

Sevenoaks District Senior Action Forum

Working together in the interest of people aged 50 plus

Email: comms@sdsaf.org.uk

Chair's letter:

Dear Friends,

It's always a joy to see the vibrant signs of Springtime. Spring reminds us that no matter our age, there is always room for new beginnings, fresh friendships, and simple joys. As the flowers bloom and the days grow brighter, let us celebrate the warmth and wisdom that each of our Seniors brings to our community.



Please save these dates in your diary:

Wednesday 22 April 1 pm at Emerson Grange Care Home in Hextable BR8 7FP.
Safety in the Home with the Kent Fire and Rescue services - places limited so
please book 01322 610090

30 May 2026 Health and Wellness Day at the Vine in Sevenoaks 10.00 - 17.00. Our Forum will take a stall at this event alongside many other health related organisations including Kings College London, Rockdale Housing and local health teams. It will be a fun and inspiring day focusing on living an active life. Do come along! You will be most welcome.

Our AGM will be held on Friday afternoon 3 July at 14.15 at Sevenoaks Indoor Bowls Centre and we are lining up an interesting panel of speakers to keep us informed of latest trends.

Many thanks to our speaker, Tony Finch, and to our hosts Wealden Heights in Sevenoaks for a very informative session for veterans in January.



We asked last month for someone to head up our planning and transport action group and are more than delighted to welcome David Brazier to our committee. David couldn't be more qualified. For many years he served as councillor for Sevenoaks North East at Kent County Council (KCC) and was known for his roles as a Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment and as KCC Chairman (2017-2018) as well as for a broad portfolio of responsibilities within Kent's local government. He was involved in key decisions on highways, waste, and community services and represented resident issues from bus routes to school

transport. Welcome David to our committee. We really do appreciate your support.

And many congratulations to our members Peter Clements and Jackie Griffiths who were both finalists in Emerson Grange's search for local heroes. Peter went on to win the Community Impact award. Congratulations to them both. They are great examples of the quiet and very valuable contribution seniors make to society.



Please keep sending in your ideas and concerns. We appreciate each and every contribution. We wish you every blessing for Eastertime and look forward to your participation in our forthcoming events. Thank you for being part of our Seniors family!

Eileen and Gill

Co-Chairs

Proposed Closure of Lloyds Bank in Sevenoaks

Many of our members have been very disappointed to hear about the proposed closure of Lloyds Bank in Sevenoaks in June 2026. Our Forum has sent formal representations to Lloyds Chief Executive asking for a rethink and we are very pleased that Laura Trott, our MP is strongly supportive of our case and has asked Lloyds Bank to liaise with us about the closure. Laura is also working with other banks in our area to enable easy switching of accounts should this become necessary and we are grateful for all her efforts.



If the Sevenoaks branch were to close, the nearest in person branch would be in Tunbridge Wells which would be inaccessible for many of our members. Whilst we recognise the trend towards digital banking, we have pointed out that the closure of this branch would materially reduce access to in-person banking services locally and would disproportionately affect vulnerable residents, including those with sensory or mobility challenges or limited access to online services. We will keep you posted of any further developments.

Counselling help

Sometimes life is tough, whatever our age, - we may be confronting marital or relationship issues, childhood trauma, addiction, bereavement, mental health problems, employment or other concerns - and we may need some professional counselling support.



Free counselling can be available via our GP but there are often long waits. The hourly rate for private help in the south east can be financially out of reach for some, so well done to Sevenoaks Counselling for offering a subsidised service to clients who have limited financial resources, (provided they live within 4 miles of their office and/or live within Sevenoaks District). If you don't qualify they may be able to signpost you to a subsidised service close to you.

Sevenoaks Counselling is a small Christian based charity in Sevenoaks providing confidential counselling to people of all ages - individuals, couples and families. All are welcome whether they have a faith or not. The service is offered in person or online, every weekday and some evenings, and all the team are experienced and professionally qualified. For more details www.sevenoakscounselling.org.uk

Praise

All the lunch clubs that provide friendship and social connection over a nice home cooked meal - and the volunteers that make these possible

All the younger generation who care for their elderly relatives.

Ros and Sevenoaks the PHAB Group which inspires and supports adults with learning or physical disabilities to have fun, make new friendships and enjoy weekly activities together. It also provides opportunities for volunteers on the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme to achieve the bronze award.

Chatty Cafe Bat and Ball Wednesday 13.30- 15.00 for social connection and making new friends.

Oxford Parish Council for distributing free carbon monoxide alarms to residents.

