

Forum News



June 2004

The Newsletter of Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum

Welcome Olivia



Dear Forum Member,

For those of you unable to attend the April AGM, I would like to introduce myself. I am delighted to have been appointed as the development officer for the Forum and offer you my wholehearted support in all our endeavours, both present and future.

The development officer post will be a huge asset to the Forum, allowing dedicated time to be spent on the issues which affect us all.

I have been an Enfield resident for 28 years and have brought up my family here. My professional background is in teaching and lecturing in Barnet and Haringey, primarily in health and fitness.

My immediate plans are to expand the membership of the Forum and to raise its profile in the local community—particularly in under represented sectors of Enfield. By researching successful forums in other parts of the country and forging links with them, I plan to expand on our effectiveness and secure further funding to develop the projects and opportunities available for “prime time” residents of Enfield.

I can be contacted on 0208 447 8841 or by email on: olivia.goodfellow@enfieldover50sforum.org.uk during office hours and look forward to meeting you all in due course.

Olivia Goodfellow

FORUM Events

Tuesday 29 June at 10.30 a.m

Enfield Civic Centre, Silver Street

TB: Is it Spreading; Is it a Danger?

Speaker: Lynn Altass,

North Central London NHS TB Network Manager

Tuesday 27 July at 10.30 a.m.

Enfield Civic Centre, Silver Street

Fire Kills: Do you have a smoke alarm?

Would you like one fitted free?

Speaker: Peter Roll, Chief Community Fire Service

Officer and Elaine Gibson will speak on Living Independently, Living Safely with a Community Alarm

Monday 12 July at 11.30 a.m.

Capel Manor

Summer Outing with talks, a guided tour of themed gardens and viewing of Enfield Arts Exhibition.

Take a picnic to eat in the gardens or buy lunch at £2.75 in the restaurant.

Tickets £4.50 Details: Anne Wood 020 8372 4123

Thursday 9 September

Edmonton Leisure Centre

**Fitness + Home Safety Advice+Awareness Day
Admission Free including Lunch**

Details: Derek Friggens 020 8482 1925

FROM THE CHAIR

Tuesday June 1 was a Red Letter Day for the Forum. It was the day we welcomed Olivia Goodfellow as our new part-time coordinator and development officer, charged with moving the Forum up a notch or two or three in our drive to become an even more representative voice of older people in Enfield.

Thanks to the National Lottery and its grant to the Community Fund, we will have the finance for a three year project providing we meet our stringent targets every year.

The aims that we have set are:

- * MUCH increased membership
- * GREATER involvement with the wide variety of community groups in the Borough
- * HIGHER level of Forum participation in decision-making affecting older people.

The Forum Committee will be focusing on revising our Development Plan and all members will be invited to give their views. In our first Development Plan we set the aim of winning the funding for a part-time officer.

Now the work begins to get our membership back over the 200 mark and dare I suggest up to 300 by the 2005 AGM - and to increase the number of affiliated organisations to the Forum to 40. But it is for you to decide whether these targets are feasible.

Meanwhile, we are always open to suggestions for topics you would like to discuss at Forum meetings and in time we would like to expand the social side of the Forum. So if you have ideas please let us have them and please support the events advertised on this page.

Monty Meth

Enfield Pension Credit Recipients now top 12,000

and Adds £50 + to Average Weekly Income

We continue both to monitor the progress of the Pension Credit while we seek ways of getting more of the people entitled to the extra money to apply for it.

Everyone over 60 should have an income of at least £105.45 a week if they are single or £160.95 if they have a partner. At the same time we deplore the fact that over 2 million poor people estimated by the Government to warrant the extra money are still not getting it because for one reason or another they have not applied for money which can now be backdated for up to a year to October 2003 - previously, backdating only applied for three months - but make sure you ask for backdating.

Some people, we know, say: "If I'm entitled to it, why should I have to apply?" We understand their feelings, but we have to encourage them to go by the book - until we get the rules changed!

We are hopeful that with the support of Enfield Chief Executive Rob Leak it will soon be possible to have joint teams from the Council and the Pension Service working together so that people who enquire about council tax rebates or housing benefits are automatically asked about their eligibility for pension credit.

And the same applies in reverse, that people enquiring about pension credit are automatically asked about their qualification for housing and council tax dis-

counts. Sounds simple - but it needs to be implemented.

