 pm
Patching Lodge, Eastern Rd, Brighton
(next to Bingo Hall), BN1 0DE

Fridays - 11.30 am to 1 pm
Elizabeth Court, 65 Wilbury Rd, Hove (near to the County Cricket Ground) BN3 3EX

Readers' Contributions

The Volunteer Waltz

A poem by Clive Taplin

I've laughed and I've cried and felt good inside,
Sometimes thought I could have done better,
Though at the end of the day they usually say,
Call again love whenever you're passing.
There's a cuppa whenever you're passing.

The needs may be small, take no time at all,
The difference can be quite surprising,
A six inch gain on a lavatory chain,
Can lessen the pain in an arm gone lame,
Pop in love whenever you're passing.
There's a biscuit if ever you're passing.

Some people are haunted by thoughts of the past,
And fears of the present and future.
I am myself, and I know you are too,
So take hold of my hand, and we'll soldier on through,
With a smile, and a kiss at the meeting,
And a wave and a tear at the parting.

And what I love much, is the warmth of your touch,
As you stroke the back of my hand.
But is this a bed in a ward for the dead,
Or a tent in Samarkand?
Whichever my friend, do come back again,
Right now I have sand in my head.
And I think I have sand for my bed.

Hello my dear friend, you've come
back again,
How good it is just to see you.
Go look for a chair and put it down there,
And then I can tell you about it.

I can't wait to hear all about it.

(First published in the Neighbourhood Care Scheme newsletter)

The Age of Discretion

A poem by Len Goldman

Having just reached the age of discretion,
I shall act like a sage
And accept my old age,
And not let it become an obsession.

Though I'm not growing younger each day,
I'm as old as I am
And I don't give a damn,
And I'm not quite decrepit, I'd say.

Here's a recipe; when you are old,
Just you carry on
As you've always done;
Be positive, purposeful, and bold!

I know I'm no longer a lad,
And I never wear jeans,
But I'm still full of beans;
Being old isn't nearly so bad.

Send your contributions or letters to: Mandi Sherratt,
The Pensioners' Forum, 1st Floor, Intergen House, 65-67
Western Road, Hove, BN3 2JQ, or email mandi.sherratt@bh-impetus.org - unfortunately we can't print them all & some may be edited, but we really want your opinions!

A gentle introduction to enter University life - A Brilliant Take on Life - by Nick Correlli

Now, at the age of 56, I am safely ensconced in the halls of academia at City College, Brighton, doing an ACCESS Course in Politics, Policy Making & Globalisation.

I would, in a humble way, recommend to anyone thinking that traditional learning skills are a fossilised indentation on the coastal cliff-face, a stones throw away from the delightful seafront at Swanage and Durdle Door in Dorset.

I was preparing for College life, in April 2010, buying my first ever lap-top computer.

In 2011, after a three year 'Health MOT sabbatical with a brand new knee joint, I decided to join the College. Having made sure that the Student Support Team understood the limitations of my health issues; I sat the 'entry tests' and failed them with flying colours! I was 'spooked' by being 'tested' on a programme delivered by a computer. A little freaky to my way of thinking!

Because I had taken the trouble of bringing with me a portfolio, of previous experiences when dealing with the bureaucracy in England, plus a couple of examples of third quarter C20th British Politics, the Course Director decided to take a chance on offering me a place for the September intake. It was a steep learning curve. Coming out of school in a 'streamed' system into an all abilities dynamic was a shock.

However once I had softened my competitive streak, the inclusiveness of the all abilities teaching proved fun and informative. With a lot of communication with my fellow students, I managed to cross over to the 'shared experience format' which was very interesting.

The ACCESS Course is ideal as a taster for university. It lasts from September until late June, and includes revision style studies in Math's, English and IT, which is great.

We do more presentations, prepared work and study structures than I ever did at school.

The College was right to take a gamble with me. I am benefiting greatly from the social interaction at the visits to Sussex & Brighton University, introductions to lectures, seminars and tutorials, exploring subjects that I am really interested in. I am also achieving some good grades on technology that I would have run a mile from eighteen months ago. Wow!

So it's a big thank you to everyone at City College - and please, if you want to return to education after four decades out of the system, go on, give it a whirl. I promise you, you will have the time of your life! I am doing just that. Considering that at the age of 27 I was 'written off' as a disabled adult by bureaucracy, life has improved - immensely.

Joan Brown, 80,
cancer survivor



**1 in 3 women
who get breast
cancer are over 70,
so don't assume
you're past it.**

A lump isn't the only sign of breast cancer. If you're worried about any changes to your breasts, tell your doctor straight away. Finding it early makes it more treatable and could save your life.