Royal Fashion

If you were an admirer of our late Queen's taste in fashion, you may be interested to visit the exhibition at the King's Gallery at Buckingham Palace from 10 April to 18 October 2026. It will feature 200 items worn throughout all the decades of her lifetime including formal and informal clothing, jewellery, shoes, hats and accessories. Many items will be on display for the first time and an accompanying book will be available to purchase. Disabled visitors can attend for half price (£11) and an access companion can go free. For those on Universal Credit, tickets at £1 will be available.

For more information,

visit <https://www.rct.uk/collection/exhibitions/queen-elizabeth-ii-her-life-in-style/the-kings-gallery-buckingham-palace>



Community Transport - Dial 2 Drive

Many thanks to Cliff, a volunteer driver with Dial 2 Drive, for reminding us of this community transport service which is available for residents in our area.

DIAL 2 DRIVE

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Supporting local residents to get out and about

Dial 2 Drive is a volunteer led community transport scheme for people unable to access public transport due to older age, illness or disability, living in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, and the surrounding areas of West Kent.

We can help people get to:

- Medical Appointments
- Social Outings
- Hairdressers
- Opticians
- Lunch Clubs
- Shopping

To register give us a call on:

0300 777 1200

Visit our website for full membership details

www.imago.community/dial2drive

Scan for full details



An affordable yearly membership applies, and journeys are invoiced monthly for miles travelled.

IMAGO
creating change *together*

www.imago.community
Registered Charity Number: 1108388

 **COMMUNITY FUND**

Have you received a suspicious text or email?

Many thanks to our member, Margaret N, for pointing out this helpful information from Kent Police -

Kent Fraud Alert System



TO STOP FRAUD™

Number 1 of 12 frauds of Christmas – Phishing

Received a suspicious text or email?

Contact the organisation directly. Do not use the numbers or address in the message – use the details from their official website.

Fraudsters put a lot of effort into making fake messages look real, report it by forwarding for FREE to 7726.

You can also report suspicious emails to report@phishing.gov.uk

Find out more by visiting our website at [Advice about fraud | Kent Police](#) and also from the Home Office at [Stop! Think Fraud - How to stay safe from scams](#)

If you have been a victim of any type of scam, then contact your Bank immediately, which you can do by calling 159 and reporting to Report Fraud at [Reporting cyber crime and fraud or phishing attempts - Report Fraud](#) or call 0300 123 2040.

Preventing fraud

Together,
let's stop
scammers.



Remember, ABC:



never Assume



never Believe



always Confirm



ActionFraud

KENT POLICE



TRADING STANDARDS



Kent Police

Report a non-urgent crime online www.kent.police.uk/report

Talk to us on LiveChat – available 24/7 www.kent.police.uk/contact

In an emergency, if crime is in progress or life is in danger call **999**

If you have a hearing or speech impairment, use our textphone service **18000**.
Or text us on 999 if you've pre-registered with the emergency SMS service.

www.kent.police.uk   

Recipe

Smoked Salmon and Scrambled Eggs

This is an easy way to include some protein in your diet, and is a good source of vitamins B12, D, folate and selenium. There is no need to add any salt as the smoked fish provides this. Serves 2

Ingredients

4 free range eggs
50 ml skimmed milk
1 teaspoon olive oil
60 grams smoked salmon pieces
2 teaspoons fresh herbs (dill, chives, fennel or parsley)
Freshly ground black pepper



Whisk together eggs, milk and black pepper. Heat oil in non-stick pan on medium heat, pour in egg mixture. Gently stir. Add smoked salmon and herbs and cook until desired level of firmness. Serve immediately. You can also experiment with different types of fish e.g. smoked mackerel.

Why not pair this up with some tasty home-made tomato soup to make a quick and easy lunch when a friend pops round?



Serves 2

Tomato Soup Ingredients

1 can plum tomatoes
6 pieces sun dried tomato
200 ml of stock made with a stock cube
Sweetener to taste (suggest 1 teaspoon sugar or 1 dessert spoon maple syrup)
Salt and pepper to taste
200 ml milk (approx - adjust to your taste)

Simmer all the ingredients together (except cream/milk) for ten minutes then blend till smooth. Add milk and warm through. Serve decorated with herbs and maybe a swirl of cream.

Stress Management

We are grateful to Dee Bryan (widow of our Founder, Roger Bryan) for sharing these words of wisdom with us -



'It has been the greatest privilege of my career to work in Palliative Care, both with cancer patients and their families and those with terminal lung disease. I have worked in various settings, an outpatient cancer centre in the NHS, a local hospice, a cancer centre in Harley Street and latterly 'Action for Pulmonary Fibrosis'.

Working in Palliative Care for 30 years presents many challenges. The most important factor being stress which through discussion with many patients and carers played an important factor prior to diagnosis. Stress is part of modern life and anxiety inevitably becomes a factor when having surgery and treatment.

