

Book your flu jab today

This year, more than ever, it is important that vulnerable people have their free flu vaccination as soon as they can

Although Enfield's older residents have a good record with 65% getting the flu jab last year, the aim this year is 75%, for obvious reasons. The Forum has promoted the flu jab for many years – to the extent that local health managers call us “militant supporters” – and it is even more important than ever this year.

The Academy of Medical Sciences has estimated that a ‘reasonable worst case’ (not a forecast) scenario of winter flu, Covid-19 and the backlog of work that was stalled due to the first wave of C19 could result in 120,000 excess deaths. (To date there have been approximately 45,000 excess deaths in the UK from the first wave of Covid.)

Glenn Stewart, Assistant Director of Public Health, Enfield says the NHS and other government departments, as well as local authorities, are therefore extremely keen that anyone who is eligible for a winter flu jab gets one as soon as possible.

“This particularly applies to those who may have been in the shielded or vulnerable groups during lockdown. Vaccination will also prevent the onward transmission of the virus; getting vaccinated is not just to protect yourself but also to protect those around you.”

Many people do not take the illness seriously. We have all heard “It’s just the flu.” But each year the flu kills on average 11,000 people and hospitalises thousands more. There’s no “just” about it.

Flu is caused by influenza viruses that infect the windpipe and lungs. And because it’s caused by viruses and not bacteria, antibiotics won’t treat it. (However, if there are complications from getting flu, antibiotics may be needed.) So prevention is the main way to tackle the flu.

There is a big push to increase the take up of the vaccine for those disproportionately affected by Covid: the over 65s, especially the over 80s, all those with long term conditions,

2 to 3 year olds, the housebound and their carers, those with learning difficulties, care home residents and those in assisted living accommodation or in multiple occupation conditions, ethnic minorities and those living in deprived areas. (See p4 for full list of those who should have the vaccine).

The flu vaccination is free, safe and effective and must be given annually. It cannot give you the flu. It does not protect you from COVID-19 or seasonal coughs and colds, but it does give protection against the strains of flu virus that will be circulating this year.

The NHS says it (probably via your GP) will contact you directly if you are eligible, and will give you information about where to go to get the vaccine. But it will be much more complicated than usual this

year, with one way systems, PPE and social distancing. The flu vaccine is also available at pharmacies.

Our local CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) is identifying large venues so that GPs can manage the demands of social distancing and what we hope will be a high turnout. We have also heard of some GPs setting up gazebos in their car parks.

The combination of the winter flu, seasonal coughs and colds as well as the Covid-19 virus will place great strains on the health service – and on some individuals – so we must all do everything we can to stay healthy. Get your flu jab as soon as you can.



Remember, it is not “just the flu”. It kills thousands of people and hospitalises many more every year

Changes affecting older people in Enfield

Online seminar 10am, 6 October
See pg 15 for details

Ruth's Review

Keeping positive in uncertain times

So the strangest of times continue, when all we want is to return to some sort of normality. Some days I feel we are getting there and other days I am not so optimistic.

Business continues almost normally in our office. We have been back for some time and grateful to be in a position to do that. Thank you all so much, those who renewed recently: We are working very hard to try and reinstate Forum events, meetings and support groups. We have applied extended membership times to those who have renewed and this has been fairly and accurately allocated, so please be aware of this if you have not renewed yet.

We are aware there have been limitations on membership that we needed to account for. Currently Millfield House remains closed to the public as does the library here. We will be able to meet members inside the building but this will be by appointment only and will require people to sign in and out. We are not able to operate a drop-in facility at this time, so please phone the office and arrange an appointment if you wish to do so and we will have the membership cards ready.

Looking ahead, a lot of our work will undoubtedly be more online, but we remain very aware of those who are not online and what we can do to support that. One of those is still maintaining Forum Focus in its current format, posted out to people, to ensure all our news reaches all our members. There are plans ahead to operate IT support classes for our members when we can do so safely.

In order to ensure that our members receive the appropriate priority and concessions, we will be working with our partners to ensure that membership of the Forum is checked and ratified. I know a lot of you want further information re the changes at Fusion and meetings at the Dugdale Centre, with the CAB, solicitors, tax advice etc. We assume that for purposes of track and trace and safety of numbers there will be a booking system going forward. We will be able to clarify, once we have the right information. Updated information regarding Fusion can be found on pages 4-5.

We are looking to increase our use of social media and the administration and moderation of facebook will now be managed in the office. Many thanks to Olivia Goodfellow and Chris Gooch for establishing and maintaining this group with its healthy membership. We are keen to ensure that all members of the group are Forum members or local partners within the Borough of Enfield going forward and to ensure that this is an effective communication tool and increasing our social media presence.

Keep safe

Ruth Fathaddine

Office and Development Manager



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Disclaimer

This newsletter is for general information. You are urged to seek competent professional advice before doing anything based on its contents. The Forum takes no responsibility for any of the services provided by any advertisement in this newsletter.

JOIN the Forum

The Forum is a voluntary organisation which relies on membership fees, some sponsorship and occasional small grants to undertake a wide range of activities which benefit older people in the borough of Enfield. If you are reading this and are not an individual member, please consider joining by contacting the office. It's just £11 a year (£16 for couples) or £100 (£150 for couples) for lifetime membership. Organisations can join for £25 a year or £100 for five years.

Improving public health

With public health at the top of the agenda, we remember the success of our anti-spitting petition and ask that the shake-up of Public Health England extends to the unfair funding formula

Forum members have all too often been met with: "I'll sign it, but it won't do any good," from our fellow citizens when we've been out seeking support for our petitions.

But now with the coronavirus pandemic a major and daily threat to every one of us, none has proved to be more important to the doubters than our long and successful campaign to secure the 2013 by-law banning spitting on the borough's streets.

I think our Forum helped to make Enfield a healthier borough for present and future generations when nearly 4,000 people signed our petition calling on the government to sanction an anti-spitting by-law.