We have also put the Pension Service staff in touch with those responsible for people living in sheltered accommodation in the Borough and we will continue to publicise the pension credit at all events in which we participate.

Meanwhile we can report that as at April 2004 there were:

4700 people in Edmonton receiving pension credit averaging £58.10 per week, 4280 in Enfield North receiving an average £51.89 and 3635 in Enfield Southgate with an average £59.66 a week.

That makes a total of 12,615 individuals in 10,220 households in the Borough receiving extra money.

There is still much to do in finding hard-to-reach people, particularly those who do not participate in their local community groups. They are letting the Government keep some £2.5 billion in unclaimed benefits for pensioners and in addition it is estimated that four out of ten pensioners are currently missing out on £750,000 unclaimed Council Tax benefit - an average £426 cut in council tax bills.

THE PENSION CREDIT FREEPHONE APPLICATION LINE IS 0800 99 1234

.....and now read two sides of the same story

Letters edited from Saga's June magazine

Reader No 1: Jill Basten of Bordon, Hants writes: "On April 12 my state pension increased by £3.94 a week and my pension credit by 88p. The latter is already less than the advertised handout because when working I foolishly made some modest provision for retirement. This just puts me on the wrong side of the threshold for any benefits to which I would otherwise be entitled.

In a fit of madness I declared this massive increase of £3.82 to the council, as a result of which my housing and council tax benefits have been reduced by £3.25. So much for 55 years of hard work and paying taxes."

Reader No 2: Jane Scanlon from Southsea wrote: "I feel I must write and put the other side of the pensions and benefits story. My 86-year-old mother was visited by a very understanding member of the benefit office at a time that suited her, and filled out all the forms. All she had to do was sign. Less than three weeks later she received a cheque for £324 and a request to return her pension book. Her pension has now been increased by over £20 a week and she no longer has to pay council tax, which she had been doing at a reduced rate.

She also no longer has to pay for a TV licence and from this year she will receive £400 for her fuel bills".

Needless to say she is very happy with the Pension Credit scheme and with all that has been given to her.

Pay up for Pensions.

NPC + TUC March and Rally

Saturday June 19. March from Temple Tube Station at 1pm to Trafalgar Square for a 2pm rally. Show your support for a better pensions deal for all. Look out for the Enfield Pensioners Action Group Banner - and rally behind it!

Visit our website

www.enfieldover50sforum.org.uk

where you will find up-to-the-minute information about the Forum's activities, minutes of our meetings, links to other websites, coverage of issues affecting older people and a membership form for joining the Forum.

**FORUM
SUMMER SOCIAL
AT
CAPEL MANOR
Monday 12 July 2004
tickets £4.50**

HAVE A PLEASANT DAY AT CAPEL MANOR
The forum committee invites you and your guests to take part in our first Summer Outing to Capel Manor.

The day will start at 11.30 with an introductory behind-the-scenes talk from a horticultural expert. This will include the history, the present day activities and the future of Capel Manor, followed by a short question and answer session.

For lunch a main course can be purchased at the restaurant for a very reasonable £2.75, or if you prefer it you can bring your own picnic and spread out in the wonderful gardens. After lunch we will be taken on a short guided tour of the themed gardens. Members can then stroll around the gardens at their leisure and/or visit the Enfield Arts Exhibition being held at Capel Manor.

Buses 317 and 217 stop at the junction of Bulls-moor Lane and the A10, which is approximately a 5 minute walk to the entrance of Capel Manor. For any disabled member who may experience transport problems it may be possible to arrange a lift from the Civic Centre. Should any one need this service, please discuss this when buying your tickets.

Members travelling by car and willing help with lifts from the Civic Centre are asked to let Anne Wood know.

Tickets, full details and travel options will be available at the June Forum and from Anne (tel 020 8372 4123).

Monday 12 JULY at

CAPEL MANOR

Blood Tests to be Easier

Major changes in the phlebotomy services at Chase Farm Hospital and many local surgeries are under way - all designed by the Primary Care Trust to reduce waiting times and improve efficiency. Money has been obtained for a new supervisory post charged with shifting the pressure from the hospital and getting more people seen in their local community.