My role as a Complementary Therapist was to offer a listening ear, aromatherapy massage, reflexology, Indian Head Massage, hypnotherapy and relaxation techniques to support them alongside their conventional treatment. This enables people to have the tools to cope in a gentle, nurturing way and helps manage side-effects.

Managing stress in day-to-day life is not always easy, but there are some basic things that can help. For example, going for a walk and going out in nature, gentle exercise like swimming, connection with people is so important, belonging to groups or meeting up with friends is essential for our well-being, mindfulness/relaxation, a gentle massage, eating and sleeping well'.

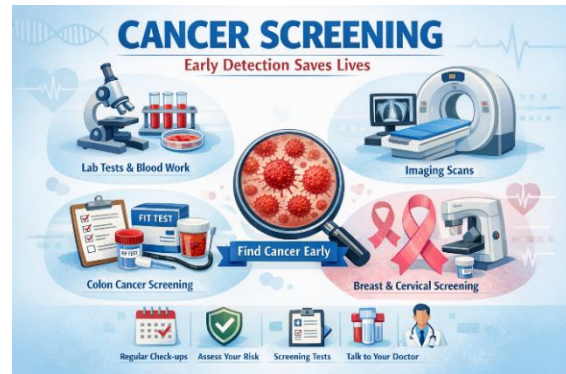
Cancer screening

We are grateful to John Harris, a member of our Health watch and Social Care Action Group, for providing this report.

Recent cancer rate statistics seem very worrying. The latest statistic show that three and a half million people in 2025 were living with cancer in the UK is shocking. However, the most important phrase in that sentence is "living with cancer", because, although the number of cancer cases has been increasing in recent years, so too have the survival rates. Over the last 50 years, the proportion of the UK population dying from cancer (the cancer death rate) has fallen by more than a fifth (22%). These figures are a testament to the progress that has been made in preventing, detecting and treating cancer. Today, 1 in 2 people diagnosed with the disease will survive it for at least 10 years, compared to just 1 in 4 in the early 1970s. And we're on the cusp of many more improvements as set out in the recent National Cancer plan.

Early diagnosis allows for more successful treatments to be started earlier leading to a longer and better quality of life. That has been the reason why national screening programmes have been developed for the most common cancers.

There are several current screening tests for common cancers that are considered effective and recommended by expert groups. Examples include:



- Breast cancer screening

Screening mammography has been shown to reduce deaths from breast cancer among women ages 40 to 74, especially those ages 50 to 69.

- Cervical cancer screening

Human papillomavirus (HPV) tests and Pap tests are recommended for cervical cancer that can be used alone or in combination. Expert groups generally recommend that testing begin at age 21 and end at age 65 (for women who have had adequate prior screening and are not otherwise at high risk for cervical cancer).

- Colorectal cancer screening

Several screening tests, including colonoscopy, sigmoidoscopy, and stool tests are used. Experts generally recommend that people who are at average risk for colorectal cancer have regular colorectal cancer screening at ages 45 through to 75. New developments include:

- Lung cancer screening: Currently under development, this programme targets individuals aged 55 to 74 who smoke or have smoked. It provides for risk assessment and possibly a CT scan if necessary. A low dose CT scan, has been shown to reduce lung cancer deaths among heavy smokers. Expert groups generally recommend screening of some current or former heavy smokers at ages 50 to 80 and a national programme is being considered.

- Prostate screening

The UK National Screening Committee (UKNSC) has announced a draft recommendation for a targeted prostate cancer screening programme, focusing on men aged 45 to 61 and those with BRCA1 or BRCA2 genetic mutations. Researchers will analyse the most promising screening techniques – including PSA blood tests, genetic saliva tests and fast MRI scans.

One hopeful improvement in Breast screening services was highlighted in a recent set of results from research on 1000 women in Sweden. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support radiologist in analysing breast screening results was found to significantly improve detection of early cancers.

It is important to attend for screening if called to do so. Early treatment could make all the difference. Note that ladies over 70 are not automatically called for breast screening but you can ring the breast screening unit and ask for an appointment. The same applies to bowel screening for the over 75s – kits are not received automatically and need to be requested.

Local Heroes

Emmerson Grange has hosted its first community awards to celebrate local unsung heroes. SDSAF member Peter Clements won the Community Impact Award which celebrates the quiet compassion and helpfulness that makes a lasting impression on the lives of others. Well done Peter - thank you for being such a positive and gentle force for good - and for reminding us that there are unsung heroes around us who make our world a better place.

