

Sevenoaks District
Seniors Action Forum

Working together in the interests of people aged 50 plus

Email: comms@sdsaf.org.uk

Silver Sunday – October 2020 – New Arrangements

In the last Newsletter we said that we hoped to hold our 10th birthday party at the Sevenoaks Indoor Bowling club but this cannot be implemented at the current time. We have had to put on our thinking caps to come up with Covid safe ideas to celebrate and now have a twofold plan (film and walks) to show that we are alive and kicking and living within the art of the possible. In spite of the challenges, we are determined to provide opportunities for our members to ‘show up’ safely and get out and about. These plans follow the new Government guidance to take effect from 14 September 2020 but do forgive us if there are subsequent changes after we go to print.

Stag Cinema–Free tickets for The Greatest Showman - 4th October

Cinemas have now reopened and we have been able to reserve multiple seats at the Stag Cinema Sevenoaks for ‘The Greatest Showman’ at 3.30 p.m. for 4 p.m. on Silver Sunday, 4 October. The film has had great reviews and appeals to all ages.

The Stag cinema is Covid safe and complies with all government guidelines. Kindly note we will need to wear face coverings (unless exempt) and observe social distancing. Unfortunately we have had to forego any ideas of socialising over a glass of vino or a cuppa but we will hopefully make up for that next year.



Booking is required by ringing a member of our Social Team on 01959 523379 or sending an email to comms@sdsaf.org.uk and we will then give you a booking number (we won't be sending out tickets). Numbers will be limited so it's first come, first served. You are welcome to come alone or to bring a member of your household bubble.

Although entry will be free of charge (thanks to funding we have received) we ask you to make payment by extending an act of kindness to someone in your neighbourhood. We also ask you to let us know if you have booked a seat and then can't come so that someone else can enjoy this uplifting film.

Sevenoaks District Council's Silver Sunday Initiatives

Silver Sunday is a special day in the national calendar when everyone can come together to celebrate older people. With social distancing restrictions still in place, Silver Sunday 2020, which will be celebrated on 4th of October, is going to look very different this year, but it is needed more than ever. Therefore with the help from partners and various local community groups Sevenoaks district sees the return of Silver Sunday, with a range of initiatives to improve the wellbeing of our residents.

Due to Coronavirus, some of the activities are now being delivered digitally, including a special video of the Pop-Up Pop-In session with the very popular Sue Larken from Age UK to keep everyone active. You can view all the events and initiatives on the Sevenoaks District Council website www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/silversunday live from 1st October.

Silver Walks

Councillor Irene Collins and the leaders of Every Step Counts have kindly agreed to turn their regular weekly walks into 'silver walks' to celebrate our seniors during Silver Week starting Monday 5 October.

Fortunately these group walks are exempt from restrictions introduced on 14 September. They are well organised, easy going, Covid safe, suit all levels and happen in all weathers. There are 7 walks to choose from throughout Sevenoaks District, all led by dedicated and qualified volunteers who will keep you safe and encourage you all the way.

Tuesday - 11.30 am Chiddingstone from The Castle Inn TN8 7AH

Wednesday – 10 am Otford from the High Street Car Park by the Recreation Ground gate TN14 5PQ

Wednesday - 10.30 am West Kingsdown at the West Kingsdown Pavilion off London Road TN15 6BZ

Thursday – 10 am Swanley at Swanley Park, meet opposite the cafe BR8 7PW

Thursday - 10 am Chipstead, opposite The Bricklayers Arms Chevening Road TN13 2RZ

Thursday - 2 pm Greatness meet at the car park Mill Lane TN14 5AG

Friday - 10 am – Kemsing, meet in Kemsing Village Hall Car Park TN15 6NB

It would be helpful if you could drop an email to everystepcounts17@gmail.com to say you are coming or phone/text 07899 985196. Otherwise just get there a few minutes early to check in. Do bring your own portable snacks so that you can stay for friendly socially distanced refreshments at the end. You may also like to bring a portable chair or stool. And remember to bring clothes suitable for the weather.

Letter from the Chair

Dear Member

Despite deciding not to watch much television these days, I caught the beginning of the film 'Cinderella' when her mother was explaining the secret of personal power. The secret was simple yet profound - have courage and be kind. Many of us have experienced a great deal of true kindness from neighbours, family, friends and the wider community during recent months and long may this continue. Adversity often brings out the best in humanity. Let's continue to find new ways to be kind to each other so that the word 'mankind' really means what it says.