It made us the first borough for 22 years allowed to fine people – £80 for fouling our streets (£50 if they paid within 14 days).

Before the Department for Communities and Local Government would consider the anti-spitting by-law, we had to address a full council meeting to secure unanimous all-party support.

Our anti-litter enforcement patrols have now issued fixed penalty notices to some 2,225 people.

As we now live in daily fear of picking up Covid-19, it is timely to recall our petition and campaign because spitting is a source of transmitting infectious diseases. Outlawing spitting in Enfield has played a part in improving public health and hygiene in the borough.

So to hear, at this critical time, that Public Health England (PHE) is to be abolished and replaced by the fanciful entitled National Institute for Health Protection, without any clear policy and direction for improving public health in the localities, must rank as one of the most bizarre government decisions we've seen in a long time.

Have you ever heard of a new organisation being set up without a named leader with clear areas of responsibility? Yet this so-called National Institute has been launched with Baroness Dido Harding as its interim head charged with sorting out the coronavirus testing and tracing debacle.

The 53-year-old Baroness has quite a CV – including stints at Thomas Cook, Woolworths, Tesco and Sainsbury's – although she is perhaps best known for being the chief executive at TalkTalk before becoming the chairwoman of NHS Health Improvement.

We do not yet know who will be installed as the permanent chief executive of this new Institute, nor do we know whether it will be mandated to tackle all the tasks currently in Public Health's portfolio – such as cutting obesity, smoking and alcohol abuse,

as well as tackling mental and sexual health problems and reducing health inequalities.

No wonder the leaders of our most prestigious health organisations, such as the Academy of Royal Medical Colleges and the Faculty of Public Health, are unwilling to wait until next year for answers.

Only then will we learn how independent and autonomous this new National Institute will be and whether it will have full control of an adequate budget – or will it remain a mere puppet within Matt Hancock's Health and Social Care Ministry (DoHSC).

Can Mr Hancock be trusted to do the right thing when in the last eight years the PHE budget has been cut by 40% in real terms as it was moved from the NHS to being a local authority responsibility?

We know only too well how PHE was sidelined when we sought answers as to why it had been so grossly under-funded for the last seven years.

Duncan Selbie, the PHE chief executive, meekly

passed the letter to the DoHSC, never to be answered.

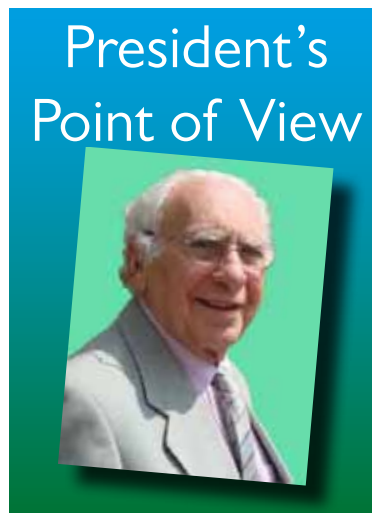
Mr Selbie has now departed and the Forum is now preparing to make our presence known to his yet-to-be-appointed successor. We are focusing attention on the 2021/22 funding allocation to Public Health Enfield and have enlisted the support of our three local MPs.

Our next approach will be to the Minister for Public Health, Jo Churchill, when we shall seek a government commitment to end the outdated and discriminatory formula which has relegated Enfield to a £50 per head allocation for public health, compared with Haringey's £70, Camden's £101, Islington's £108, Westminster's £125 and Kensington and Chelsea's £135.

If the Government can abolish Public Health England without consultation it can and should abolish an outdated funding formula that has for too long relegated and robbed Enfield of the funds needed to improve life expectancy in our most deprived low income areas.

Keep safe and stay well.

Monty Meth –
Forum President



Thinking of updating your will? Then please consider leaving a legacy to the Forum to help future generations of older people.

Triple Lock suspension?

With the growing threat to the pension guarantee, a one year suspension might be the least worst option

Chancellor Rishi Sunak is contemplating unlocking the guarantee that the basic state pension will rise annually by 2.5%, or the rate of inflation or the rise in average earnings whatever is highest. This is known as the Triple Lock and has been attacked by many commentators as unfairly benefiting pensioners at the expense of younger generations.

Unless the Triple Lock is amended, it is said, pensioners will get large increases linked to earnings over the next two years. Average earnings will drop this year as some 10 million workers have been furloughed and seen their pay cut, but it is expected to go back up in 2021 as the economy recovers.

Scrapping the Triple Lock could save up to £8 billion a year, according to leaked Treasury figures. So we hope the same Treasury officials will remember that Britain currently comes bottom out of 14 leading EU countries in its spending on pensions as a percentage of that country's national income. We spend 11.4% compared with Italy 16.5%, France 15% followed down the ladder by Portugal, Austria, Denmark,

Finland, Holland, Belgium, Spain, Germany, Poland and Sweden.

We now know that the free TV licences for the over 75s is one pensioner benefit that has gone since the last election. We know too that despite the Triple Lock introduced in 2011 by the

Conservative Party-led coalition, in 2019 the UK state pension was 29% of average earnings, the lowest among the world's major industrialised nations.

At the 2019 general election, the Conservative Party promised to keep the Triple Lock but it looks increasingly likely that it will use the Covid-19 crisis to justify breaking this promise.

The most important thing is that we get a guarantee

that this is just a one year suspension and not an excuse to kill it off.

We need to maintain the principle that pensions keep pace with inflation and average wages. Once that principle is lost, it will have gone for good and it will be the younger generation of future pensioners who will be the big losers.

Payout as percentage of average wage

Netherlands – 100.6%	Germany – 50.5%
Portugal – 94.9%	USA – 49.1%
Italy – 93.2%	Norway – 48.8%
Austria – 91.8%	Switzerland – 44.9%
Spain – 81.8%	New Zealand – 43.5%
Denmark – 80.2%	Australia – 42.6%
France – 74.5%	Ireland – 42.3%
Belgium – 66.1%	Chile – 40.1%
Finland – 65%	Japan – 40%
Czech Republic – 60%	Poland – 38.6%
Sweden – 54.9%	Mexico – 29.6%
Canada – 53.4%	UK – 29%

OECD average 62.9% Source: OECD

Join the Forum

Although we are unable to run our usual schedule of events, the Forum is still working hard and we are planning more webinars and other online activities for our members.

