

Sevenoaks District Seniors Action Forum

Working together in the interests of people aged 50 plus
email comms@sdsaf.org.uk

Chair's letter

Following on from the successful Singalong earlier in the year, we have been asked to hold another one in celebration of Silver Week.

We have arranged for the event to be held on FRIDAY 3RD OCTOBER 2025 at 2.00 - 4.30 pm at Otford Village Hall TN14 5PQ. Tea and Cake will be available as usual and we do hope that you will be able to join us. Please come and bring your friends to enjoy a relaxing afternoon of home grown musical talent, coordinated by Frank McConnell.

Also, we encourage you to go out and enjoy walking together in one of the many walking groups organised by 'Every Step Counts' and by the District Council - it's such a great way to keep fit and to stay connected. These 'silver walks' can be enjoyed whatever your level of mobility.

We thank all the organisations and members who contributed to our very successful AGM in July. It was well attended with some excellent speakers from Hi Kent, Kent Police, the Green Doctors and the CAB and we were delighted to be supported by District Chair Lynda Harrison and Sevenoaks Town Mayor Tony Clayton.

This newsletter puts a focus on care and carers - we look at how to make sure carers get the support they need, at caring for our disabled offspring when we reach the winter of our lives, and at the thorny issue of care fees which sometimes can whisk away all our hard earned savings and leave precious little for the family members we would like to help.

We send our best wishes to John Edwards-Winsor one of our most stalwart supporters, who sadly is poorly in hospital. We miss his wonderful energy and helpfulness and pray for him and his family and for his continued improvement.

Many thanks to all our members who have contributed to this newsletter - please keep your ideas rolling in. With best wishes to all. We look forward to seeing you at our forthcoming events.

Eileen and Gill



**Sevenoaks District
Seniors Action Forum**

An invitation to celebrate Silver
Week with us at our Singalong
Event

At

Otford Village Hall

TN14 5PQ

2.00p.m. -4.30p.m

On

Friday 3rd October 2025

Refreshments and entry all free of
charge

All welcome

*This will be a friendly event where
members of the Forum will showcase
their talents, you can meet with others
and enjoy the entertainment.*

You can just turn up on the day but it would
help us with catering if you could let us know if
you are coming email comms@sdsaf.org.uk

*Silver Week is a special time to celebrate
and value older people. Come and join
us!!*

Learn more about Photography

Many thanks to Jean-Pierre Darque for this letter to our members, telling us about the Sevenoaks Camera Club



Dear SDSAF Members,

We are fortunate to have a vibrant camera club right here in town. **Sevenoaks Camera Club** ("SCC") new season will soon start. The club offers a great opportunity for members of the public to dive into photography, socialise, and pick up new skills. We would be particularly pleased if members of SDSAF wanted to join SCC

Sevenoaks Camera Club is all about encouraging photography and helping members to take and enjoy better pictures. Our community is made up of photographers of all skill levels, from beginners to seasoned experts. If in doubt you can try out a few meetings before deciding on membership.

Here's what the club is about:

- **All Cameras Welcome:** Whether you're using a compact camera or a mobile phone, we've seen beautiful shots captured on all types of devices. Beginners and more experienced photographers alike are welcome, no matter what camera you use.
- **Sociable and Enjoyable:** Some members don't even take photographs but join us just to appreciate great photography and enjoy the social side of our club.
- **Learning Together:** While we don't offer formal courses, our talks and competitions are fantastic ways to learn about techniques, subjects, and composition. Sometimes, just looking at photographs can inspire us to improve our own work. Plus, there's always informal help and guidance available from fellow members.
- **Recently, the Sevenoaks Kaleidoscope Gallery hosted our Club Annual Exhibition,** featuring prints from club members, including landscapes, portraits, abstracts, and railway-themed photos, with selections also displayed on a TV screen. This is the highlight of the year for most members and a joy for all to see some of our photography.

Established in 1952, since then our club has been a place where members come for the joy of photography and engaging talks. Our first meeting is on 8th of September at the Mencap Hall in Hitchen Hatch Lane.

If you are interested you can find more details, including the programme of meetings (on our website at www.sevenoakscameraclub.org.uk or email us at info@sevenoakscameraclub.org.uk, or contact the Membership Secretary: Jean-Pierre Darque on 07880828880 – J-P is also a member of SDSAF and leader of Hi Kent Social Group.

Recipe - upside down cake

Thanks to Diane who brought this simple but tasty three ingredient cake to our summer party. You may like to try her recipe - it goes well with custard



1 tin peaches or pineapple (approx 400 gm)

8 oz self raising flour

4 oz caster sugar

Line a deep baking tin with greaseproof paper (base and sides)

Drain and cut up the fruit and put it onto the greaseproof paper

Mix flour and sugar with some of the juice until it just comes together. Spread this over the fruit.

