



FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE OVER FIFTIES FORUM NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2020

Dear member,

This has been an extraordinary year; all of our lives have been affected in the most dramatic ways by the coronavirus pandemic. I have been fortunate enough to have been kept busy with the Over Fifties Forums and held our first online forum meeting with two great keynote speakers.

Our first speaker was Paul Rutterford who has been a volunteer presenter at Thanet's Academy FM for more than 8 years. Paul said: "What I soon began to realise during the first lockdown, from hearing about a host of good news stories, was that the people very quickly stepped up to volunteer and work together". Here are some of the stories:

- Bee Bishop, of Bee's BookShare, could not hold her book groups during the lockdown so brought her own delivery service to people. www.beesbookshare.co.uk/about/
- Residents came together to improve the coastline as unprecedented amounts of litter increased on our beaches during the easing of lockdown.

Our second speaker was Stephen Kelly, Prevent & Protect Fraud Officer from Kent Police. Steve said: "At present no one knows the true cost of fraud with one in three crimes being fraud and only 5% of scams being reported. Today, criminals are trained in the 'gift of the gab'. They rely upon pressure and making you panic into rash decisions. They get at you by your landline, your computer, your mobile phone and even the front door. They are wise in their use of the internet and some programs even allow them to choose the STD code and number being shown. Websites may look like the genuine article but be aware that there might be links on them that may lead you in the wrong direction. If you get a phone call from an unknown number don't be frightened to ask for their details, where they're based and tell them you will ring back."

If you ring back:

- Don't ring the number you are given nor the one that may be showing on your phone.
- If the caller says they are from your bank, use the telephone number on the back of your debit/ credit card.
- Try ringing a friend before using the phone for the call to the alleged scammer - they may not have rung off.

- If possible use a different phone.
- If the caller says they are from the Police you can ring 101 and ask to speak to the officer by name. This will enable you to do a check.
- Please do not give out items such as PIN numbers over the phone – banks and other institutions will not request them.

Scams and frauds have always been there. What is new is the use of the internet and telephone systems. But why are older people such a target? Well, 40 - 50 years ago, there were no credit or debit cards, many people rented their accommodation, there was no internet, many had to rely upon State Pension when retired and, if you had a bank account, reliance was placed upon the Bank Manager for everything. We have had to learn the complexities of the internet later in life. We were encouraged to have a company or private pension and to own our own homes and, as a result, we have more disposable income. Also, there is easier access to loans and overdrafts today.

What scams are there? To be honest there are too many to list. Basically, if there is a problem in the world, someone will try to make money out of it. The message is be on your guard.

Help is available from:

Kent Police: www.kent.police.uk/fraud

Your own bank's website

Action Fraud: www.actionfraud.police.uk

The telephone number on the back of your credit or debit card.

Preventing fraud

Together, let's stop scammers. 

Remember, ABC:

-  never Assume
-  never Believe
-  always Confirm

Get the latest scam advice:  [@KentPoliceECU](https://twitter.com/KentPoliceECU)

Making the Over Fifties Forum newsletter more accessible for people

We want to help people who are partially sighted or blind to enjoy the information in our Over Fifties Forum newsletters. To find out more please get in touch email fhoffs@kcv.org.uk or calling 07812 487971.

Advice came from Kent Association for the Blind. KAB also offer assistive technology support. To learn more visit www.kab.org.uk/get-support/services/assistive-technology/



How are you accessing your GP during Covid-19?

Over Fifties Forum would like to hear from you as concerns have been raised regarding some of the challenges people are facing, during Covid-19, in accessing their GP surgery.

PLEASE TELL US:

1. Have you used GP services during Covid-19?
2. How did you access your GP:
 - a. By telephone?
 - b. Through the GP's website 'eConsult'?
3. Were you offered a telephone appointment?
4. Were you offered a video call?
5. Were you offered a face to face appointment?
6. Do you use your GPs online consultation provider 'eConsult'?

Did you know there is the NHS app? (**not the Covid-19 app**) It allows you to:

- View your health records and current and past medicines.
- Order repeat prescriptions, see your available medicines and choose a pharmacy for your prescriptions to be sent to.
- Get health advice.
- Book GP appointments (not all GP surgeries are connected to this app).

Pauline said: "I regularly attend the Health Reference Group (HRG) meetings and I raised my concerns with them and asked for them to be cascaded back to Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)."

