



EASTLEIGH SOUTHERN PARISHES OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUM

NEWSLETTER 49
May 2009

TRAVEL TOKENS FALL-OUT

1 Our Petition of just over 2,000 signatures calling for the restoration of the travel tokens presented on February 23 has produced no response as yet from the Borough Council.

2 Our complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman about the travel tokens decision has been accepted and we are to be notified of an adviser. (Copies are available on request)

3 The Hon. Secretary's complaint to the EBC Standards Committee about the Leader of the Council, Councillor Keith House, has been referred by them to the Standards Board.

4 A photograph of our members' lobby of Councillors before the Council's Budget Meeting on February 23 with our banner has been printed in full colour in "Activate", Help the Aged's magazine for older people, which is distributed to forums and others across the UK.

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Unfortunately, we have some bad news to report. After the February Council meeting, but before the publication of the March Newsletter, the ESPOPF Committee received a delegation from the Borough Council of 3 Cabinet Members and Officers. We were told that our annual grant was under review, as our *behaviour* had not been satisfactory – no evidence was offered.

Even though the grant was for our Open Meetings, it was clear that, if we accepted it, our freedom of speech in our Newsletter would be compromised. ESPOPF's members had made their views known on this issue two years ago through the columns of the Newsletter and so the Committee decided that, in order to remain independent and *a force to be reckoned with*, we had no alternative but to refuse the EBC grant. However, we wrote to the Chief Executive to say that we wanted to work with the Council in partnership, if they would respect our independence and expertise in all matters concerning older people: *nothing about us without*

us. No reply on this has been received.

After our March Newsletter was published, giving a frank and honest account of proceedings at the Council meeting, we received further correspondence from Cabinet members and from Hampshire Adult Services, who had been alerted to the reference to them as the sponsor of the Newsletter. Our attention was drawn to the Local Government Act, which prevents councils from publishing party political statements or enabling others to do the same.

We have been asked to make it clear that the views expressed in the March Newsletter are not the views of Hampshire Adult Services and we are happy to do that. In fact, reference to them was made in error: their grant was not used for that edition.

As far as we are concerned, we, as an independent body, were not engaging in party politics, just relaying impressions of the ruling party's attitude to older people. We find it difficult to understand how the law may gag criticism of individual political parties that comprise a council on the basis that "*it appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party*". Had the comments been flattering, we wonder whether we would then have been accused of affecting public support for a political party!

ESPOPF's committee has decided, therefore, that it would be preferable to be independent of council funding altogether. Fortunately, there are other sources of funding open to us. We hope members will express their views on this at our next Open Meeting on the 19th or write to us.

ESPOPF COMMITTEE 2008/9

Chair: Patience Sambrook (Hedge End) 01489 782552
Vice Chair: Jackie Charles (Hamble) 02380 453296
Hon. Sec. Diane Andrewes (Bursledon) 02380 403311
Hon. Treasurer/Membership Secretary: Betty Lawrence (Netley) 02380 453680
Web Master: David Andrewes (Bursledon) david@espopf.org
Members: John Taylor (Butlocks Heath) Jean Huggett (Botley) Margaret Phippard (Hamble) Shirley Driscoll
Pat Rose (West End) June Watson (Hedge End) Peggy Budd (Netley Abbey) Jean Norton (Bursledon) Gloria
Bowles (Hamble)

(Anyone interested in filling the Botley vacancy should contact the Hon. Sec.)

MARCH OPEN MEETING

About 60 people attended our EUROPEAN HUSTINGS to hear the views of 4 candidates on the many varied and interesting questions sent in by members. All the political parties, except the Liberal Democrats, sent their candidates and it was useful to note the different approaches and responses. It was disappointing to some that all the candidates were white males and that many members seemed to be unaware of the achievements of the European Parliament. All speakers were rationed to five minute-replies and David Andrewes on the gong and Patience Sambrook in the chair ensured that order reigned. There was no time for supplementary questions, so the speakers were not challenged on their answers, which was a pity. It was obvious that some of our members were frustrated by this. However, it was an enjoyable session and members appreciated the fact that the candidates had travelled from afar to speak to an enthusiastic audience of older people.