Join the Forum or renew your membership. We rely on subscriptions to print and post this newsletter, to continue our campaigning work, and to support older people throughout the borough.

Your up-to-date membership also ensures you can enjoy the concessions we have negotiated with Fusion Leisure.

Membership is just £11 a year (£16 for couples) or £100 (£150 per couple) for lifetime membership. Organisations with more than 50% of members over 50 can join for just £25 a year.

Anyone over 50 can join but you must be a resident of the Borough of Enfield to enjoy the Fusion discounts.

Contact the office (020 8807 2076) or visit the website: <https://enfieldover50sforum.org.uk/membership/>

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Get the flu jab

You should have the flu vaccine if you:

- Are 65 years old or over
- Are pregnant
- Are an adult or child with certain conditions
- Live with someone on the shielded patient list
- Are living in a care home or other long-stay facility
- Receive a carer's allowance, or you're the main carer for an elderly or disabled person
- Are aged two-three
- Are in primary school, or the first year of secondary school (Year 7)
- Are a frontline health and social care worker
- Are aged 50-64 (note that vaccinations will be given later in the year for this group. Those at higher risk will receive their vaccine first).

Fusion Leisure Centres

We asked Fusion Leisure some questions and these are the answers they came back with

Why are some centres not open and the others offering limited hours for gym/swim and far fewer classes?

Due to the nature of the pandemic we, working in partnership with Enfield Council, have taken a phased approach to reopening the facilities. We have taken guidance from UK Active (the leisure industry organisation) and central government to ensure that we are following rules and regulations around social distancing and being Covid Secure.

Why am I allowed only three visits per week and one activity per visit?

Whilst we have reduced capacity, we need to ensure every member gets a fair chance to undertake the activities they want and that everyone is safe when in the centre. Members can book further visits (on top of the three they have already had in a week) for the gym. You need to use the option that says 'Extra' when doing this. So members can use the gym every day if there is space available. We advise members to utilise their advanced sessions for the activities they want to attend and the Extra session for any gym activities. We do have plans to review this and are hopeful of an increase in the number of sessions members can book shortly.

Are members of the Over 50s Forum still entitled to concessions?

Yes, we are offering concessions to members of the Over 50s Forum as well as to other groups including those with disabilities, those in receipt of benefits and the under 16s, who are pay-as-you-go. This means they can buy the concession card (sometimes called the energy card) for £7.50 a year instead of the standard price of £21.50. With this card they will get a discount of 30%, so paying £5.60 for a swim/gym session/class instead of £8.

How do Over 50s members ensure they get the discount now that all bookings are online?

We need people to go to www.fusion-leisure.com, select a preferred centre and register with their name and address etc. Then they should go into that centre, show their Over 50s membership card and renew or buy their annual concession card. This information will be added to their online registration so that they will then pay only £5.60 for activities they book.

What about Forum members who had/have an annual pass?

All Fusion annual memberships were frozen at the end of March and re-activated in mid-August when we re-opened. We have extended members' end dates on their memberships to backdate for the loss of time during the lockdown and we would advise all annual members on their visit to ask

our reception team for confirmation of their end date so their annual membership and any benefits that might be associated with it do not expire.

What about Forum members who paid monthly direct debit?

We are still awaiting an answer from Fusion. Check our website for updates.

What are the new options?

1) Daytime, Individual DD, Centre Only. This means access to only one centre Mon-Fri 10am – 4pm. Gym, pool, 2 classes a week. £35 per month individual or £66.50 per couple.

2) Anytime Individual DD All Enfield Centres, £45 per month or £85.50 per couple.

3) Gym and Swim DD Centre Only, £34 per month or £64.60 per couple.

These are the prices for everyone and there are no reductions for Forum members.

The options also have differences about joining fees. See Fusion website or go into a centre for more details.

What happens when Forum members' annual pass runs out?

Forum members with an annual pass which runs out before April 2021 will be able to renew for a year for the same price as they pay now (as agreed between Fusion and the Forum last year) with the same terms and conditions though limited to three activities a week (see earlier question). For others buying an annual pass, Fusion is currently offering a 12 months for the price of 11 deal. The Number 1 option above will cost £385.

The number 2 option, £495. There are no

reductions for Forum members at this current moment in time.

When are the Over 50s Days returning?

We would all like to see this very successful scheme up and running again as soon as possible. Unfortunately, by its very nature, an Over 50s Day involves people gathering and socialising as well as exercising, so it does not meet Government guidelines. The new guidance around groups of no more than 6 people meeting at a time has also put a hold on these days returning. As and when guidance changes we will be in a position to update the Forum accordingly.

What provision are you making for people who are unable to access online booking facilities?

We are still awaiting an answer from Fusion. Call in to your local Fusion Leisure centre to find out more. Or ask a friend/ neighbour to check our website for you.

If you have more questions about Fusion, especially about day to day operations and Covid-19 measures, please go to your local centre or visit the website and see Frequently Asked Questions.

<https://www.fusion-lifestyle.com/faq/>



The centres are asking people to help keep themselves and everyone else safe



Restore OPAU to Chase Farm!

The Forum is calling for the Older People's Assessment Unit to be moved back to Chase Farm Hospital

Under cover of Covid-19, the Older Persons Assessment Unit (OPAU) at Chase Farm Hospital has been moved to Barnet Hospital without either consultation or even public announcement.

The Forum was told that this was temporary to maintain Chase Farm as a Covid-free site, but there are no signs of its return and no undertakings to reinstate it in spite of your Forum's approaches and serious arguments that it is a clinical necessity with the approach of winter.