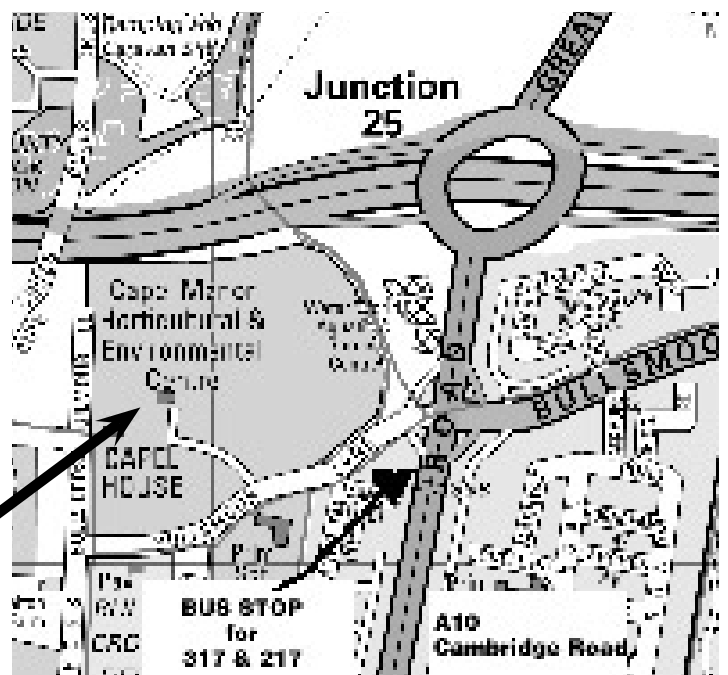
During the summer the waiting area at Chase Farm will be enlarged and a reception desk installed. It is hoped to also start an appointment system that will ensure that patients who have fasted are seen first in the morning, while overall waiting times will be reduced.

Meanwhile, the number of blood test sessions at local surgeries has been increased from 17 to 31 a week and it is hoped that two more surgeries will join the scheme in July.

There are now three phlebotomy sessions a week at Eagle House Surgery, Ponders End; four at the Freezy-water Centre, Aylands Road; four at Bincote Road, three at Oakwood Medical Centre, two at Highlands surgery, five at Nightingale Road, five at Forest Road and five in Enfield Town at Willow Lodge, Willow Road; White Lodge and Abernethy House, Silver Street; Carlton House, Baker Street; and Dr Theiwendra in Cecil Road. If you are registered with any of these surgeries then you should be able to make a blood test appointment through them.

Also on the cards is a new primary care centre at the Edmonton Green Shopping Centre Development which will replace the existing Central Clinic due for demolition to make way for the new ASDA supermarket.

The new Edmonton Green Primary Care Centre will probably embrace current surgeries in Fore Street, Church Street and Market Square and offer modern health care facilities to patients and a better working environment for medical staff.



Do you know about the Safehouse Project ?

Do you qualify for free home security ?

If you are aged over 60 and live in a council house or flat - or a private home and receiving pension credit, housing or council tax benefit and have less than £8000 in savings then you should contact Enfield's Community Safety Unit on 020 8379 4310.

They will assess whether you are eligible for free home security such as locks, bolts, door chains, door viewers, personal attack and smoke alarms. They will arrange for the Police to survey your home, get an estimate for the work and then arrange for it to be done.

Called the Safehouse Project, they last year completed over 500 free home security surveys. So if you are worried about your home security or have recently been burgled then please contact Enfield's Community Safety Unit on 020 8379 4310.

Under the headline "OAP Robbed", Enfield Gazette recently reported: "An 85 year old woman was robbed of £300 by a man posing as a CID officer. The burglar called at the victim's home in Park View, Winchmore Hill, at 10.30 a.m. last Friday claiming he was checking on the elderly due to a series of muggings in the area. He then made off with the cash from a bedside cabinet while the victim was getting him a a glass of water".

Helpful Tips on Safety in the Home

- Always check that all doors and windows are shut and locked when you go to bed
- Keep keys in a safe place and make sure you know where they are
- Don't keep too much cash at home -put it in a bank or building society for safety
- Draw your curtains when it gets dark and take clothes in from any outside washing line
- Keep emergency telephone numbers like gas, electricity, neighbours by your telephone
- If you receive malicious calls, tell the police
- Never tell strangers you are alone
- Use a door chain, then look through the peephole in your door before answering
- Always ask for identification. Legitimate callers will be happy to provide it and will normally make a appointment before calling anyway. Ask them to come back later if you are not sure
- If you are suspicious call 999

Campaign to end Discrimination in Disability Benefits

A new campaign to end discrimination in the provision of disability benefits has been launched. The **MOBILISE** campaign aims to to remove the age barrier that prevents people aged 65 and over from claiming the Disability Living Allowance (DLA), believing this to be one of the blatant examples of age discrimination which must be scrapped.