Centre - local hero award winner Peter Clements flanked by Emerson Grange representatives Aadil Baig, and Aileen Nimmo.



Proposed Bus from Sevenoaks to Pembury Hospital

Many thanks to our MP, Laura Trott and to Graham Clack who works closely with her, for raising a petition with KCC for a bus service from Sevenoaks to Pembury Hospital.



We strongly support the introduction of this bus service and plan to campaign alongside Laura Trott, Age UK, and the CEO of Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust. The proposal would provide a reliable and affordable transport link for patients, visitors, and staff.

The absence of a direct route creates significant barriers for older and vulnerable residents, many of whom do not have access to a car and face costly or stressful journeys involving multiple changes. A direct service would promote independence, reduce isolation, ease parking pressures, and ensure that transport does not prevent access to essential healthcare.

For Train enthusiasts:



The Golden Arrow (French: La Flèche d'Or) was a premier luxury boat train operating between London and Paris from 1929 to 1972. It paired Southern Railway Pullman cars (London-Dover) with Compagnie Internationale des Wagon-Lits (Calais-Paris), offering a seamless, high-class travel experience that was suspended only during World War II.

The train used to pass through Otford and also Neufchatel-Hardelot on its way to Paris. Here the commemorative arrow is being held by members of the Otford - Hardelot- Neufchatel Twinning Association during a recent visit. A life sized replica of The Golden Arrow is now on display in Otford Station.



Digital Hubs in Kent

Would you like some free help to improve your digital skills?



Digital Hubs cover the whole of Kent – they are held monthly in a range of locations and are bookable in advance. There's one at Otford Library 10.00-12.00 on the third Thursday of each month, one at the Eden Centre in Edenbridge, 10.30-12.30 on the second Saturday of each month and one at Sevenoaks library is due to start up soon.

The sessions are manned by volunteers, called Digital Champions, who provide one on one tuition and help you with any digital queries you may have.

For instance, they can show you how to do online banking and shopping, help you with scam awareness, give you tips on navigating your digital device, show you how to keep in digital contact with friends and family and search for jobs, hobbies, or community activities online.

If you would benefit from attending a Digital Hub, you can book a half hour slot on the website or call the central phone number (03000 410 950) and one of the team will book you in. The website is

[:https://www.digitalkent.uk/information/projects/engagement/hubs](https://www.digitalkent.uk/information/projects/engagement/hubs)

A Positive Perspective on Ageing

(Inspired by research in gerontology and healthy ageing)

Health and ageing experts often highlight everyday activities that show just how capable, resilient, and adaptable many older adults remain.

If you are over 70 and able to do some—or even many—of the following daily activities, it's a wonderful sign that you are maintaining strength, independence, and vitality.

1. Managing finances and technology independently

Paying bills, handling banking, or using devices like smartphones, tablets, and computers, shows strong thinking skills and a willingness to keep learning. Adapting to new technology at any age is something to be proud of.

2. Getting up from a low chair or the floor

Being able to rise without using your hands reflects good leg strength, balance, and coordination—important ingredients for staying mobile and confident in everyday life.

3. Preparing a meal from scratch

Cooking keeps both mind and body active. It involves planning, memory, movement, creativity, and the pleasure of nourishing yourself and others.

4. Walking comfortably for about a mile

Regular walking supports heart health, stamina, and joint mobility. Being able to walk a mile at your own pace is a good indicator of endurance and overall wellbeing.

5. Keeping track of medications

Remembering and managing medications shows organisation, awareness, and care for your own health.

6. Driving safely, including at night

Driving calls on many skills—vision, coordination, quick thinking, and confidence. Continuing to drive safely reflects strong functional ability and independence.

7. Maintaining independence in everyday life

Managing daily tasks, making decisions, solving problems, and staying connected with the world around you are all powerful signs of healthy ageing.

Of course, everyone ages differently. Some people may need a little help with certain tasks, and that is a normal part of life. The encouraging news is that improvement is often possible at any age. Small daily habits—walking, cooking, learning new skills, staying organised, and keeping socially active—can help keep both mind and body strong.

Healthy ageing isn't about perfection. It's about continuing to live with purpose, confidence, curiosity, and enjoyment—while maintaining independence for as long as possible.

And every day that we remain active, engaged, and interested in life is something worth celebrating.

Making our world a better place ...

A beautiful observation sent to us by Samar - reminding us that we can inspire others by the quiet choices we make -

'Sometimes you feel a wave of admiration for someone, not because of what they have achieved but because you have watched them grow through storms they have never talked about, because you have seen them choose kindness when life wasn't kind to them, because they carry light even on days when they feel empty. They make our world better and softer by being real, gentle and true.....'

Upcoming event for your diary:

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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