We believe Chase Farm has managed to maintain blood tests and x-rays and imaging on site and could organise access and exit for the OPAU in the same way.

The Older Persons Assessment Unit was in part compensation for the loss of A&E at Chase

Farm and has been a huge success. It would be difficult to find a more impressive unit. Its loss mainly affects residents in Enfield and Southgate where it has been a life saver, life enhancer and of great help to GPs, patients and their families and carers.

As time has gone on, solid evidence has emerged that GPs want its return as they can't refer patients who need its specialised services to Barnet as it is so inaccessible to large numbers who

don't want to go there or who simply can't get there.

The result is that they are being referred to – or turning up at – A&E at North Middlesex University Hospital and to the Urgent Care Centres which are already over-burdened. It makes no sense. There is evidently unmet need now and NHS England has directed local NHS managers as part of its Recovery Programme to catch up on all backlog work.

If we can't get a ready diagnosis, there can be no relevant treatment, no treatment, no cure thus making the patient more vulnerable to Covid-19 and flu.

There are no valid practical or clinical reasons for the failure to return the OPAU to Chase Farm and no arguments against a safe and swift re-establishment.

The Enfield health economy has long been under-funded making us the poor relation in the new North Central London conglomeration we have been marshalled into, and loss of the OPAU has added to our health deficits as any health equality impact assessment will confirm.

The Forum is asking the MPs for Southgate and Enfield North to throw their weight behind our push for restoration.



The Older Persons Assessment Unit was, in part, compensation for losing A&E at Chase Farm

Cheer up! Christmas is coming

This is one celebration that will go ahead despite the virus pandemic and with it will come – wait for it – your £10 Christmas bonus paid to all pensioners by the government.

Newer recipients are unlikely to be aware that the £10 Christmas bonus was granted 48 years ago by Prime Minister Ted Heath, following a meeting in April 1972 with the late Jack Jones, then leader of the Transport and General Workers Union.

When he retired, Jack became president of the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) and came to our Forum's celebration at the age of 94 to welcome our 1,000th member.

While you will receive the same £10 bonus as it was in 1972 in early December, it has never been increased from the time when the state weekly retirement pension was £6.75.

"In those days it was enough to cover the cost of a turkey dinner for the whole family, with change left over for presents. After more than four decades of rising inflation, you can barely get a pack of Christmas cards and a book of stamps with it now. Had it risen in line with inflation it would be worth around £140 today," says Barry Todman, secretary of the NPC London Region.

And for those of us lucky enough to get to aged 80, there's another bonus of an extra 25p a week waiting for you – unchanged since 1971 when it was a decent 4.2 % of the basic state pension. It would and should be about £3 a week extra if, like everything else, it went up with inflation.

Ministers in successive governments have always told the Forum that it requires special legislation to change the £10 or the 25p age addition payment and parliament can never find the time.

Focus on climate change

The Forum's first webinar focused on what we can do to cut our carbon footprint

In early September the Forum launched into the world of webinars, inviting our members to a joint online meeting with Enfield Climate Action Forum (EnCaf).

Theo Sergiou from the Enfield Youth Parliament, pointed out that although a rise of 1 degree Centigrade in global temperatures might sound small, it has had a high impact. He was keen to emphasise practical ways to make a difference and suggested that the Youth Parliament and the Forum could work together in an Intergenerational Forum.

Feryal Clark, MP for Enfield North, said there is still a climate change emergency even though everything is so focused on Covid-19 at the moment. "It is not a distant threat. It is happening here and now." She said the country needs a green recovery plan and it is a shame that the government did not impose conditions related to the



We need to protect existing forests and plant more trees to help reduce rising levels of CO2

green economy as a return for helping companies during the lockdown, which other European countries did.

Charles Appleby, one of the founders of NoCO2, suggested five ways in which we can all help reduce our negative impact on the planet:

- 1) Switch your electricity supplier to one who offers 100% clean/green electricity
- 2) Cut your carbon footprint – cut air travel, leave the car at home or get an electric car, eat more vegetarian meals
- 3) Go carbon neutral by planting trees (or paying recognised charities to plant trees)
- 4) Join an organisation that is focussed on the environment/global warming
- 5) Spread the word – talk to people to explain why we all need to take responsibility.

Scammers target pensions

Pensioners are warned to take care when moving funds out of their retirement pots

More than £30 million has been stolen from pensioners by scammers in the last three years alone and the main victims have been men in their 50s, says, the Financial Conduct Authority and the Pensions Regulator.

They are launching a new "beware campaign" because victims have lost between £1,000 and £500,000 from their retirement pots, says Action Fraud, the crime reporting agency.

Pension savers will be urged to take their time when told of time-limited offers, seek advice and check

they are speaking to an authorised company. Football commentator Clive Tyldesley will put the message across that there is no transfer deadline in shifting your money to another account.

"Your favourite team wouldn't buy a new striker just because his agent says he's good. They'd ask around, check out his stats, do some research – just like you should when handling your pension plans."

NOTE: The government has announced that, from 2028, people will have to wait until they are 57 to access their pension savings – up from aged 55.

Shortage of GPs

One in six GPs plan to quit the NHS or retire early once the COVID-19 pandemic dies down, while 29% plan to work fewer hours, according to a survey by the British Medical Association.

They say this raises 'serious concerns' over the future of general practice. It is particularly worrying for us in Enfield with its permanent shortage of some 80 GPs.

Almost 3,500 GPs took early retirement in the five years from 2014/15 to 2018/19 according to official data that show a sharp rise in doctors retiring early over the past decade.

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Targeting violent crime

The police have set up a local team tasked with targeting crime hotspots in the borough

In this column, we would like to introduce you to the North Area Tasking Team (NATT for short) which is a brand new initiative to tackle violence in North Area Command Unit.

Its remit is to target the violent crime hotspots in our boroughs and it's got off to a flying start as a long list of previously wanted offenders have already been arrested and charged with violent crimes.

NATT is one of the first really concrete signs that officer numbers in the North Area have gone up as part of the government's increased commitment to spending on the police.