Bake in middle shelf of a medium oven for about 25 minutes

Or if you are keen to avoid sugar and gluten, you may like to try Monika's delicious bean cake



2 tins kidney beans, drained and mashed

2 beaten eggs

1 banana mashed

2 packets stoned organic dates

1 teaspoon baking powder

Mix together using blender and put into a greased baking tin. Cook at 180 degrees for approx 30 minutes or till a skewer comes out clean.

We really appreciate you sending in your recipes. Thank you.

Green Doctors

We were pleased that the 'Green Doctors' visited our AGM to advise us on how to keep warm in winter and how to save fuel. They have sent us this flyer to summarise the free of charge help they can offer to our members.



Call us on 0800 233 5255

Let us help you
regain control of your energy bills

Our Green Doctors can help you with:

- Understanding your heating systems and how to use them effectively
- Checking your tariff and supplier are meeting your needs
- Practical tips for how to use your home appliances efficiently
- Advising on your energy habits
- Checking for energy support schemes, grants, and discounts

Filling out an enquiry form online is the quickest way to receive a call back.
Scan the QR code OR visit south.greendoctors.org.uk and click 'FREE consultation'.



The Green Doctor project is a **FREE** service, including our free phonenumber, free advice sessions & free energy measures!

 south.greendoctors.org.uk  **0800 233 5255**
 GreenDoctorSouth@groundwork.org.uk

Find out more at
south.greendoctors.org.uk

  **GREEN DOCTOR**

Focus on Carers

Many of our members are unpaid carers without realising it. Becoming a carer can happen suddenly or gradually. Someone we love can no longer function on their own so we give them support. Taking responsibility for a loved one's wellbeing can involve a great deal of stress and responsibility and can make it difficult or even impossible to maintain social connections, to get involved in leisure activities or to have a life of our own.

If you're responsible for taking care of a loved one, whether that's an adult family member or a friend who cannot manage alone, you could be eligible for carer support, advice and guidance. You can find out what support you may be eligible for by calling Kent County Council's Adult Social Services on 03000416161

or do an online self referral via their website

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/adult-social-care/care-and-support/caring-for-other-people/request-a-carers-assessment>

Caring for Disabled offspring

Many thanks to our associate Jenny for bringing this difficult matter to our attention

How do parents of severely disabled children prepare for their care after they can no longer take care of them due to old age or their own disability?

The question they've been asking them themselves for years (but very quietly) now has to be spoken out loud. " what happens when I'm not here? Who will look after him/her?"

There's never a good time to deal with some difficult emotional matters in life. Exploring options and engaging with social services as well as family members needs to be done sooner rather than later for all concerned. The disabled child needs to have some choices and be able to make some preferences heard. Family members need to be consulted about their thoughts and feelings and what they may feel able to offer in the way of support for the disabled child.

We must never underestimate how difficult letting go of a lifetime responsibility can be. Although there will be times when being any kind of carer can feel like a huge burden, the empty space when they're not there can feel cavernous and disorientating.

Rest assured, there is support out there and you are not alone.

Scope offers advice and support on disability-related issues, including respite care.

Web: www.Scope.org.uk Phone: 0808 800 3333. Email: helpline@scope.org.uk.

Disability Rights UK offers advice on benefits and support for disabled people.

Web: www.disabilityrightsuk.org Phone: 0300 995 0400 Email: enquiries@disabilityrightsuk.org.

Mencap is a UK-based charity that supports people with learning disabilities, their families, and carers. They offer a range of services including advice, support, and information.

Web: www.mencap.org.uk Phone: 020 7454 0454 Email: helpline@mencap.org.uk

The key is to grasp the nettle and start to prepare for your child's future as soon as possible.



Affording care fees

Our thanks to Anna Durrant for pointing out a 'Which' report highlighting some of the current financial issues surrounding care fees

In September 2021 the government announced plans to introduce a cap of £86,000 on the total care fees anyone would pay over their lifetime, with the state paying the rest, to take effect in September 2023

Last year, the cap was scrapped by the new Labour government and a new commission has been launched to form a National Care Service – but this won't make recommendations until 2028. Changes could take several years to materialise. So, basically, paying for care costs is currently down to us.

Care in our own home can be expensive (the NHS estimates £800 a week). But if you have to move into a care home, costs ramp up and have outpaced inflation.

For a typical residential care home, the national average weekly cost is £1,402. But if you need nursing dementia care, the most intensive type of care, it's £1,597 a week, and costs in our area can be higher than this.

Worse still, there's a growing gap between the fees councils pay to care homes and what 'self-funders' pay. Councils are under pressure to pay less and self-funders need to make up the shortfall.

