

# SENIORS' NEWS



GSF

**March 2010**

*From the Chair We're here. We think. We vote.*

There is no doubt that I have to abbreviate my contribution on this occasion. Our esteemed Editor deems it so. Moreover, I am about to shut down my computer in preparation for a fortnight of taking the warm air and the gentle sea breeze of Lanzarote.

So how shall I abbreviate my offering? Bulleted points! That's the way forward...

- What a wonderful Christmas Carol Sing-Along we enjoyed before Christmas. It was so rewarding to see so many people enjoying themselves and participating with such joyful, full-voiced sound.
- The snows caused cancellation – or rather deferment - of our January Meeting's proposed activity.
- The recent Meeting with Chris Kippax was not only useful in explanation of Government's 'Total Place' programme, but it was also enjoyable and informative.
- Cllr. David Milstead has been rescheduled (from January) for 09 March and we hope Members will turn out in force to pose questions about financial projections and provisions in Gillingham. This is the Meeting I shall miss while I am on holiday. In my absence, please ensure that David starts from the position of the people and not from that of financial constraint. Remember: you can put anything into a budget, provided it goes in FIRST.
- I have sent in some comments on the Proposals for reorganisation of Dorset Association of Seniors' Forums. More responses would still be appreciated.
- We must put together a sensible plan for an Application for a Grant to conduct 'Falls and Bone Health' activities during June – National 'Falls' Month. We can consider £500 as a possible amount available to support our plans. Thinking caps on! Proposals need to be 'filed' by 01 April, latest, I think.
- What a pity the so-called Czar for the Elderly, Joan Bakewell, is unable to accept our invitation to North-Dorset. It seems that she does not venture out into the field to consult with those whom she is supposed to represent. One wonders how she can perform her, admittedly non-statutory, duties without meaningful social interaction with groups such as ours.
- Faye and Andrew Oliver continue to work on their entertaining presentation detailing their recent holiday in New Zealand. Perhaps we shall gain some idea of how NZ operates without a compulsory retirement age.
- It is with regret that I must announce the enforced resignation of two of our Committee Officers. We thank them for their work and wish them well. Now we have Vacancies for Minuting Secretary and Publicity Officer. Offers to fill these Vacancies would be appreciated. I know that Hilary Foggo will be more than happy to train a new Minuting Secretary.

I think our Editor is screaming at me for using more than twice the number of words that she had prescribed. So, I'll wish you a happy next Meeting and look forward to seeing you on my return from the Lanzarote sunshine. Keep well!

*Terry*

BT SCAM

This is genuine! This actually happened to one of our friends, but fortunately he didn't fall for it," *writes my correspondent TJ*

I received a call from a 'representative' of BT, informing me that he was disconnecting me because of an unpaid bill. He demanded payment immediately of £31.00, or it would be £ 118.00 to re-connect at a later date.

The guy wasn't even fazed when I told him I was with Virgin Media, allegedly VM have to pay BT a percentage for line rental! I asked the guy's name – the very 'English' John Peacock with a very 'African' accent - & phone number:0800 0800152. Obviously the guy realized I wasn't believing his story, so offered to demonstrate that he was from BT. I asked how and he told me to hang up and try phoning someone - he would dis-connect my phone to prevent this. AND HE DID !! My phone was dead - no engaged tone, nothing - until he phoned me again.

Very pleased with himself, he asked if that was enough proof that he was with BT. I asked how the payment was to be made & he said credit card, there & then. I said that I didn't know how he'd done it, but had absolutely no intention of paying him, I didn't believe his name or that he worked for BT. He hung up. I phoned 1471 & phoned his fictitious 0800 number – not recognised.