The unit is overseen by Superintendent Simon Crick and consists of 48 PCs, four Sergeants and one Inspector to head up the whole team day to day. Crucially these are not officers who have been taken away from other duties in the borough and then not replaced.

Rather they are locally-experienced officers with excellent knowledge of the hotspot areas they are working in and their previous positions have been filled with new recruits.

The team has been very busy arresting high-harm individuals, patrolling, executing warrants and picking up outstanding offenders.

These officers have been picked for their very specific local



Inspector Niall O'Neill and some of his NATT officers

knowledge. They understand the tensions that can exist in the area, the geography of the streets and they are sympathetic and sensitive to any community issues. They work closely with the Gangs Unit and many are qualified in public order skills too.

Supt Crick wants more female and BAME officers to be part of the team to make it truly representative. There are currently four female and nine BAME officers in the unit and work is underway to increase that.

The team operates to a very high standard of policing – they know that the key to successful stop and

search is intelligence-led policing done with explanation and civility – and they need strong grounds to stop someone.

Four teams work in rotation to constantly patrol the hotspot areas, some in cars and some on foot and the teams can be moved around as required to tackle violent crime. According to Supt Crick it is a very sought after role which lots of officers want to be part of.

Here at North Area we are very excited to see the effects NATT will have on reducing robbery and violent crime rates for our residents.

Niall O'Neill

Inspector

Call 101 for non-emergencies and 999 if you witness a crime taking place or need immediate help



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Stanley T. Clark
- Stanley T. Clark

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Always look on the bright side of life



Our new 10 commandments

1. Talk to yourself. There are times you need expert advice.
2. "In Style" are the clothes that still fit.
3. Your people skills are just fine. It's your tolerance for idiots that needs work.
4. Biggest lie you tell yourself: "I don't need to write that down. I'll remember it."
5. "On time" is when you get there.
6. It would be wonderful if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes, then come out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller.
7. You've noticed people your age are so much older than you.
8. Growing old should have taken longer.
9. Ageing has slowed you down, but it hasn't shut you up.
10. You still haven't learned to act your age, and hope you never will.

And one more:

"One for the road" means peeing before you leave the house

If my body was a car

I would be thinking about trading it in for a newer model. I've got bumps and dents and scratches in my finish and my paint job is getting a little dull.

But that's not the worst of it.

My headlights are out of focus, and it's especially hard to see things up close.

My traction is not as graceful as it once was. I slip and slide and skid and bump into things even in the best of weather.

It takes me hours to reach my maximum speed. My fuel rate burns inefficiently.

But here's the worst of it. Almost every time I sneeze, cough or sputter, either my radiator leaks or my exhaust backfires!

Puns 4 U

The guy who invented the door knocker got a no-bell prize.

How does a lawyer sleep? First he lies on one side, then he lies on the other.

Which country's capital has the fastest-growing population?- Ireland. It's Dublin every day.

England doesn't have a kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.

I tried to sue the airline for losing my luggage. I lost my case.

End of the line

We mourn the loss of the following businesses:

A local bra shop has gone bust.

A mining company has gone under.

A manufacturer of food blenders has gone into liquidation.

A dog kennels has had to call in the retrievers.

An origami book company has folded.

An aerial installation company has called in the receivers.

A key company has gone into lockdown.

A watchsmith has wound down and called time.

An Iceland store has had its assets frozen.

A shoe factory has been soled and employees given the boot.

The Heinz factory has been canned as they couldn't ketchup with orders.



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Let's Talk About Loneliness

Jan Oliver, our Membership Secretary, looks at how common loneliness is and suggests ways we can try to manage negative feelings

Last year the Forum ran a membership survey which showed disturbing high levels of loneliness – both social and emotional amongst Forum members. The lockdown and the current restrictions on socialising are likely to have made matters worse.

So I read with interest the report 'The Psychology of Loneliness' compiled by Baroness Diana Barran MBE and published by the Campaign to End Loneliness.

According to Barran's report, loneliness is an emotional response either to the quality or quantity of our relationships with others and, it is important that we draw more on insights from psychology, than is currently the case.

Mental health issues such as depression and social anxiety can contribute to loneliness and, conversely, loneliness can cause mental health problems.

Social anxiety is revealed as one of the major contributors to loneliness – a long-lasting and overwhelming fear of social situations and one of the most common anxiety disorders – affecting up to 12% of us, compared with about 6% for generalised anxiety disorder.

Where someone attributes the cause of their loneliness to internal factors (failures in social interactions for example) rather than situational variables (eg death of a spouse), this is likely to impact on their self-esteem, with inadequacy, self-blame, lowered self-worth and even shame being a possible feature.

Our social identity can make it easier or harder to cope with loneliness – if the people we are mixing with do not reflect our identity then feelings of loneliness are likely to be exacerbated. Loneliness does not just affect older people.

Personally I have experienced intense bouts of loneliness throughout my life, starting in adolescence. But, studies show that internalised ageism appears to generate a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' whereby those who, in their younger years, believe that loneliness is an inevitable part of getting older have been found to experience much higher levels of loneliness in later life.

So just what can we do about it?

Firstly, according to Barran's research, sharing stories about loneliness helps to destigmatise it. In June 2019, the

#LetsTalkLoneliness campaign was launched to help raise awareness and tackle stigma. This campaign encourages people to get involved by sharing their stories online in order to show how normal it is to feel lonely and highlight that no one should be ashamed or embarrassed to talk about their feelings. We can also try to manage the negative feelings and thoughts about loneliness alone:

- Think through the personal triggers to loneliness as a first step
- Write down thoughts to identify unhelpful thought patterns and to take back a sense of control
- Spend regular time outdoors, and connect with the environment with or without other people. This can reconnect us to the natural world and ease feelings of loneliness
- Activities, especially creative pastimes or purposeful activities, can help
- Actively focus on the positive and develop a sense of optimism. Identify what brings pleasure in your current situation as well as focusing on good times from the past



The lockdown and current restrictions are likely to have made the problem of loneliness even worse

- Focus on the short-term future, including making plans and having a structure to the day or week
- Making the effort to initiate small moments of contact can potentially develop more meaningful connections or re-ignite old ones.