Clive Hart, Associate Lay Member - Patient & Public Engagement (Thanet), NHS Kent & Medway CCG, wrote to Cathy Finnis, Lay Member for Patient and Public Engagement for the Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group.

Clive wrote: "Our group of PPG Chairs from across Thanet are concerned re the eConsult system of communication with GP's in this district. They unanimously agree it is a far too long winded and non-user-friendly system and would really like practices to look at other possible forms of communication if possible. From our discussions it was clear that virtually everyone gave up after starting the process and even the most tech literate struggled to complete the process or, again, simply gave up later..."



Get in touch with Pauline, Coordinator for Folkestone & Hythe and Thanet Over Fifties Forums let us know how you are getting. Ring me on 078412 487971 or email fhoffs@kcv.org.uk.



FREE FINANCIAL WORKSHOPS Supporting people through challenging times

The Money Charity is a not-for-profit organisation that has been helping people for more than 25 years and is funding three financial workshops for Over Fifties Forum members. For more information, visit <https://themoneycharity.org.uk/>

The FREE FINANCIAL WORKSHOPS

Tues 12th Jan 2021, 11am:

Your Money during Challenging Times - this workshop has been designed to help people reassess their financial situation in light of the pandemic. Tips will be shared on budgeting, how to make your money work harder and save on everyday expenditure and where to go for further information and support.



Tues 19th Jan 2021, 11am: Redundancy & Your Money - redundancy may be a shock or it may be planned, but whatever the circumstances, there are important decisions to be made. This workshop will discuss the questions people need to ask themselves before making these decisions and will look at the different options. It will also help people think about budgeting and managing any debt they may have. Details of organisations offering support will also be shared.

Tues 26th Jan 2021, 11am: Mind Your Money - this workshop explores the importance of building financial resilience and the link between money and mental wellbeing. It also encourages people to think about their relationship with money and how, if necessary, they can begin to challenge this.

The workshops will take place via Zoom with a max. of 20 people per session as this allows time for Q&A's. Places will need to be booked.

Attendees will receive a free copy of The Money Charity's latest Money Manual; a handy guide to making the most of your money. If you would like to attend but are not confident using Zoom, we are more than happy to help you. Please ring Pauline on 07817 487971.

Are you eligible for the Warm Home Discount?

To qualify you will need to be in receipt of the [Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit](#) or on a low income.

Are you **eligible for Pension Credit**? To find out, visit www.gov.uk/pension-credit-calculator



Recently, Martin Lewis asked his viewers: "Are you one of 10,000s of women missing out on £1000s of state pension?"

Married women who hit state pension age before April 2016 are a key group who may be owed, but others – including widows, divorcees and the over-80s, whether married or not – should also check.

Take a look at the five below points and use the help number

1. If you're a married woman who hit state pension age before April 2016 and your state pension is less than 60% of your husband's, check now.
2. If you're a widow whose pension wasn't increased when your husband died, or who may have been underpaid while your husband was still alive, check now.
3. If you're a woman aged 80+ and get a state pension of less than £80.45/wk, check now – whether you're married, widowed, divorced or single.
4. If you're a divorced woman and should have benefited from your ex-husband's national insurance record, check now.
5. If you're the heir of a woman who was underpaid state pension while alive and has since died, check now.

www.moneysavingexpert.com/reclaim/married-women-missing-state-pension-boost/

To check if you have been underpaid and are owed, contact the government Pension Service and ask about your situation. Call 0800 731 0469 or see other contact details at www.gov.uk/contact-pension-service



FREE ONLINE TICKET to a live streaming of 'That'll Be the day' on TUESDAY DECEMBER 8TH AT 7:00PM

You will need to have a device that allows you to connect to the internet to stream the show and an email address to receive your ticket.

Tickets will be shared on a **first-come, first-served basis**. Please contact Pauline on 07812 487971 or email fhoffs@kcv.org.uk if you'd like to see the show.



Cleo Smith, Chief Officer of Age UK Hythe and Lyminge for 14 years, has been awarded the British Empire Medal.



Mrs Smith said that the praise should not belong to her alone: "We wouldn't have been able to do anything like what we accomplished without my incredible team, and every single volunteer that willingly gave up their time for nothing to

help out the community. I would love to give individual special thanks to so many people but I would definitely forget somebody!"