Among those supporting **MOBILISE** are Help the Aged, Age Concern, the Disability Alliance and the TUC. The Forum would like to hear of any examples of DLA being withheld or reduced on grounds of age and what this has meant to your standard and quality of life - or whether you have been denied DLA on grounds of age.

It seems that people who become disabled after the age of 65 cannot get help with mobility or low level care needs. Whilst younger disabled people get the Disability Living Allowance, older disabled people get the more limited Attendance Allowance.

Having different rules and an upper age limit for claiming DLA is discriminatory and must be abandoned. DLA is a non-means tested benefit for disabled people with care or mobility needs. People who claim DLA before their 65th birthday can continue to receive it after the age of 65. However, people whose disability arises at or after the age of 65 - or who don't claim help until after 65 - can only claim the much more limited Attendance Allowance.

Why should we have a cut-off at 65 when people are living much longer and when the Government is planning to end age discrimination in employment by 2006 and the NHS national service framework for older people has as its first standard a strong declaration against age discrimination in health and social care?

But we need evidence of age discrimination to take to our three MPs. So please contact our Development Officer, Olivia Goodfellow on 020 8447 8841 with your case history. We would only disclose your name with your full prior agreement.

Diary Note

Is It Fair - organisers of the council tax protests - is planning a London demonstration on Saturday 2nd October 2004.

HAVE YOUR SAY

Offers of contributions to the newsletter are welcome. If you have an issue, item or suggestion for the newsletter send it or email it to Olivia or Monty.

Open Day at Myddelton House Gardens, Bulls Cross

Sunday 20 June 12 noon - 4 pm

Organised by day centre staff at Age Concern Enfield to raise funds for new furnishings for the William Preye Centre in Edmonton.

ADVANCE NOTICE

for an

OVER 50s

Stay Safe, Fit and Healthy

OPEN DAY

at

Edmonton Leisure Centre

Thursday 9th September

A wide range of sport and leisure opportunities for the over 50s

- **Morning talks**
- **FREE Swimming**
- **FREE Aquafit**
- **FREE Table Tennis**
- **FREE Short Mat Bowls**
- **FREE Yoga and Pilates**
- **FREE Refreshments**

A partnership initiative between Enfield Leisure Centres, The Enfield Borough Over 50s Forum and Age Concern Enfield.

Toenail Cutting a minor step forward

We sent to the local Primary Care Trust our toenail cutting survey which showed that around 90% of respondents needed some treatment for a variety of conditions such as bunions, corns, hard skin, ingrowing toenails, callouses and chilblains.

In response, the podiatry service say they will offer treatment to people suffering from ingrowing toenails and bunions and, in general, they can expect to have their toenails cut at the same time. But once the treatment is completed, the patient will be discharged and they will not get an on-going toenail cutting service.

Anyone can ask their GP to refer them to podiatry if they think that the condition of their feet is interfering with their mobility, or if they feel the condition of their feet could lead to a complicating condition. In other words, don't sit in silence while your feet are deteriorating, but see the GP and ask for a referral.

Even if you are not taken on by podiatry you will now be offered a foot health education class where you, or your carer, will be shown how to manage simple foot health and hygiene problems, including cutting toenails.

That is progress of sorts but the NHS still insists that toenail cutting is not a health issue, but a personal care matter in the same way as cutting finger nails is about personal care, not health.

The podiatry service confirms that they are about to start training social service staff in one care home and they accept that they "clearly have some way to go in extending that service" The pace they say will be "evolutionary rather than revolutionary in style". So there's not much comfort there but meanwhile Age Concern's toenail cutting service continues at Plevna Road, Edmonton, and at the Lancaster Road Centre.

**For information on this service call Jill Dawson
Monday-Thursday 9am-4pm 020 8373 6285.**

We have 16 books of tickets for the Age Concern England summer prize draw.