Finally, I listened to a Radio 4 presentation on loneliness, which focused on the effects of having no physical human contact. Stimulating your own skin through hot baths, self massage and soft clothing can apparently release endorphins and therefore have a positive impact on our sense of well-being.

If you would like to share your stories or tips about loneliness with Forum members, please email Jan on eternalechoes2002@yahoo.ie or write in c/o the Forum office for possible inclusion in Membership Matters.

Please provide your name on your messages – but let us know if you would like us to keep your contribution anonymous. Whilst we cannot promise your contribution will be published (because of space restrictions), we will respond to all contributors.

Jan Oliver

Membership Secretary

Make your savings last in retirement

Not so long ago entering retirement was for many people a relatively simple process. Guaranteed pensions from Annuities and Defined Benefit pension schemes were the norm.



George Touli

Nowadays, however, following the pension reforms that took effect from 2015 there are far more flexible options to draw income from pensions. There has been a clear shift in recent years in the way we draw our income from our pensions as seen by the decline of the annuity markets and the increase in the use of flexible pension drawdown plans.

Although the reforms have been largely welcomed by removing some constraints, they have also introduced a new level of intricacy and presented many people with risks they may not be aware of. When drawing income from pension drawdown the main concern must be to make sure that your savings last and that your money doesn't run out. Anybody in pension drawdown should be having a regular review of their pension investment funds on an ongoing basis

Questions to ask yourself:

- How do I get the regular income I want while ensuring I never run out of money?
- Is there a particular order in which I should draw on different assets?
- Am I missing out on the most tax efficient way of taking income?
- How can I make sure I leave the rest of my estate to my family when I die without giving them an Inheritance Tax headache?
- What do I do if I have multiple pensions or a defined benefit plan?

If you are unsure about any of the questions above you must seek qualified financial advice. For a general discussion about anything to do with pensions, please feel free to call the office to

schedule a telephone appointment.

George Ttoulis or Jack Gorgon who are both qualified financial advisers at Burlington Wealth Management are available to discuss any financial matter.

If you wish to arrange a private consultation please call the office on (020) 8882 6688 or send an email to george@burlington.uk.net

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WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Focusing on healthy eyes

Despite the dominance of Covid-19 in the news, there are other important health issues

Last time I was in Chez Stewart Snr's, Covid came up on the news again to which my Dad retorted that he was bored of hearing about that 'disease' and went to bed.

So, allowing for the keen interest and paternal pride in his son's work, here's something else from the world of Public Health.

This week I finally succumbed and started wearing reading glasses. Top tip – reading is much easier when you can actually make out the letters, but I was trying to hang on as long as possible in the mistaken belief that wearing glasses will make matters worse.

Now that I've taken my own advice and actually looked it up, it doesn't seem that wearing glasses makes your eyesight worse. Rather, as you get older the lens gets larger and thicker whilst the ligaments that connect the lens to the ciliary (focusing muscle) of the eye get slacker. Subsequently, the ligaments cannot exert enough force onto the lens to focus and Glenn ends up with egg on his face. And glasses.

So, what can you do to keep your eyes healthy? Here goes:

1. Have an eye test every two years unless directed to do so more regularly. Eyes often do not hurt when there is something wrong, so this is a good precautionary idea. Opticians may also pick up signs of other conditions as well (dementia, diabetes, high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, arthritis, tumours) which might then get treated more quickly and effectively.
2. Don't smoke – as a trainee in public health if I was ever asked for causes of anything I'd always say 'smoking'. I was nearly always right. Free advice and support here: <https://stopsmokinglondon.com/>
3. Only drink alcohol to recommended guidelines – 14 units for men and women per week (approximately 6 pints of beer or 6 medium glasses of wine).
4. Protect your eyes from the sun – sunglasses, shade or hat. Ironic as we enter winter, but a low-lying sun can be pretty bright as well. Look for glasses carrying the CE mark or the British Standard BS EN ISO 12312-1:2013, which ensures they offer a safe level of ultraviolet protection.

Glenn Stewart

Assistant Director of Public Health, Enfield

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Chair's Column



Things to look forward to....

Surely it is not just me – but the novelty of being stuck at home has well and truly worn off. So is there anything to look forward to?

In my household we have not made good use of our lockdown time, so recently there was a long promised trip to the charity shop to donate items that someone else might want (although the winter coat I love but never wear has somehow found its way back into the cupboard – can't bear to part with it – yet).

Next on the visit list is the dump, which needs booking these days but early in the week seems to be reasonably quiet. As you can see, I lead an exciting life.

I'm not a fan of hot weather so the cooler temperatures are welcome and I have already noticed the leaves are changing colour – can't wait for autumn's golden hues when I go on my walk.

It is thrilling to see that art galleries and museums are opening, albeit with booking required. But to be honest the restrictions on numbers means that free galleries, which are normally heaving with people, are a delight.

At the moment public transport is pretty empty outside of the rush hour – so that makes for a fantastic free day out (except for the essential coffee break). It won't last long though!

My friends who have been shielding are thinking about renting a cottage near the sea. They plan to take a gallon of disinfectant just in case – but think it will be so good for them to have a change of scenery. Other friends who missed out on their holiday plan to spend the money on renovations to their house.

There are differing opinions on the joys of working from home. Some people have said they love it and don't pine for the daily commute – others are missing the camaraderie and inspiration which is found in many workplaces.

And then there is the return of sport on the TV and sometimes in the flesh. I have not set eyes on my dear husband during the last few weeks thanks to that.

Hopefully, those of you who live alone will have been able to meet in the park or a garden for a safe chat with friends. It has been a treat to meet up with people outside – some members of the Forum writing group have met a couple of times – it is simply so refreshing to see faces not bound by a Zoom screen.