The morning activities were varied and interesting: the usual exercises with Diane Rodaway; consultation on EBC's Walking Strategy; an unofficial survey of the EBC Hospital Taxi service, in the light of the intention to extend the service. (See letter page)

The new food regime ensures that more time is available for the morning and afternoon sessions and committee members do not have to work so hard in distributing the food. We still rely heavily on Betty Lawrence to take and place the orders and balance the books and David Andrewes and Jean Norton have taken care of the desserts (delicious roulades last time) and special needs. We appreciate all that and thank them very much.

The raffle raised £49. Thanks to all who brought prizes and bought tickets.

MARCH 100 CLUB WINNERS

£50 Pat Spaven (80) West End
£25 Rita Milton (10) Netley Abbey
£25 John Lawrence (60) Netley Abbey

BHH AGE-FRIENDLY ACTION PLAN

It is hoped that this will be printed soon and launched at the AGM in July.

HAMBLE VALLEY U3A

The first Hamble Valley Branch meeting will be held on May 12 at the Underhill Centre, St John's Road, Hedge End at 2-4pm. If you would like to join, please telephone our Membership Secretary on 01489 781845 or turn up on the day. The annual subscription is fixed at £15. Subsequent meetings will be held on June 9 and July 14 – same venue and time.

Patience Sambrook

2009 RESEARCH

Hampshire County Council wishes to commission us to research the provision of information in the county. How easy is it to find out what we need to know and where to go for it? What happens at the other end of the telephone if we make an enquiry? Are we satisfied?

We know already that providing older people with the information they need when they need it presents real challenges. This exercise will be a good opportunity, as always, to provide real evidence - this time about how the advice services are meeting our needs and what improvements would make a difference.

If you would like to join our research team, be involved in the preliminary brainstorming sessions, or attend a focus group, please contact David or Diane Andrewes (Tel. 02380 403311), who will be delighted to invite you to a meeting, to discuss any other form of involvement or just to answer any questions. No experience is necessary, but curiosity about the availability and supply of information to older people would be extremely useful.

Obviously, we shall be involving all our members in the research after our preliminary discussions.
Diane Andrewes

NEXT OPEN MEETING: AGM JULY 21

NOTICE BOARD

FREecycle

Freecycle matches people who have things they want to get rid of/give away with people who can use them, so keeping useable items out of landfills. Google *Eastleigh Freecycle*.

ONE COMMUNITY CARERS' CENTRE IN EASTLEIGH

This Centre produces a very useful Newsletter and holds regular meetings mostly in Eastleigh, but in the Southern Parishes on the third Wednesday of the month. On Wednesday May 20th there will be a Southern Parishes Carers' Drop-in at the Barleycorn Hedge End 12 – 2pm. For more information, contact **Joanne Newcombe 02380 902404**

NHS HEALTH CHECKS

Health Secretary, Alan Johnson, has announced that everyone aged 40-74 in England will be invited for a free health check as part of a national programme to identify their risk of illnesses such as coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease. The checks will be available at doctors' surgeries, health centres, walk-in centres and pharmacies.

All NHS Trusts will be offering MRSA screening to all relevant elective patients and free prescriptions will be available to people living with cancer and related conditions.

NEW GUIDE FOR CARING FOR OLDER PEOPLE

Members will be glad to know that the Nursing and Midwifery Council has produced a set of principles focusing on respect, dignity and communication. The guidance covers the skills and qualities of nurses who provide

the care; different aspects of that care; the different environments where care is delivered. It says that care should be focused on the needs of the individual and that older people should be equal partners in their own care.

SUPPORT THE PETITION

Google "nurse whistleblower" and support Margaret Haywood

IMPROVE THE LIGHTING IN YOUR HOME

The RNIB and the Thomas Pocklington Trust have produced a free booklet for older people on how to improve the lighting in the home. Older people need more light because their retinas age. Poor vision is a major cause of falls and good lighting can reduce the risk. Task lighting can produce 25 times more light than ceiling mounted lighting. The booklet may be obtained from the RNIB website: <http://onlineshop.rnib> or call 0845 702 3153

CALLING PERFORMERS

One Community is planning to revive its list of entertainers and is looking for people who can give a talk, show slides, sing, dance, play a musical instrument to community groups for a modest fee or expenses only.

Please contact Julia Allan on 02380 902457 or email jallan@1community.org.uk

REMAP

REMAP is a charity that designs and makes equipment which is not available commercially for disabled people. Tel. Richard Bannister on 01590 616330 for details.