1st prize - a new Ford Ka. 2nd prize: a luxury holiday worth £1500, 3rd prize: £500 and there are five runners-up prizes of £100 each. Tickets cost £1 each and they come in books of 10. And for each book we sell the Forum will get £5. If you can take a book please call Forum Secretary Tony Watts on 020 8886 9125.

Invite a Friend along to the next the Forum

Make the Forum stronger. Contact Olivia Goodfellow on 020 8447 8841 or get a form from the website - www.enfieldover50sforum.org.uk

Council Withdraws from Elsinge Monday OAP Club Scandal

Members attending the May Forum meeting were shocked to hear that without any warning one of our affiliates, the Elsinge Monday OAP Club, which meets at Kempe Hall on the Elsinge Estate, Bulls Moor, had received a letter from the Council claiming hiring charges for the hall dating back to April 2003 and amounting to £951.75.

At the same time the Club were informed that the hire charges to use Kempe Hall in future would be £6.75 per hour and that no discretionary reduction was possible.

We took up the fight on their behalf because we feel strongly that a voluntary organisation which seeks to make life easier for older people - the members of this club are aged between 80 and 95 - at least deserved a less high-handed and more understanding approach. We pointed out that as all but two members of the Elsinge Monday OAP Club are residents of the Elsinge Estate they could easily qualify as a meeting of residents and meet the criteria for a reduced hire charge.

Because the OAP Club's appeal against the backdating charge of £951.75 had apparently been quite arbitrarily rejected and their offer to pay a hiring charge of £3.50 an hour has also been rebuffed, we wrote to Councillors Matthew Laban (Cabinet member for Housing) and Councillor Don Delman (Cabinet member for Voluntary and Community Development) urging them to re-consider the Council's policy regarding this OAP Club which has been running for some 20 years, the last five at Kempe Hall for which no hire charge has ever been made.

We are delighted to report that Councillor Laban acted immediately on our letter and telephoned to say that he had instructed the Director of Housing to withdraw the backdating claim. He also gave an undertaking to review future hire charges. This is good news and shows the Forum's intervention paid off - but we still have to be vigilant to ensure that community groups like the Elsinge OAP Club are not subjected to a level of hire charges that makes it difficult for them to continue.

This club has a membership of some 25 people paying 50p a week. Once a month they try and get an entertainer costing £20 or more and they pay £100 a year for insurance cover while the OAPs are in the hall. They raise money from raffles to cover the cost of refreshments etc.

These voluntary groups give their time and energy - and often their own money - to helping others and they deserve a more understanding response from the Council's officers who refused to be responsive to any plea for some latitude and understanding.

Forum Wins New Leisure Centre Deal

More than 500 people have already bought the new half-price energy card costing £10 for people aged over 60 and some over 60s have bought the special swim anytime, any day £17 monthly pass. These deals were negotiated with the Forum, but we need to publicise them much more to encourage more people to exercise regularly.

Now we have news of a new deal exclusively for Forum members which gives them use of the fitness suites at each of the four leisure centres at Southbury, Albany, Edmonton and Southgate at very competitive rates.

Forum members will be able to get a 50% discount on their combined fitness and energy card (swim) annual membership which will cost £20. For this you will be able to swim as often as you like and you will be able to use the fitness suite for £3.60 per session instead of £5.60.

If you take out a monthly direct debit it will cost you £27 to use the fitness suite - and have free swimming - a saving of £9 per month. And if you're really feeling like mortgaging the future you can pay annual fee of £270 - saving £90 a year.

To obtain one of these deals you will need to provide proof of your Forum Membership which must be obtained from Tony Watts 020 886 9125.

NHS Dentist

For any member looking for a NHS dentist we understand that Southgate Smile, a Dental Practice on roundabout opposite fitness centre, had vacancies at the first of June (Tel 020 882 0999).

New AT Home Service Centre in Edmonton

AT Home - stands for *Assistive Technology at Home* - and is a new joined up health and social care service designed to help people of all ages to remain as independent as possible within the community.

The AT service centre at 14 Centre Way, Claverings Estate, Edmonton N9 OAH will provide equipment, adaptations and telecare for people who have a physical or sensory disability. Booklets about the service are available from social services, libraries and the Civic Centre or you can call 020 8379 5028 for a copy.

The new service centre set up by the Primary Care Trust and the Council will enable disabled people and their carers to test a range of ideas to help them live more independent lives such as making cooking easier. To find out more about the **AT Home** service please call 020 8379 3974.