It is wise to contact your local authority for a free needs and financial assessment, which may come up with less expensive solutions, such as equipment and changes to your home. It's also the gateway to NHS funding.

The financial assessment decides if you'll get financial support from the local authority, based on whether your wealth exceeds capital limits:

	England	Scotland	Wales	Northern Ireland
Upper capital limit	£23,250	£35,000	£50,000	£23,250
Lower capital limit	£14,250	£21,500	n/a	£14,250

In England, if our assets exceed £23,250 there is no funding. If we have less than £14,250 in assets there is full funding from the council but we still need to contribute from any income eg our pension. Friends and family can pay top up fees to enable us to go to a pricier home than those used by the council.

If you own a house in Sevenoaks District this will doubtless block you from funding. However, if your spouse or partner, or a relative aged 60 or over, or a child of yours who's aged under 18 or 'incapacitated' still lives in your home, your home will be disregarded. This also applies to temporary stays in care homes and for the first 12 weeks after it's decided your stay will be permanent.

Giving away assets in your lifetime can be an effective way of minimising inheritance tax and care home fees. However, this should be done very carefully with good timing because making gifts (or placing assets in trusts) could be seen by local authorities as deliberate deprivation of assets and they could pursue your beneficiaries for the payment of your care home fees.

How can we pay for care home costs?

There are several ways to raise funds

- Savings and investments
- Income from pensions, work or property eg your family might consider renting out your home
- Health Insurance or long term care insurance
- Benefits: make sure you are getting all of the benefits you may be entitled to, such as Attendance Allowance which isn't means-tested
- Equity Release - a way to access some of the wealth tied up in your home
- Immediate needs annuity: this involves paying out a large sum of money upfront, but it can offer the peace of mind of knowing your care fees will be met for as long as necessary
- Downsizing: selling your current home and buying a smaller one to produce a lump sum to help pay for care
- Financial help from family or friends
- Asking the Council for a deferred payment agreement. If agreed, this puts a charge on your house so that outstanding care fees can be paid at point of sale

Be sure to take advice from a reputable later life financial adviser before embarking on any unfamiliar strategies, as each will have its plus and minus points.

If you have any experiences re care fees to share with our members via our newsletter, they would be gratefully received.

Praise

Weald Heights Care Home in Sevenoaks for achieving an 'outstanding' rating from the Care Quality Commission

The kind souls who contribute regularly to food banks to help others less fortunate than themselves

All those unsung carers who care quietly for others in their own homes - forming an army of unpaid heroes in our District

Kind neighbours - people who consistently help others—checking in on the elderly, organizing drives, taking in parcels, watering plants and caring for pets when needed

Custodians of Culture - artists, historians and all those who preserve our local heritage and identity.

All the veterans who have served in our armed forces at some stage in their life and all those currently serving

Carers Cafe, first Tuesday of every month, 11.00 at Weald Heights Care Home, Sevenoaks TN13 1PD

Thanks to Samar who sent this in to us. It made us smile



While many complain about life in general and the cost of living, etc. I am sitting on a sofa that costs £3,500, lovely and cool in front of an air-con unit costing £2,300, watching the latest film on a 70" smart TV that costs £4,000. Right now, I'm so happy, with no worries and not a care in the world. Not even the staff at John Lewis, who keep asking me to leave, can spoil my day.



Campaign for Commissioners for Older People in England and Scotland

Charities like Age UK, Independent Age, and the National Pensioners Convention are actively campaigning for commissioners to champion the rights of older people in England and Scotland, ensuring their concerns are heard by policymakers.

The all party Committee report on the Rights of Older People recommended that the Government should appoint a Commissioner for Older People covering the whole of the UK.

Their task would be to address the challenges and opportunities presented by an ageing population and to focus on issues like access to care and support, financial security, and the pervasive problem of ageism.

Commissioners have already been appointed in Northern Ireland and Wales but there is a delay for the rest of us because the UK government has said it will consider the effectiveness of existing commissioners in Wales and Northern Ireland before making further appointments. If you feel we should have our own commissioner now, you can help by contacting your local MP by letter or by email.

Happy 100th birthday to Swanley Bus Garage!



Some of the vintage buses that were in service

Thanks to our member Peter Clements for telling us how much he enjoyed the centenary celebrations at Swanley Bus Garage on Saturday 23 August. Members of the public were able to take free rides to West Kingsdown and back in vintage buses and Peter's vintage car, Buttercup, was one of the classic cars on display that also did some nostalgic ferrying around the local lanes. Visitors to the open day were able to look inside the classic depot building including pit walks where they could see the underside of a bus. Well done to Swanley Bus Garage for all that you do for our community!