Finally, I have heard that the Millfield Pantomime will be going ahead – I'm told it will be "Puss in Boots"! There are also plans for a Christmas show for small children at The Dugdale Centre.

What more could we want? (I believe it is called a vaccine.)

Christine

Christine Whetstone, Chair

Membership Matters



Thanks to those members, Jean and Lily, who have taken the plunge and written to us about what is on their minds. Lily, your poem is on the back page. I hope your garden is going well – I wonder if you have any photos? As regards Jean's point on care home staff, some members will have heard of the various cake making schemes (providing cakes to care home staff as a small morale booster) that have sprung up across the Borough. The Forum is hoping to get one off the ground and hopefully will be advertising for volunteer cake makers and/or drivers next month, so start digging your Xmas and chocolate cake recipes out!

Please keep your membership contributions coming in – letters, photos, poetry, stories (email eternalechoes2002@yahoo.ie or send to the Forum office. Thanks.

Jan Oliver (and Herbie the dog)
Membership Secretary

Social Care

I was glad to read Monty Meth's article in the recent edition of Forum Focus and would agree with him that this area of care is badly underfunded. I was also interested to read his figures on the high number of Covid-linked deaths in Enfield. I think there are a number of reasons for this.

Firstly as Monty comments, there is the huge discrepancy between the pay and conditions of NHS staff and that of workers in the Care sector, who are generally recruited as unskilled and low paid workers, though they are often nevertheless highly dedicated people. The selling off of Council-run Homes to private, profit-making organisations, encouraged by the Government on a huge scale, some years ago, certainly did not help. And of course staff in Care homes are predominately women. This was once true of the nursing profession but less so now. And even today, women are less likely than men to be able to afford a professional training .

But I believe there is another, perhaps more fundamental, reason for the neglect of Care homes, Simply this, that Care homes are generally inhabited by old people, and old age is not something that many of us are very keen to contemplate. For old age can only end one way, in death, and we'd all rather avoid thinking about that for as long as possible. Even mentioning death is often avoided with euphemistic phrases like 'passing away', 'popping off', or even 'popping one's clogs'. And people still alive and living in Care homes? – are they still regarded as important members of society? Well, maybe at Election time.

Interestingly enough, I think the Scottish system of funding for Care homes is a little different from ours. And perhaps that helps to account for the lower rate of deaths from Corona Virus in Scotland than down here. So yes, let's shout for better pay, and recognised qualifications, for Care home staff.

Jean Robertson-Molloy (Member)

Affiliated groups

News from our affiliated group members
and how they have been coping with the effects
of the lockdown

North London Humanist Group

The group provides activities for non-religious people. In normal times it holds monthly talks and discussions at the Ruth Winston Centre, social get-togethers such as meals out, a garden party in the summer and local theatre visits. During the lockdown its meetings are Zoom sessions, with interesting speakers.

Details of its current activities and meetings can be found at www.northlondonhumanists.org.uk

Mayfield Athletic Table Tennis section

The club, situated in Kenmare Gardens, is restarting after the lockdown. If you are interested in joining the club, *details are available from Ben Payne ben.payne@talktalk.net*

Groveland Bowling Club

The club in Grovelands Park is open during the restrictions every day between 2pm and 4.30pm except for Sundays. Anyone fancying their hand at bowling just pop along or give *Grovelands a ring on 020 8886 0484.*

Adoramus Choir

This choir of 70 usually performs three or four major concerts every year but obviously could not during lockdown. But members have been using Zoom for rehearsals on Tuesday nights, learning how to become a virtual choir, singing individually at home and waiting for the results. We are so grateful to our Music Director David Hooke for his skill in facilitating this.

You can hear a sample on this link: <https://youtu.be/lwD6tA5BJUY>

Probus Club of Enfield

Members if this club have not been able to meet during the lockdown, but have kept in touch with phone calls and Club newsletters sent out by email and post. They usually meet at the Jolly Farmers, Enfield Road on the second Tuesday of each month at lunchtime.

They describe themselves as 'a retired Gentleman's Club' with meetings including lunch and after dinner talks from a visiting or in-house speaker, usually illustrated. And they also try to have visits to places of interest fairly regularly. New members welcome. *Contact the secretary, Mike Palos on email: mp015b2441@blueyonder.co.uk*

Winchmore Folk Dance Club

During lockdown it has, of course, been impossible for the Folk Dance Club to dance together and so they have made do with watching other people dance on videos, whilst sharing news and websites with each other. Below are the links to:

SHREWSBURY LASSES and MR BEVERIDGE'S MAGGOT.

They say "In our mind's eye we are those gorgeous creatures sweeping to and fro in our silk dresses, or silken breeches..... If only.

Pride & Prejudice – Mr. Collins' awkward dance with Elizabeth
<https://youtu.be/LKNj7wVhyP8>

<https://youtu.be/76fv-ws1rq4>

Enfield and District Veteran Vehicle Society (EDVVS)

This is a very active group with over 300 members with two main meetings a month and regular meetings for our sections: the Railway Modellers, Bikers and Custom Cars. Many of the members are in the vulnerable category and some have had to shield throughout the lockdown. Only recently have they been able to drive their classics for more than a trip to the supermarket. Members have literally been driven into their garages, sheds, workshops, and yards to work on the vehicles and activities related to their hobby. It has hit the group hard and sadly two of its members have lost their lives to this awful virus. They are all looking forward to the day when they can re-open to the public and resume our activities at the Whitewebbs Museum of Transport.

For details of the EDVVS and the Whitewebbs Museum of Transport see our website www.whitewebbsmuseum.co.uk



Social Calendar 2020/2021

We are sorry that we are not able to offer any social events in the immediate future. Obviously we are following government guidelines and so cannot organise gatherings of large (or even small) groups of people. We hope to be back in business as soon as possible.

Monday 30 November 2020. Annual Xmas Party – Subject to Government Guidelines.