I phoned the police to let them know, I wasn't the first! It's only just started apparently but it is escalating. Their advice was to let, as many people know by word of mouth of this scam. The fact that the phone does go off would probably convince some people it's real

This is good but not that clever. He gave the wrong number - it should have been 0800 800152 which takes you through to BT Business. The cutting off of the line is very simple, he stays on the line with the mute button on and you can't dial out - but he can hear you trying (This is because the person who initiates a call is the one to terminate it). When you stop trying he cuts off and immediately calls back. You could almost be convinced! The sad thing is that it is so simple that it will certainly fool the elderly and vulnerable. **Please pass this on to friends and family and be on your guard.**

## INFORMATION

PENSION CREDIT

Pension Credit is a tax free payment for those aged 60 or over who live in Great Britain.

The amount of Pension Credit awarded depends on how much money you have coming in each week and how much you have saved or invested. There are two parts to Pension Credit - the Guarantee Credit and the Savings Credit.

The Guarantee Credit can top up weekly income if you are aged 60 or over. You will probably get the Guarantee Credit if the money you have coming in is less than £130 a week for a single person or £198.45 if you have a partner. These amounts may be more if you or your partner are severely disabled, are a Carer or have housing costs.

The Savings Credit is awarded if you are aged 65 or over and you have saved some money towards your retirement. You could get up to £20.40 a week if you are single or £27.03 a week if you have a partner. Savings Credit can be paid on its own or with the Guaranteed

*Information from The Pensions Service  
0845 6012923*

**CHERISH YOU LOCAL  
STORE AND POST OFFICE**

**BROAD ROBIN STORES  
AND POST OFFICE  
BROAD ROBIN, GILLINGHAM**

They stock a wide range of Groceries, Fresh Fruit, Vegetables, Frozen Food, and Fresh Meat. They also sell Sweets, Toys, Gifts, Birthday, Celebration Cards and Stationery. Etc

**They will deliver orders  
above £5 minimum.**

01747 825040

Free parking

## QUALITY OF LIFE

An estimated 3.5m older people live alone.

12% of older people (over 1.1m) feel trapped in their own home.

In England, 8% of those aged 75 and over say they have difficulty accessing a corner shop, 10% a supermarket, 10% a post office, 9% a doctor's surgery and 17% to a local hospital.

From 65 onwards participation in arts, car ownership, museums and galleries, sport and learning all start to reduce. For example, car ownership falls from over 70% to 42% and participation in the arts drops from 65% to 50%.

7 out of 10 over 65s have never used the internet.

Since April 2008, all pensioners in the UK have been entitled to a minimum concession of free, off-peak travel (valid between 9.30am-11pm weekdays and at all times on weekends and Bank Holidays). Some local authorities have introduced more generous schemes to take into account other forms of transport and 24-hour travel.

Pensioners in England cannot use their bus pass in Scotland, Wales or N Ireland, and vice versa.

An estimated 500,000 older people in the UK are abused either psychologically (34%), financially (20%), physically (19%) or sexually (3%).

Dementia affects 1 in 5 people over the age of 80, 1 in 4 over the age of 85 and 1 in 3 over 90. There are currently 700,000 people suffering with dementia in the UK. This figure is expected to rise to 1m by 2025.

### **BOWEL CANCER**

Can be cured if caught early. Currently people between 60 and 69 are contacted to be sent a screening kit. If you are over 70 you can request a screening kit from The NHS Bowel Cancer Screening Programme  
freephone helpline 0800 7076060

## FACTS AND FIGURES

In 2009 there were around 12m pensioners living in the UK, 7.5m women and 4.4m men of state pension age. This represents 19% of the total population.

By 2050, the number of people of state pension age is forecast to be 16m, which will represent 21% of the total population.

Average life expectancy in England stands at 77.7 years for men and 81.8 years for women.

According to the latest district by district NHS figures, men in Blackpool live on average to 73.2 years – 10.5 years fewer than their counterparts in Kensington and Chelsea, whilst women in Hartlepool have the lowest life expectancy of 78.1 years; 9.6 years less than women in Kensington and Chelsea.

40% of those aged 65-74, 55% of those aged 75-84 and 67% of those aged 85 and over have a disability or illness that limits the quality of their life.