A New Name? -Update on the Role of Physician Associates

Following a Government - ordered review, the health secretary Wes Streeting has accepted the recommendation that Physician Associates need to be renamed. Implementation of this change could lead to them being called “physician assistants “ or doctors assistants”. It has also been suggested that patients initially see a qualified doctor and that PAs do not treat patients before they are diagnosed.

Thousands of physician associates work in NHS hospitals and GP surgeries across the UK. They are not qualified Doctors but undertake tasks such as taking medical histories, examining patients and making diagnoses. Professor Gillian Leng who led the review found that patients were confused about their title and therefore could be misled into thinking they had been seen by a Doctor. This confusion could pose a risk to patient safety. Professional medical bodies have welcomed the recommendation for a title change, as they feel the widespread confusion among the public could risk undermining trust in the medical profession in general. Professor Leng has also concluded and specified that those who perform these roles must make it clear to patients that they are not fully qualified doctors.

Professor Leng found evidence in two studies that patients are likely to misconceive Pas to be doctors, Focus groups organised by The Patients Association found that many patients do not

know what a PA is. A subsequent study highlighted patient confusion over what PAs do and what are the limits to their role.

Wes Streeter has said that while many PAs provide good care there are concerns over transparency for patients, scope of practice and the substitution of doctors. A source from The Dept of Health and Social Care said “ It’s clear there’s a legitimate problem of patients not knowing who they are seen by, which is their basic right.” This independent review into Physician Associates and Anaesthetic Associates will hopefully provide certainty to patients and staff across the NHS.

Jackie Griffiths - Chair of Health and Social Care Committee

Paraprosdokians



Paraprosdokians are figures of speech in which the latter part is surprising and sometimes humorous.

1. Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
 2. The last thing I want to do is hurt you, but it's still on my list.
 3. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
 - 4 Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
 5. War does not determine who is right, only who is left.
 - 6 To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.
 7. To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
 8. You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.
 - 9 . Going to church doesn't make you a christian anymore than standing in a garage makes you a car
 10. I used to be indecisive about being in a Seniors Action Group, but now I'm not so sure.
- Do you have any paraprosdokians you would like to share with us?

Some wise words from our Vice-Chair

Help yourself!

Great news, many of us are enjoying longer lives and healthier if we take more care of ourselves. Drinking enough water will prevent dehydration.

Exercise and movement will help to keep us active. Walking is considered good, done daily if possible, and so are Socialising with friends and family, U3A, Chatty Table, Bowls and Volunteering.

Plan ahead for medical / hospital visits when needed, including savings for transport and friends' help.

I have asked a Gym to help me recover from a major operation with gentle supervised exercise so that I can enjoy the extra life I have been given with joy. I will report back. An investment in my well being. There are resources in our communities to help us to help ourselves, let's use them.

Merilyn Canet

Silver Sunday – a message from Sevenoaks District Council

Silver Sunday runs from Friday 3 October until Thursday 11 December 2025 and there's something for everyone - from art workshops to coffee mornings, swimming to walking groups and lots more. Carers, friends and family members are welcome at all the activities.

Events include our Silver Sunday Fairs:

- Friday 3 October 2025, 10am to 1pm at New Ash Green Village Hall
- Tuesday 7 October 2025, 10am to 1pm at Edenbridge Memorial Health Centre
- Monday 3 November 2025, 10am to 12noon at Next Door Hextable

You are invited to this free event for information and advice about local services, support, hobbies and activities.

There's also our Health & Wellbeing Days where you can get a free NHS Health Check and get general health advice, all whilst exploring the leisure centres and taking part in a free seated exercise class. These will take place on the following days:

- Thursday 23 October 2025 10am to 12noon at White Oak Leisure Centre
- Thursday 6 November 2025 10am to 12noon at Sevenoaks Leisure Centre
- Wednesday 10 December 2025 10am to 12noon at Edenbridge Leisure Centre

There's our ever popular 'Silver Bells' Christmas Parties at The Eden Centre on Thursday 4th December and West Kingsdown Village Hall on Thursday 11th December 2025. Both run from 12pm to 2pm. The free festive events include a buffet, music, dancing, games and more!

To view all our Silver Sunday events and how to book your places, visit www.sevenoaks.gov.uk/silversunday.

Alternatively, to request a Silver Sunday programme, please email communities@sevenoaks.gov.uk or call 01732 227000.

FORUM CONTACT DETAILS

To contact the Forum Committee:- email Chair at : chair@sdsaf.org.uk
or write to SDSAF, c/o Kemsing Library, 72 West End, Kemsing TN15 6QE,

SDSAF Website: www.sdsaf.org.uk

Please let us know if you would like to receive the Newsletter in large print