Having courage seems to be a bigger challenge for some of us, especially when we feel fearful, uncertain and maybe confused about what we can and can't do as we enter Covid's recovery phase. Many of our members are saying that their confidence is dwindling around doing ordinary things like shopping and eating out - activities that used to be routine. So perhaps now is the time to find our famous 'grit', pick up our lives again and get out and about as far as we are able: make that hairdressing or dental appointment, take a mini staycation, find a shady spot for a picnic with a few friends, join a walking group, start a book club, learn how to use Zoom, reach out to help somebody - anything that takes us just a little outside of the comfort zone and helps us to regain our personal power and confidence.

With luck on our side, while abiding by the recommendations and rules, we will be able to socialise safely, at our own pace, and seek support where we need it. Action can be a brilliant antidote to any feelings of depression and can help us to feel vibrant, useful and alive again. Let's not underestimate our collective abilities and personal experience but use them to celebrate and enjoy the life we have ahead of us.

Eileen Murray Giles, Chair

Praise

Grateful appreciation to Community wardens Paul Robertson and Steve Grange for their prompt and caring help when they were alerted to some scam emails. Scammers can be so devious and clever and know all the tricks. If you have been a victim of a scam or narrowly avoided it, remember it's not your fault. Try not to worry about it alone - seek support from family and friends and contact your community warden.

Broadband, Computers, iPads, Smartphones & Tablets....!!!!

When Lockdown arrived with a bang rather than a whimper many people without access to the internet found themselves isolated, with just the telephone for communication. Many people prefer it this way, and those of us who have various devices often wish the In Box or New Messages and calls were not so time consuming to deal with.

The Forum had planned to hold an information session about Information Technology to highlight the pros and cons, and to explain some of the jargon around it and to answer any questions you might wish to pose. In the meantime our research has revealed the wide variation in costs, accessibility and security, but it does boil down to what you wish to use it for.

One of our main motivations for doing this was the Secretary of State for Health's decision to Go Digital for many NHS services. There are some advantages in doing this: not having to leave early for an appointment an hour before time to allow for circling around a crowded car park, not having to pay for petrol or parking when you get there and not being at risk of picking up an infection when associating with others. However we are also taking every opportunity to remind NHS services to bear in mind that not everyone has the skill, knowledge or money to invest in some of these devices, and to ensure patients in this category are not disadvantaged in future and the choice for face to face appointments remains.

Mobile Phones

Like many modern inventions the mobile phones can be a mixed blessing. If you have a mobile the constant bombardment of social media updates, messages and scam calls are troublesome but a phone can come in useful if you need to access information on the move, so you might like to consider the following or let the Forum know of any other useful Apps or websites you have come across:

ICE: This is an acronym for In Case of Emergency. By including this in your phone's Contact list or your home Address Book anyone who needs to get in touch with a relative or friend will be able to do so, should the need arise. You could also consider installing a number under ICE2 to identify an alternative person.

www.what3words.com: This is a free App which you can download onto your phone. There is an explanatory article on www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-49319760 but in a nutshell it can pinpoint your location, anywhere in the world, using three words which you can give to the emergency services. This has proved very useful to people who have needed emergency assistance.

Keyfinder: If you frequently misplace keys or forget where you placed other vital items (glasses are our top pick of those) you might like to consider exploring the variety of different gadgets which will, thanks to technology, locate them for you.

The Great British Toilet Finder Map: . The following link might prove useful when you are out and about and need to locate the nearest public convenience: <https://www.toiletmap.org.uk/>

Firefli Study

A few volunteers from the Forum are taking part in a research study being conducted by the University of York into the effectiveness of the home safety visits carried out by the Kent Fire and Rescue Service. These visits focus on fire safety, testing and fitting smoke alarms and wider health issues such as falls prevention, reducing social isolation, keeping homes warm and helping people stop smoking.

If you are over 70, live in Kent and would like to contribute to this study, please email comms@sdsaf.org.uk or call 07775 568 834 for further information.

Sending out the Newsletter

The dispatch of the last Newsletter coincided with one of the hottest days of the year. A band of socially distanced, enthusiastic volunteers gathered in the sweltering heat to fold, fill, label and gum the envelopes.

2020 has seen great variations in the weather and autumn seems to have arrived prematurely, with the evenings drawing in and the thermometer dropping. But given the rest of the year we may yet have an Indian summer and make use of the awning again this month!