To find out more visit www.ageuk.org.uk/hytheandlyminge/get-involved/volunteer/

"Do you need support this Christmas period?" The BIG Community Christmas is a collective of groups reaching out to help people that live in the areas of, Hythe, Lyminge and Romney Marsh. Help can be delivered in many forms.

In a year like no other, our community are continuing to join together to support **anyone** needing a hand during this Christmas period.

This Christmas are you, or someone you know struggling with:

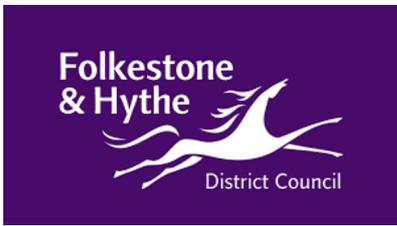
- Purchase of food
- Purchase of gifts and toys for children
- Loneliness and isolation
- Caring for a family member, friend or neighbour

Do not hesitate to get in touch, just one simple referral could make Christmas much easier.

There is support out there and it is easy to access, either by visiting the web-page and completing the short online form, or by calling **01303 269602 or 01797 208590**

All enquiries will be dealt with in the strictest of confidence.
www.ageuk.org.uk/hytheandlyminge
www.rmdc.org.uk/christmas2020

There is an ALSO an online form available for people to make a referral on behalf of themselves or another. Visit: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdT3NjqBP0I_NQB1q9iYhKI6xa4jkYhANR0Q9UQzPiUZ9syZA/viewform



The Folkestone, Hythe and Romney Marsh community hubs, which have been providing a vital lifeline for many during the COVID-19 pandemic,

are looking for more volunteers.

An incredible 600 people responded to the initial call for help made in March. Since then volunteers have given hundreds of hours helping those isolating in the district with no family members nearby to help.

The volunteers have been delivering hot meals, dropping off shopping and collecting prescriptions. More recently they have proved invaluable helping the organisations running the hubs to support those struggling with loneliness.

But with more people going back to work, the hubs are concerned that fewer volunteers might mean a reduction in the help they can offer. They also want to support those who need help over the festive season and there is a particular need for drivers to help with shopping deliveries.

Councillor Jenny Hollingsbee, F&HDC Cabinet Member for Communities, said: "We were amazed and very, very grateful when so many people came forward to help seven months ago and they have been truly wonderful in helping our district during this pandemic.

The organisations which set up the hubs with support from the district council have put in place some fantastic schemes to help their local communities and they could not have done that without the hours that the volunteers have given.

The number of volunteers is dwindling as more resume their jobs but we hope that there may be people waiting in the wings who would be able to give some time to enable this network of support to continue."

One of the Folkestone volunteers said: "I joined later than most after months of being in lockdown with my family. Becoming a volunteer has been such a rewarding experience because I have

been able to interact with people again, be it answering the phone and having a good chat, shopping on their behalf or delivering prescriptions. It is great to know I am helping those more vulnerable and providing that extra bit of support for our community as others return to work."

Through the Emergency Assistance Fund, the council is supporting a Volunteer Co-ordinator for the district for three months through the Hythe hub. If you are able to spare some time to help please fill in the form in the volunteering section of this page on the council website folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/community-hub The Three Hills Sports Park runs the Folkestone community hub, Hythe and Lyminge Age UK operates the Hythe area hub and the Romney Marsh hub is run by the Romney Marsh Day Centre.



Kent Coast Volunteering's Good Neighbours Service has been hard at work this year providing social contact to hundreds of older people across the Thanet, Dover and Folkestone & Hythe districts, and we couldn't do this without the dedication and kindness of our volunteers. If you, or someone you know, is interested in becoming a befriender in any of these areas,

please get in touch with the Good Neighbours Service team on 01843 609335 or thanetgns@kcv.org.uk

The Folkestone, Hythe and Romney Marsh community hubs, which have been providing a vital lifeline for many during the COVID-19 pandemic, are looking for more volunteers.

For more information visit www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/community-hub

We are committed to sending the quarterly newsletter to all members by email or post because keeping in touch with people is important to us. Our members' list is confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside of Kent Coast Volunteering. **HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER** please email fhoffs@kcv.org.uk or telephone 07812 487971. Our Mailing Address is KCV Folkestone & Hythe Hub, 65 Shaftesbury Ave, Folkestone CT19 4NS. **MEMBERSHIP IS FREE!**