**VOTING POWER OF OLDER PEOPLE.** Our voices matter because we make up such a large share of the population and because we are more inclined to vote. In 2005 three-quarters of people aged over 65 voted, compared to half of 25- to 34-year-olds and just 37 per cent of 18- to 25-year-olds.

### **FROM THE EDITOR**

Before you cast your vote look carefully at the Political Parties and weigh up how they compare by looking at what the Conservatives did for older people when they were in power and what the present Government have done. Don't listen to what they say they will do but compare their records with regard to the National Health Service, Pensions, Transport, Bus Passes, help for Carers etc. Compare anything that you feel affects you and your families life. We need to look at the bigger picture not at the mud slinging that goes with an Election. June

Printed and published on behalf of the Gillingham Seniors Forum.  
Editor June Tipping. 35 Laburnum Way, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4RU. Tel: 01747 823684. Email: jazz35@btinternet .com

Please send articles to Editor for inclusion on the next newsletter by 15th May.

### THREE RIVERS

Danny and Rogie are running the London marathon to raise funds for our new Community Centre. Sponsorship forms can be picked up at Gillingham Library.

#### **Danny Thrasher**

Danny and his family moved to Gillingham from London in 2002 and he currently works in Shaftesbury. The family firmly believes that the centre of the community is its sports centre. He is delighted to be part of the RiversMeet team helping to raise funds for our community centre.

“As a family we enjoy recreation and feel it is an important part of life bringing us all together. I have been running since 2001 and have completed five marathons including London '09 and '08. Last year I achieved a personal best time of 3.08 and I hope this year the training in the cold and dark months will pay off. If I can haul my body through the remaining weeks of training then we should be proud owners of another London Medal

#### **Rogie Goorun**

Rogie and her family have lived in Gillingham for the last 16 years. She is currently working in Shaftesbury Comprehensive.

She started running when she first came to the town, joining the Gillingham Trotters. When training for the marathon she regularly leaves the house up by 7.00 am for her early morning run.

Currently Rogie is focussed on getting fit for the London Marathon, varying her daily distances to build up to the 26 mile pavement pounding on April 25<sup>th</sup>. This will be Rogie's third London Marathon.

Make cheques payable to “Gillingham Community and Leisure Trust”

#### **MS SOCIETY ART GROUP**

Meets every Monday morning from 10 am in the Gillingham Methodist Church Hall.

New members are always welcome – both experienced and beginners. Just turn up on a Monday morning or contact the leader, Phil Morton on 01747 833743. You don't have to have MS to join.!!!

#### **LABURNUM LIVE MUSIC CLUB**

For the over 50s

Meets on the 3<sup>RD</sup> Monday of each month at The Royal British Legion Club School Road, Gillingham at 2 pm

March 15<sup>th</sup> BLUE CHIP JAZZ

Membership £3 a session or £30 a year . Includes Tea and Biscuits. Just turn up or Call June for details 01747 823684

### **GILLINGHAM SENIORS FORUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**WILL TAKE PLACE ON  
13<sup>TH</sup> APRIL AT 12.30**

**You will find an attendance form with this Newsletter please come if you possibly can.**

**If you need transport book with the Gillingham Area Voluntary Car Link Scheme on 07599311443 or take a taxi, we will reimburse your travel costs on the day. Telephone Ted on 01747 821102 to join**

### VOLUNTEERS OPPORTUNITIES

#### **GILLINGHAM VOLUNTARY CAR LINK SCHEME**

Still have vacancies for Voluntary Drivers using their own cars. A mileage rate of 40 pence a mile is paid. Telephone the Coordinator Di Stuckey on 01747 821737

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#### **LABURNUM LIVE MUSIC CLUB (For the over 50.s)**

Needs one or two people to prepare refreshments (Tea and biscuits) for their members. on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month Between 1.30 and 4 pm.  
Telephone June on 01747 823684 for details.