When you have read our Newsletter why not consider passing it on to a friend or neighbour and encourage them to join the Forum?



Ideas for a Nice Day Out

We have become accustomed to travelling far and wide to see things of interest, often overlooking what's on our doorstep. We are blessed in West Kent with a lovely landscape so you might be interested in considering staying closer to home and visiting places on our own doorstep. Please let us know of any hidden gems around the district so that we can publicise them in the Newsletter.

SEVENOAKS WILDLIFE RESERVE

While the weather is clement why not take the opportunity to take a gentle stroll around the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve?

The paths are a reasonable width, flat and well drained and the views over the lakes are lovely.

Parking is adequate and free as is entry to the Reserve.

Dogs are not allowed beyond the car park to ensure the birds aren't disturbed.



BIGGIN HILL MEMORIAL MUSEUM

The Biggin Hill Memorial Museum is open again. Opening times are: Tuesday – Sunday 10am-5pm, and the Nightingale Cafe is open from 10a.m. – 3 p.m. Entrance costs £6 and full details can be found on their website <https://bhmm.org.uk/> or alternatively phone 01959 422414.

Pre-booking is not required but there is a proviso that they may need to close their gates to conform with social distancing. Other measures have also been put in place to ensure a safe environment.

It is pleasing to see that they can offer designated hours for older adults or high-risk individuals and if you wish to find out more about that contact Katie Edwards – k.edwards@bhmm.org.uk .

BBC TV Licensing

TV Licensing have started sending letters to anyone aged over 75 asking them to either pay for their TV licence or apply for a free one. We want to make sure you know what to expect when you get your letter, so that if you're contacted by scammers before then you'll be able to spot them.

TV Licensing will only ask you to pay using the following options:

- By post using the address: **TV Licensing, PO Box 578, Darlington DL98 1AN**
- Online at tvl.co.uk/75pay or tvl.co.uk/75apply
- Over the phone on **0300 790 6151**

If you are contacted and asked to pay for your TV licence using a different phone number, a different website or by posting your details to a different address **you have been contacted by a scammer**. TV Licensing have also been clear that they will not come to your doorstep to collect the licence fee if you are over 75, so anyone who claims to do so is also a scammer.

Email in subject line
The scammer wanted the email to look personalised, but they only knew your email. A company is unlikely to use your email in the subject line.

Sender's email
This looks suspicious. The real organisation will use donotreply@tvlicensing.co.uk or donotreply@spp.tvlicensing.co.uk to email you.

No name
TV Licensing will usually include your name in their emails unless you did not provide one.

Misspelling and grammatical errors
It's common to find grammatical and spelling errors in phishing emails, such as this misspelling of license.

Account numbers
If an email includes an account number. Check that it is actually your number. Often scammers will use a random number in the hope you won't check.

Alarming threats
Scammers will often try to scare you with false threats of debt collection to encourage you to take action sooner.

Watch out for the URL
Although the URL looks genuine, a different URL will be used when you click on the link, taking you to a fake site. Don't be tempted to click on any links if the email looks suspicious.

From: TV Licensing <hello@tv.licensing123.com>
To: john.smith@email.com
Date: 18 August 2019 at 13:06
Subject: john.smith@email.com : Your TV Licence will expire on Tuesday, 20 August 2019.

TV LICENSING TV Licence Number: — 0788627854 —

Switch on sit back tune in wind down and relax knowing you're covered.

Dear Customer,

Your TV Licence will expire on **Tuesday, 20 August 2019**. You must renew now, quickly and easily online. Renew your TV Licence today and save money.

We're sorry to let you know that the TV license could not be automatically renewed. Something's gone wrong with your payments. Your bank has declined the latest Direct Debit payment.

TV Licence number: **0788627854**

Licence expiry date: **Tuesday, 20 August 2019**

If you don't keep up with your payments, you risk becoming unlicensed. Please take care of this straight away or we may be forced to cancel your licence or pass your details to a debt collection agency. Please keep this email safe, because it tells you how to access your licence online. Remember, you need to let us know if your personal information changes for example, if you move home or change to another bank.

You can update your licence quickly and easily at tvl.licensing.co.uk/update

Pay for your TV Licence - Home - TV Licensing™

Please Set up a new Direct Debit Now >>>

This message, its contents and images with it are intended solely for the addressee and are confidential.

