

# SEVENOAKS DISTRICT SENIORS ACTION FORUM

## Newsletter 26 February 2017

The meeting place for the interests of people aged 50 plus

## So, what have we managed to do?

*Since its beginning in the Autumn of 2010,  
the Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum has been guided by one aim:*

**WE WANTED TO HELP IMPROVE THE LIVES OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE DISTRICT.**

*After 6 years of existence, the Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum has grown from a handful of Members at the initial meeting to over a thousand in 2016. It is time we took stock and questioned ourselves on what, if anything, we have achieved.*

*This newsletter mainly looks at what we have achieved although we have managed to get some of our usual news paragraphs in as well!*

**We believe that our work has helped to improve the life of older people in the District but we know that the more Members we have, the more effective we can be, however, we need help.**

**SDSAF is now so big that we need more people to help run the organisation. Don't be shy if you think you might like to offer to help. NONE OF US KNEW HOW ANYTHING WORKED WHEN WE FIRST STARTED. WE ARE HOWEVER ALIVE AND KICKING AND WE HAVE LEARNT. WE WILL HELP YOU LEARN IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP.**

**We are an ACTION FORUM so we need people who are willing to take action - that might mean writing the occasional letter or email to the NHS, the Councils, our MP, the bus companies, it could mean doing other things like researching the facts for a campaign. It could mean almost whatever you want it to mean. More later!**

**STOP PRESS 1... at the AGM in May (more info later in this newsletter) you can meet the new Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Scott, one year into his job. What has he achieved?**

**STOP PRESS 2... VERY NASTY SCAM happening at the moment - Two people knock on the door and pose as the Police. One keeps you talking, the other ransacks your house. Even if they look like the Police - CHECK!**

**Will we see you at one of the village fetes this year?**

# OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

## WE NEEDED DECISION MAKERS TO KNOW ABOUT US

Our successes are;

- 1 More people and Departments of Kent County Council know about us.
- 2 Sevenoaks District Council know about us.
- 3 Most of our Parish Councils know about us.
- 4 The Big Lottery Fund knows about us.
- 5 Our range of partners has grown through attending fetes and other events.
- 6 Our newsletter distribution list to decision makers and opinion formers has grown.

## WE HAD TO BE BIG ENOUGH FOR DECISION MAKERS TO LISTEN TO US

Our success is;

- 7 Reaching 1,000 members (September 2016 - 6 years after our institution)

## WE NEEDED PARTNERSHIPS WITH DECISION MAKERS

Our successes are;

- 8 By invitation of Sevenoaks District Council, we are members of the Local Strategic Plan Older Persons Sub-Committee - this is a sub-committee of the District Council which directly contributes to the Local Strategic Plan, the top level planning document for the Council.
- 9 By invitation of Sevenoaks District Council, we are members of the Access Group which looks at how people of all abilities can gain access to all they need.
- 10 By our own efforts we are being influential in the relationship between the Older Peoples Forums in Kent and the County Council. We have held meetings with the most senior County Councillors responsible for all matters that concern older people.
- 11 We attended a Select Committee of the County Council (discussing transport matters), the highest level of involvement that is possible.

## WE NEEDED DIRECT ACTION TO IMPROVE THE LIFE OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE DISTRICT.

*Our successes are;*

- 12 Project Defibrillator - we funded, through a Big Lottery grant, defibrillators in seven parishes in Sevenoaks District, co-funded with the Lions Club the defib in the foyer of the Stag and helped raise the profile of the need for defibs throughout the District.

13 We influenced the District Council to hold the Second Inquiry into the Broomhill development in Swanley after the first had been held inconveniently in Sevenoaks.

14 We have held or been involved in numerous meetings both formal and informal with politicians at all levels where we have discussed our Members' concerns. We are in regular communication with our MP who knows SDSAF and our large membership very well.

15 We have built relationships with several senior local government officers so as to ensure that the needs of older are understood by them. They are then better placed to influence the politicians.

16 We have taken opportunities to influence decision makers on the travel and transport needs of older people. One of our most active Members has done a wonderful job in holding local bus companies to account. Another is a constant thorn in the side to our politicians on the need for a better way to deal with the transport needs of older people.

17 We hold meetings with local County Councillors and with our District Chief Executive.

We continue to add to our achievements,  
this newsletter will barely be published before the list will be out of date  
- it will have have grown.

## AGM 2017 Wednesday 24th May 2017 at 2pm

We are VERY pleased to announce that the main guest speaker at the AGM this year will be Matthew Scott, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent. This year we will meet at the offices of Sevenoaks Town Council, Bradbourne Vale Road, Sevenoaks TN13 3QG.

Members have consistently told us that one of their main concerns is crime. As time has gone by, there has been much mention of the numbers of police officers visible on the streets and on the way that the Police do or do NOT attend when called to a crime scene or concern. This will be your chance to talk to the Commissioner himself one year into his new job. What has he done, what is he doing? What can we expect next?

This will be a Members only event so if your neighbours want to come along too, help them to register as Members!

**Would you like to edit this newsletter? Do you have journalism/writing skills? Get in touch – we need you!**

## Help Please

The Action Forum needs new blood! It doesn't matter how well something has been working, it is very easy to go to stale and go off the boil. If we want to keep growing and keep influencing the decision makers, we need new energy with new ideas. Maybe YOU could supply those? You wouldn't be on your own. You would get lots of help from the 'old hands'. The people who run the Forum were all strangers to each other when we first met. How does the song go? 'A stranger is just a friend you haven't yet met'?

## IS THIS THE CHALLENGE YOU HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR SINCE YOU RETIRED?

Across the years, we have asked new Members if they might like to join the Committees who run SDSAF. If you have offered, NOW is the time to put your offer into operation. Contact any of the people below to help.

**CO-HOUSING** Housing issues are a high priority for many of our Members. Typical concerns are 'My house is now too big for me', 'I would like to declutter my house but who can I trust?', 'I can no longer look after my garden and would like some help'. Some Members own their houses, some rent privately, some rent from a Housing Association, some feel that the answer might be Co-Housing? Want to know more? We are trying to arrange a Members' Meeting to investigate housing ideas.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN AN ISSUE GROUP OR A LOCAL GROUP? CONTACT US

*Thanks to all our partners*



## Contacting SDSAF Management People (Please note some changes);

Chairman	Frank McConnell	frank@frankmcconnell.com
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Steve Plater	01732 450400	steve.plater@btinternet.com
Secretary	Derrick Bateman	bateman.derrick@gmail.com
Treasurer	David White	davidwhite678@gmail.com
Membership	Roger Bryan	07470 201703 roger.bryan@me.com

Action Group Members: Eileen Murray Giles, Jean Bentley, Brian Gasson

Write to us via Roger Bryan, 10 Greenside, Swanley, BR8 7ER

**Membership Forms are available online:** [http://sdsaf.org/?page\\_id=158](http://sdsaf.org/?page_id=158)