



NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2020 Edition

Older Peoples Day 2020

Chairs Report

Shortly after the first planning meeting in March new guidelines and advice from Public Health made it very clear that we could not produce a booklet full of invitations to cream teas, outings, cinema screenings and many other lovely events which should be taking place in October. At that time the future was unclear. I remember we of a certain age were advised not to go out for three weeks – THREE WEEKS! Impossible! Well look where we are now.

During the course of the planning meeting ESSA was asked to consider re-vamping Older People's Day into a more vibrant, up-to-date celebration that might also appeal to a wider audience. As a 50+ organisation we might now be beginning to look a bit out of touch. Very few 50+ people (my own children included) regard themselves as 'old/older'.

We were asked to consider having an annual Ageing Well Festival instead.

Ho! Hum! We thought – OK we'll give it a go.

Then of course after that first planning meeting on 6th March came the complete Covid-19 shutdown.

ESSA and ESCC had to come up with an alternative plan – a virtual Ageing Well Festival to be held in September and October promoting online events only. It was the best we could do. It is new and it is different and some of us will have to make the supreme effort to get in there and befriend our computers and other devices.

Those of you who requested a hard copy of the OPD booklet will receive a hard copy of the Ageing Well Festival booklet everyone else will find copies on line.

Meridian had planned a cinema screening and an outing for October which we will put on ice until we feel it is safe to go ahead whenever that is.

These will be advertised with posters and leaflets as soon as we think it is OK to do so.

The Computer Drop-in will resume once the Hillcrest Centre re-opens. This will probably be at the beginning of October.

Unfortunately the Sunday Lunch Club has fallen victim of the Day Club committee who no longer wants us to be there. Cora and I are looking for an alternative venue but in the present situation that will take some time.

I know how unhappy you will be to learn that you will no longer be able to enjoy your Sunday get-togethers along with the outings, cream teas and the Pantomime at Christmas time. Cora, Zephyryn and I are equally saddened by this. But there you are.

Please take care of yourselves, stay safe and don't forget your gas masks.

Kate Davies



Pension Credit

Exactly what is Pension Credit?

According to AgeUK, it is a benefit for pensioners which is not being claimed by 1,200,000 (1.2 million) Pensioners who are entitled to receive a few pounds

extra to their income! This means that, according to our rough calculation, amongst our total East Sussex Seniors Association membership, there could be up to 1,000 pensioners who could be receiving this benefit, but are not claiming it. **Are you one of them?**

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AGM Report January 30th 2020

This was held at the Hillcrest Centre, Newhaven. It was extremely well attended, which is quite unusual for us.

Chairs report from the previous year indicated the huge changes taking place in the health services. This has meant that both ESSA and the Meridian committee have had to work harder this year to make our voices heard.

The 86-page East Sussex Health & Social Care Plan, a response to the governments Long Term Plan, was a challenge including the 5-page glossary for all the acronyms. There will now be only one Clinical Commissioning Group for the whole of East Sussex and our own High Weald CCG will disappear. Through the Lewes Havens Patient Participation Group we have been able to invite speakers who ask us to comment on changes or new initiatives planned for our area. We worry that once the CCG incorporates the whole of East Sussex we will lose the many High Weald commissioners who have become friends over the years.

Refurbishments for the Lewes Victoria Hospital is ongoing and will now become an Urgent Treatment Centre which we hope will avoid having to go to Brighton or Haywards Heath for simple procedures.

Meridian members enjoyed the pantomime at the Barn Theatre in January, two outings during the year and a cinema screening for Older Peoples Day.

The intergenerational project with the Language School based at the Summer School was a huge success with 30 members over the course of three weeks chatting to international students and enjoying a wonderful cream tea organised by the Hillcrest Café staff.

Speakers - Dave Harley was thanked for his interesting talk – Online Scams and how to avoid them.

Dawn Norman - Havens Community Hub described the new Havens Community Hub – a new way of working and supporting the local community. They now support 25 groups including the Happy Club renamed the Havens Happy Club and a new group formerly run by AGEUK at Newhaven Day Club and at St Davids Court in Peacehaven.

Our committee remains the same and we look forward to planning our next year's activities at the first committee meeting to be held quite soon.

Meridian Forum COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIR Kate Davies (Piddinghoe) 01273 516207

VICE CHAIR Pat Bowman

SECRETARY Hillary Ryan (Seaford)

TREASURER Marilyn Nolan (Newhaven)

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Chris Bowman (Telscombe Cliffs)

Eileen Wood (*South Heighton*) – Rowena Reeves (*South Heighton*)

Pat Bowman / Chris Bowman (*Telscombe*)

Marian Stanley (*Newhaven*)

Zena Gibbs (Seaford) – Gill Hart (*Newhaven*)

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Pension Credit

With this Newsletter, we enclose a pamphlet which explains everything.

The pamphlet gives you a Freephone number to call and a list of details you will need to make a claim. It's as easy as that, so, go on, have a go!

What you may not realise is that if you get only £1 per week extra, having this benefit opens many other doors to other savings. For instance, most Councils give a reduction in Council Tax (possibly worth many hundreds of pounds), or an increase in Housing Benefit, plus dental treatment is free and now that the rest of us have to pay for our TV licence, if you are over 75 then yours will continue to be free.

So, what's stopping you?

It's very simple, so, go on, have a go!

We would also love to hear from you that you have been successful. Letting us know by phoning **01273 583213 (BT Call Guardian in place)** or **07866 301908** would give us a great deal of satisfaction to know that this message has been successful and the knowledge that many more of our members are getting what they are entitled to.

SO, GO ON, HAVE A GO!

I would like to thank personally all those shopkeepers, taxi drivers, Food Bank staff, bin men, postmen, Hillcrest Café delivering meals, Rachel in Piddinghoe providing delicious meals, CTLA and to the many, many others who have helped and may have to continue to help in the coming weeks.

Thank You!