Home - TV Licensing™ IF0112 ML71-EMAIL-05-17

If you're unsure about anything, you can call TV Licensing on **0300 303 9695** to speak with someone who can help. We have also heard that TV Licensing are asking to see details of people's Bank Accounts and would strongly advise, for security reasons, that you take advice before sharing any documentation with personal data on it with any third party to avoid identity theft or fraud.

Public Transport - Go-Coach Update

Following the easing of lockdown “go2” introduced service updates that came into effect from 17th August. Some limited scheduled routes were re-established, but with a more limited timetable. The main thing is that the On -demand bookable bus services will continue to run until at least December/January, but with some modifications:-

- They will cover a large part of the Sevenoaks area, but no longer go to Orpington or Tonbridge. Concessionary bus passes will be accepted after 9.30 a.m., but only for journeys up to 8 miles. However, you could for example book from Edenbridge to Swanley but it would cost the full fare of £6.50.
- The service runs from Sevenoaks Mon – Fri 6 a.m. until 7.30 p.m., Sat 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. Edenbridge Mon - Fri 9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. and Hildenborough Mon -Fri 6 a.m. – 8 p.m., excluding Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- The hospital services will be discontinued

In January 2021 it is expected that Route 8 The Sevenoaks Town circular will be reintroduced for a 2 year period with funding from KCC and the Town Council.

The proposed taxi-style Transit vans which were due to be introduced in May are still on hold because of social distancing They are all dressed up and willing to go, once they get the all clear. These luxury vehicles will also be used by Age UK and KCC for special school transport needs.

In about 3 weeks time there will be a meeting between bus operators and KCC to discuss the allocation of funds for supported bus services in Sevenoaks (circa £350,000 p.a..)

As things are liable to change at short notice we would advise looking at the GO website or call 01732 463 964 before planning a journey.



£5 billion for Rural Bus Services: We wrote to the Ministry of Transport for clarification about the support for rural buses in England & Wales that was announced in the March budget before lockdown. An announcement about the details is still in development and will be made in due course. The correspondence can be seen on our website: <https://www.sdsaf.org.uk/news/5-billion-pounds-for-rural-transport/>

Development of the former Tesco site, Sevenoaks High Street

You may have read in the paper or seen on-line the plans to demolish the existing building and construct a new retail and residential development.

A Virtual Exhibition at which the plans and other information about the proposals can be viewed in preparation for the submission of a planning application later in the year can be seen on www.136highstreetconsultation.co.uk.

Housing

The Forum has submitted a letter to the Sevenoaks Chronicle regarding the Government's White Paper which proposes changes to the planning system and housing targets:

“In August the Government issued a White Paper which contained new targets for house building in England. If this is adopted it will mean that Sevenoaks District Council's building target would increase from 711 a year to 820. This is in contrast to the Council's view that they can only expect to deliver 588 new homes per annum because of the constraints of the District's Green areas which comprise 94% of the land.

These new targets mean that over the course of the SDC Local Plan 2019-2035 the Council would be expected to deliver 12,575 new households, which represents a big increase of 25% above the 49,709 households currently in the district. Alongside the White Paper a Consultation Document was issued which amongst other things proposes the adoption of a new method for setting the housing targets for each Local Authority and responses to this are required before 1st October.

The Forum's response to the Consultation will serve to highlight that the new 2020 formula actually results in greater house building increases in the “Green” areas than the “all England average”, leaving the Northern Powerhouse areas with lower targets, which is the direct opposite to the White Paper's stated aims.

We contend that the methodology for the new formula contains similar, serious flaws to the previous one and should be revisited. If the Government wants to use a formula we feel that they should use “resident based earnings” rather than “workplace earnings” because these better reflect local affordability. If the Government used resident based earnings in the revised methodology the annual target for the Sevenoaks District would decrease from 820 to 624 per annum, which over the 16 years of the Local Plan would result in a target of 9,984 new homes, which is more in line with the Sevenoaks District Council expectation of 9,410 which would cater for our growing population. In addition any revised formula should contain allowances for Green Credentials. This change should not affect the overall target for all England.”

