

# SEVENOAKS DISTRICT SENIORS ACTION FORUM

*The meeting place for the interests of people aged 50 plus*

**Newsletter 29**

**November 2017**

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## RESPONSES TO THE OPEN LETTER TO OUR MPs

Tom Tugendaht and Sir Michael Fallon replied to our open letter almost immediately. Mr Tugendaht, whose constituency includes some of the southern parishes of the Sevenoaks District, met three SDSAF representatives in Edenbridge on October 6th 2017. We introduced him to our organisation and what we have been doing and asked him how we could help him. A full note of the meeting appears on our website [www.sdsaf.org](http://www.sdsaf.org). We felt that it was a very helpful meeting covering many of the concerns of our Members, like buses and hospitals, parking and pensions. Tom's biggest message to our Members was "I can't represent you unless you tell me what concerns you". So tell him!

We had dated a meeting with Sir Michael in November but that had to be postponed. Gareth Johnson replied 'Thank you, it's good to hear from you and I will certainly bear you in mind in the future for any issues affecting my part of the SDC area. Disappointingly however, we had asked him for a meeting.



**BUS TRANSPORT (AGM)** Veronica McGannon, one of our members who came to County Hall with us to make representation to the Bus Select Committee of the County Council continues to press Arriva buses in the north of the District to maintain services especially for older people who do not drive. It is becoming impossible to venture out of our homes and the dangers of isolation and loneliness increase.



DO YOU REMEMBER THESE? They are an endangered species. If we don't use them we will lose them. If Councils don't subsidise them, they will go. Bus companies are private companies, they have to cover their costs and make a profit but WE need them so that we can get to hospitals and go shopping and do all the normal things that people do. None of us will be able to drive for ever and if the bus service is gone by the time we can no longer drive, what are we going to do? Will we all sell up and leave the villages and come live in town where the shops are? Or live near the hospital? Or will the burden fall on our friends, neighbours and family? If the local councils want us to be community people then local councils have to help us to be able to be part of our

communities and not individuals imprisoned at home because we cannot go anywhere (or get back on the same day without paying a huge taxi fare).

**MEMBERSHIP** Our present membership is 1082. This is one of the reasons why our MPs have agreed to meet us. This is why the County Councillors have bowed to our pressure.

**THE MEDWAY ELEPHANTS** The thing about walking is that you come across some of the most surprising facts. Did you know that the Romans crossed the Medway and came up against the Court of King Caractacus somewhere near Halling in AD 43? And that they used elephants? Fancy seeing one of those for the first time!

**MEET UP GROUPS** Do you know about these? I have to admit I didn't but I was told about them by a single lady who said she enjoyed them. For those of you who use the internet, take a look at [www.meetup.com](http://www.meetup.com)

**NEW COMMITTEE PEOPLE** We usually ask new Members if they would like to join the Committee and we are very pleased to welcome Alan and Maureen Dixon. Alan attended his first meeting in September and has the precious gift of energy. We have about 6 months before our next AGM and the search is on for some new committee members. Would you like to help run this very successful organisation? Contact us.

**SEEFA** is the South East England Forum for Ageing. It works, like us, to influence decision makers on the needs of older people, [www.seefa.org.uk](http://www.seefa.org.uk) They have created a network of experienced well informed advisors. They work in a different way to Forums like ours but are good partners.

**THANK HEAVENS FOR OLDER PEOPLE** who keep things going! How many audiences at village concerts are filled with older people! There is a vibrant music scene in the Sevenoaks District surroundings and older people are mainstream supporters. What would our economy do without Grandparents to look after grandchildren? What would our communities do without older people to support them?

- 1** Never disclose security details, such as your PIN or full banking password

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- 2** Don't assume an email request, text or phone call is genuine

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- 3** Don't be rushed - a genuine organisation won't mind waiting

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- 4** Listen to your instincts - you know if something doesn't feel right

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- 5** Stay in control - don't panic and make a decision you'll regret

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And remember, if you've done all that and still feel unsure, don't hesitate to contact your bank or financial service provider on a number you trust, such as the one listed on their website or on the back of your payment card.

**TREEZILLA** Do you know this website? VERY interesting (if you are into trees). <http://treezilla.org/faq/>. Sorry, can't write any more because I have already spent FAR TOO MUCH TIME on the website already.

**VILLAGE GREEN TECHNOLOGY** SDSAF has had some correspondence with Michael Fallon MP, and has been checking broadband speeds. If you have broadband, do you have the best available in your area? It may be useful to contact your supplier and see if you are on the best service available. Tom Tugendhat MP (tom.tugendhat.mp@parliament.uk) is particularly interested in whether or not you get good technology services. Email him direct.

**DRIVING LICENCE FINES** If you have a Photo Driving Licence and you don't look like your photograph any more, or if your address is wrong, then you could be fined £1000? It's an easy process to stay legal.

**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL** We work hard to influence our politicians and we worry that they stop listening once the elections have passed by but we have been trying hard to press KCC into a county wide meeting of Forums like ours. They promised this months ago but nothing happened until SDSAF and the Tunbridge Wells Forum together started to kick up a fuss. The meeting is now planned for late November and should give us an opportunity to find out the concerns of older people across the whole of the County.

**The KENT POLICE MALE VOICE CHOIR** performs regularly throughout Kent raising money for charity whilst entertaining their audiences. They meet to rehearse every Thursday evening at Police HQ in Maidstone and are looking for new members. You don't have to be a policeman but it is a male voice choir.

**COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS** [www.moneysavingexpert.com](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com) has revealed that thousands of people may be paying too much Council Tax because of incorrect advice. By law, someone who has been medically

certified as having a permanent condition that affects their intelligence and social functioning for example Alzheimer's or Parkinson's (but many other conditions may apply) is 'disregarded for council tax purposes' in England, Scotland and Wales. It means you can claim:

**A 25% discount** – if you live with someone with a severe mental impairment and there are no other adults living with you or only adults who have also been disregarded for council tax purposes.

**A 100% discount** – if you have a severe mental impairment and you live alone.

**ORGAN DONOR CARDS** The NHS says that 85% of people who have registered as organ donors know how important it is to tell their family or friends about their intentions BUT only 46% of them have actually had the conversation. If you would like to be a registered donor, call 0300 123 23 23 or go online at [www.organdonation.nhs.uk](http://www.organdonation.nhs.uk)

**SCAMS AND SUSPICIONS** One of the best ways to spot a scam is to smell it! A couple of committee members have received a similar scam email recently. They are called PHISHING scams and someone is throwing out a line and a hook to see if they will catch anything. What they caught with us was two people who smelled something fishy. The email writer claimed to have received a letter in the post from SDSAF for the committee member but wrongly addressed (rather unlikely!). If we replied with our actual address, the writer would forward the letter to us. Our database said that she was not a Member. We deleted the email immediately.

*Thanks to all our partners*



**Contacting SDSAF Management People. (Please note changes);**

Chairman	Frank McConnell	frank@frankmcconnell.com
Vice Chair:	Merilyn Canet	01732 461397 merilyncanet@talktalk.net
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Membership	Roger Bryan	07470 201703 roger.bryan@me.com
Action Group Members:	Eileen Murray Giles, Jean Bentley	

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

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