At the time of writing it is highly unlikely that this event will be able to take place. Also, it is not easy to publish details if things change quickly nearer the time. If you are able, keep an eye on the ENews sent via email also the Forum's Facebook Page. If this option is not available to you, may I suggest that you buddy up with someone that can pass on information to you.

Meanwhile, Hayley at the North Enfield Conservative Club is promoting various events that may interest you, all strictly in line with Government Guidelines and must be booked prior to the day. Again, at the time of writing there is no entrance fee for non-members. Pop in and have a coffee or drink and check her notice board.

We'll meet again! Jacky

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2021

8-22 February. Highlights of Sri Lanka. A Sri Lankan Adventure with Wendy Wu Tours still has a few places left on the forum extravaganza in February 2021. For full details of this luxurious adventure, *please contact Olivia on oliviagoodfellow19@gmail.com or 020 8447 8841.*

July. The Tiptree Farm day trip has now been rearranged for July 2021 and full details will be available in the New Year. Watch this space!

PLEASE NOTE DISCLAIMER: THE FORUM IS NOT LIABLE FOR ANY PERSONAL INJURY/ACCIDENTS THAT MAY OCCUR DURING ANY OF ITS ACTIVITIES OR EVENTS

Forum Groups

Some of the groups continue to run in some form via online meetings and shared communications. Hopefully conditions will allow them to resume regular meetings in the near future.

Check the website and eNews for updates.

Book Club

The Book Club is currently on Zoom on the third Thursday of each month from 10am to 12 noon. The meeting can be accessed by sending an email to Sue Scott with your email address so an invitation can be issued. The books we are reading are:

15 October: *Three Daughters of Eve* by Elif Shafak

19 November: *Olive Kitteridge* by Elizabeth Strout

Please contact Sue on scotsf48@hotmail.com or on 020 8368 0861

Coffee Club

The Skylight Restaurant at Pearsons is now open but as they are employing strict social distancing, it is not really workable to restart the Coffee Club yet. So, we will potentially start again in January, if things have eased up. *Any enquiries, phone Sue Scott on 020 8368 0861 or email scotsf48@hotmail.com*

Forum Writing Group

This group used to meet from 10 to 12 noon on the third Friday of the month at the Dugdale Centre but the date and venue may well have to change once it is able to meet in person again. Members have continued to keep in touch by email and some have contributed pieces about Lockdown which have been published on the Forum website under a new tab 'Writings'. Two meetings outside the café in Enfield Town Park have taken place when a few of the group got together for a delightful chat. They nearly got blown away in August but did not care! They plan to meet again on 17 October at 11am outside the same café but not if it is raining. If you are considering joining the writing group they would love to meet you. "Do join us – we are very jolly!" says Christine. *Contact her at whettie@yahoo.com*

Online Zoom Meeting

Changes that will affect Older People in Enfield
Tuesday 6 October, 10.30am

This meeting in conjunction with the Enfield Older Peoples Partnership Board will look at changes that will affect the lives of older people in Enfield. Speakers include Jan Shortt, General Secretary of the National Pensioners Convention, Britain's largest campaigning organisation for pensioners, on the threat to the triple lock, while others will report on the changes affecting the National Health Service and social care in the borough.

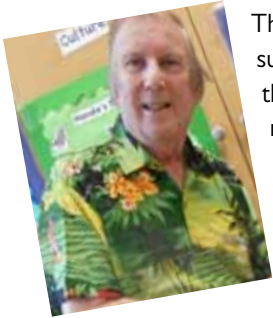
Full details on the Forum website. Forum members with email addresses will be sent the details and invited to register for the Zoom meeting.

Government Guidelines do not allow us to hold our usual Forum Meetings twice a month, so we plan to set up more online meetings in the coming months. Check the website and eNews for updates.

We will be sending out updates on all our activities via our eNews so make sure we have your email address. Send an email to info@over50sforum.org.uk if you are not already on the distribution list. Or check the website: enfieldover50sforum.org.uk

Lottery winners

The winners for the last six months were drawn at the August Executive Committee meeting



Thanks to everyone who continues to support the lottery, especially during these difficult times. We now have 120 members so the prize has gone up to £300 for each monthly draw. And we are raising funds to help support the Forum's work. All for a mere £5 a month.

The draw is usually held at the Forum's monthly meeting at the Civic Centre but obviously we have been unable to hold those meetings. Luckily the Executive Committee actually met in person for the first time in August and so were able to witness the draw.

THE LUCKY WINNERS ARE:

March – Pauline Piggins

April – Tony Watts

May – Jeff Chesnick

June – Pam Packer

July – Sue Wright

August – Jacky Watts

All six winners have received a cheque for £300 but obviously we are unable to take photos at the moment. But I am sure that we would not want to miss out on seeing Jim in one of his jazzy shirts – so here is one we prepared earlier!

If you would like to join the lottery – and remember you don't need to be a member of the Forum – contact Jim Cantle on 020 8363 4969.

Jim Cantle

Advice Service

The Forum's weekly free, confidential advice service, usually held at the Dugdale Centre on Monday mornings, is suspended until government advice changes.

During this time, financial advisors George Toulis or Jack Gorgon will remain available by telephone from 10am to 4pm Monday to Friday to offer some initial advice on tax, investments, equity release, inheritance tax and long-term care fees. Phone: 020 8882 6688.

Solicitors Stennett & Stennett will remain available to deal with enquires during office hours 9.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday to offer some initial advice on wills, power of attorney, property and legal advice about paying for social care. Phone: 020 8920 3190.

The Virus

The virus will get me

No, it won't

I am strict,

I am thorough

with lockdowning.

I have to be,

At my sunset age.

They won't bother

To save me.

My life will be

valueless.

So I pray

The virus will

Not touch me.

I'll shut the door

I'll immerse myself

In soapy water.

I'll only watch

The blossoms burst out

The red tulips glowing

In my garden

And the virus

Will not touch me.

Not ever.

Lily Bhattacharya

(Member)

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