Our detailed response to the Consultation can be seen on the Forum's website: www.sdsaf.org.uk

Health & Social Care Services

NHS Resuming Normal Service – The Move to ‘Digital’ Consultations

If the reports in the press are anything to go by it seems that more and more GP surgeries are only offering telephone or video consultations. While this suits many working people who find it difficult to take time off work to see a Doctor we are aware that many older people do not have the technology to take advantage of an on-line consultation. We are also aware that some surgeries have experienced a high rate of missed appointments because the patient did not pick up the call when they telephoned them and did not try to ring them back until the following day.

GP practices need to be aware that there may be reasons why people have not answered their calls, because we are doubtful patients would deliberately miss the chance to consult with their GP. Some reasons the calls may be missed are: not hearing the call, calls being diverted to voicemail after three rings, call blocking systems making the number unidentifiable as a safe one, too long a time frame for the call back, being in the garden or not being quick enough to get to the landline. If you have missed a GP appointment for reasons beyond your control please let The Forum know and also explain to your GP surgery why their call was missed.

Comments, Complaints and Compliments about NHS Services

If you wish to submit a compliment, comment or complaint about any health service these should be directed to the Complaints Manager of Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group email: kmccg.complaints@nhs.net. Telephone 01634 335177.

Anyone can make a complaint including, patients, someone acting on behalf of the patient with their written consent, or anyone affected by the actions of an NHS body.

Issues to consider when employing Social Care Help

Most people's circumstances change over their lifetime but given the choice most people would opt to stay in their family home and remain independent as long as they are can. Sometimes a small bit of extra help and assistance from a Care Agency is one way to achieve this. If you're thinking of employing someone in your home, maybe to give yourself more time to relax or pursue your hobbies, we would encourage you to be very clear when making an initial contact with a service provider or Agency exactly what you are expecting staff to do. For example, do you want them to provide someone to do housework, cook or help with shopping or laundry? Alternatively you may be looking for them to provide help with a family member's medical care, so be very clear who the client is in order that the Agency can accurately assess how that can be delivered and its cost.

Doing this in advance, and maybe talking it through with a relative or friend, will ensure that all parties can be clear from the outset about the fine detail of any contract and the financial commitment you are making. Companies may offer a trial period, and if this is the case get them to confirm its duration in writing so that you are clear that it is not a permanent arrangement. It might be advisable to talk with a variety of providers and shop around so that you can compare any quotes.

Arranging for a carer to live-in entails quite a considerable financial commitment, so it is important that the full scope of duties to be performed is specified in the contract. It should be agreed from the outset that any increases in rates be proposed in writing to the family members and advance notice of any increase is notified at least 21 days in advance before the charge is implemented. This will also enable the client to consider fully the implications and make alternative arrangements if necessary. If the trial period is a success by all means enter into a longer term commitment, where all the costs are clearly stated, and taking particular note of any notice or cancellation clauses. This should result in satisfaction for everyone.

SDSAF 2020 Annual General Meeting (via Zoom)

Many thanks to members and guests who attended our AGM. It was an animated meeting with plenty of activity to report. Our Action Groups had been very busy in the fields of health, transport, housing, communication and social life. All reports are available on request.

We were very pleased to have with us Cllr John Edwards-Winser, District Chair, Councillors Irene Collins, Phillip Mc Garvey and Marilyn Canet (our Vice Chair) and are grateful to Sevenoaks District Council and their Communities Staff for the support we have received especially during recent months.

Thank you to all the members who have agreed to be on our Committee. We warmly welcome Elaine Knight-Elston, Amelia Moore, Pamela Payne and Mark Robson who are new to our Committee. We also welcome all the new action group members, coordinated by Vice Chair Alan Dixon, who have offered to help on an ad hoc basis.

Our much loved Roger Bryan, one of our Founders and our inaugural Chair, has been looking after all of our membership issues in recent years. He has some major health issues to deal with and has decided to step back from committee work but we know we can turn to him for wisdom and guidance. He has very kindly worked with the new Membership Team - Dina Arrowsmith, Carol Oakley and Elaine Knight-Elston - in recent months to ensure a smooth transition.

Keeping in Touch

If you have received this Newsletter by post and you have an email address and would be happy to receive it by email, please send a message to newsletter@sdsaf.org.uk, letting us know your email address. By doing this it will save us postage and be kinder to the environment.

**To contact the Forum Committee email Eileen Murray Giles at : chair@sdsaf.org.uk
or write to us "Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum"
22 Lambarde Road, TN13 3HT
SDSAF Website: www.sdsaf.org.uk**

By the way . . . The newsletter is available in large print; please let us know if you would like to receive a copy.