NEW CO-ORDINATOR FOR HISP

Observant members will have noticed Julie Williams, the new HISP Co-ordinator, who has come to join Sally Fisher. Julie has attended a couple of Open Meetings and has come to Eastleigh from Southampton's Later Years Team. She was an adviser on housing options in the private sector in Southampton and with the CAB in South Wales. Julie and Sally are keen to help members with queries on almost anything at Open Meetings or by phone and will do home visits to help with benefit and other claim forms. To contact HISP, call 02380 902405 or email hisp@1community.org.uk

NEW NATIONAL HELPLINE

First-Stop will provide expert advice and assistance on issues that affect older people such as housing advice and local care and support services. Look on their website: www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk Tel. **0800 3777070**

LATEST SWINE FLU NEWS

A Southampton research team is on the verge of a breakthrough that could help stop a full-blown global pandemic. They are producing a two-hour diagnostic kit, which will identify the pandemic version of the disease and enable quarantine to begin and treatment to start. At the moment, this takes two days.

YOU WRITE...

Dear Editor

I wish to update readers on help with travel. The Council is re-tendering the Hospital Taxi Scheme contracts for extended services, which will serve all the surgeries and recognised medical clinics within the Borough of Eastleigh and up to 3 miles from the Borough boundary. The present list of hospitals will not be changed. It is intended to extend operation from 5 to 7 days a week. Full details will be available once the contracts have been awarded.

We also intend to run a pilot Attendance Allowance take-up campaign in Fair Oak and the Disabled Person's Railcard will be offered from June/July.

All Blue Star bus services within Eastleigh are now operating with low-floor, easy-access buses and new buses are operating on First's 16/16A service (Netley/Hamble area).

*David Airey Olls Hound
Cabinet Member for Transport.*

Dear Editor

The National Trust is on the lookout for volunteers to help with a restoration of interiors project at one of Hampshire's most historic sites, Mottisfont Abbey, near Romsey.

To find out about volunteering opportunities, email:

mike.hudson@nationaltrust.org.uk

Dear Editor

Glaucoma is the leading cause of preventable blindness in the UK. About 2% of the population over 40 have glaucoma, but half of them are undiagnosed and in danger of irreversible and progressive sight loss. Early diagnosis is essential, but because people are unaware that they might be at risk if they do not have their eyes tested.

Everyone over 40 should have the regular eye test that includes the three glaucoma tests every two years, whether or not they believe anything is wrong with their vision.

*David J Wright FIAM FRSA
CEO International Glaucoma
Association Ashford Kent*

*[Terry Smith, of Open Sight,
reminds us that people over 60
are eligible for free eye tests.
Tel. 02380 641244 for more
information – Ed.]*

Dear Editor

I have criticised our local government representatives in the past and a few years ago I decided to try and experience the role of councillor so that I was better informed. I offered my services to my local town council as a co-opted member.

Although I have always played an active part in the town, I did not fulfil what seemed to be the main criteria: I was not a member of the ruling party, I did not have any relatives on the council and I was not willing to drive Councillor X to her meetings.

My plea to your readers is to use their votes wisely at the next elections – vote for a person who is interested in your well being and is brave enough to challenge the ruling party.

*Name and address
supplied to the Editor.*

Dear Editor

I do not know when EBC decided to withdraw their FREE collection of unwanted large, household items, but there will be a large number of people on benefit like us, who will suffer as the result.

My wife and I are in our late seventies. We need to have our gas cooker taken away

and the Council has told us that we will have to pay half the usual cost ie £13.50. Please do what you can for us.

*DJ Missons Hedge End
(Councillor Steve Holes has told us that people on benefit do not have to pay, but this is not what Mr Missons was told in writing, so we are following this up – Ed.)*

Dear Editor

Anna, my little Nanna, 4 feet 11 inches of sheer determination, was a Suffragette. She tied herself to railings and was prosecuted by the police in her efforts to get the vote for women.

It is so important that you use your vote in the County Council and European Parliament elections on June 4.

Jean Norton Bursledon

Dear Editor

I am a 4th year medical student at Southampton University researching depression in later life. It would help my research if I could interview some older people in their homes about factors that influence depression. I should be grateful if your readers would contact me, if they are willing to help, please.

*Clare Blackwell Southampton
166 Osborne Road
SO17 2FF
Tel. 02380 581320*

Dear Editor

Thanks for the invitation to your Open Meeting. It was very informative discussing the many barriers there are to walking for older people. I hope the Walking Strategy will go some way to alleviating these.

*Peter Bousted EBC
Senior Transport Planner*