

EAST SUSSEX Seniors' Association

The Voice of Older People



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Winter 2020

Newsletter No.19



Have Your Say • Get Involved • Make a Difference • Shape the Future

www.essaforums.org.uk



Report from our Chair

Once again last year all the Forums organised events for Older Peoples Day. From film shows, to interesting talks, to a Good Life Show, to coach outings. The response has been excellent from our members and they have attended in good numbers. A lot of work goes into organising these events and thank you to all those involved. Of course the Forums are not alone in holding successful events as some of the other organisations involved include Age UK, East Sussex Libraries, Lewes District Council, Wave Leisure and Freedom Leisure, and the Dementia Action Alliance. Our booklet was entitled "Let's Celebrate" and I hope a lot of you did! Thanks to those who completed feedback forms, these let us know if we are doing the things you like and hopefully give us some new ideas for next year. Thanks as always to East Sussex Council for their compilation of the booklet, the printing and postage costs.

Sadly, this year three invaluable members of our forums have died and they will all be missed:

Ivy Elsey from the Wealden Forum passed away after a long illness. I understand she was once Chair

of our Health committee and a committee member of Wealden Forum.

Richard Partridge, chair of Lewes Forum died in May, this was such a shock as we didn't know he was ill. I attended his funeral and the Church was full. Richard was a regular attendee at ESSA Management meetings. Lastly **Robert Cooper** from Eastbourne Seniors Forum passed away, Richard was an attendee at our Community Services, Environment and Transport meetings. Also Ron Sunderland, chair of Rother Seniors Forum, and Nadine Harris, chair of Eastbourne Seniors Forum, have both stood down for personal reasons. Many thanks to both.

In last year's report I said that this year would be a challenge due to a cut in our grants and it has proved so.

If any of you could receive their communications from their forums by e-mail it would be a great help as the largest expenditure incurred appears to be postage and this will probably increase again in April.

I wish you all a Happy and Peaceful 2020.

Lin Neeve, Chair

The Good Life Event 2019 ESF

Welcome Building

A big thank you to all 800 attendees, around 50 exhibitors, our sponsor Stephen Rimmer Solicitors LLP, and the countless volunteers who made this year's event a great success.

The exhibition contained varied and relevant stands, from local support agencies, the NHS, legal advisors, known and established companies, not to mention the interest from the wider area not only in the community, but other parts of the South East. A number of councilors inc. The Deputy Mayor, Councilor Sammy Choudhury, and David Tutt the leader of the Council came and enjoyed the event visiting many of the displays.

We had a Tombola and thanks to our generous donors, by day's end, we had raised a very respectable two hundred and eighty-four pounds. There was a large array of sweets, cakes, other treats, and amazing promotions available all day, so everyone went home happy.

The new Welcome Building is a truly impressive venue, offering superb

facilities and excellent accessibility which we were grateful for. Due to year on year increase in demand for our event, we utilized both of the enormous "Shackleton" and "Mallory" halls, which we have every expectation to be booking for next year's Good Life.

Weather on the day started out quite appallingly, but everyone believed in the event and knuckled down for some impressive teamwork. Despite this poor and inclement start to the day, it brightened up by mid-morning and it certainly didn't seem to deter attendees at all.

The feedback we received was very positive, and we have had some interesting suggestions for possible exhibitors for next year's event. We thank you for all of your suggestions, they will be given equal consideration. We encourage all of our readers to provide us with any ideas for next year by emailing us.

For those of you who were not able to attend, we invite you to watch a short film we made at the event, viewable at: goodlife.esf-online.org

A very special thank you to Shirley Davis for all her hard work in once again, planning and running the event so smoothly.

We very much look forward to seeing you all again at Good Life 2020.



HASTINGS & ST. LEONARDS SENIORS' FORUM

For the second year running, HSSF celebrated Older Peoples Day with a Palm Court Tea at the White Rock Theatre.

Entertainment was provided by Friends Unlimited which is led by our Secretary Helen Bird. This was followed by tea and a raffle with the Mayor closing the afternoon.

During the past year HSSF has been involved with efforts to stop the closure of centres for older people. We are also supporting Hastings Voluntary Action firstly with efforts to persuade seniors to volunteer as many organizations in the area are in urgent need of helpers, also in their plans to turn

the Pop-In Centre in the Priory Meadow area into a hub catering for all aspects of life, including advice and activities. The Forum have moved our Coffee Mornings there and have a place on the Steering Committee. We are on the bus users group and our Health and Social Care group keep us up to date with developments. We have organized outings lunches and teas, celebrating Older Peoples Day with a Palm Court Tea at the White Rock Theatre and are planning a celebration of Christmas at Hastings Museum in December.



The Mayor of Hastings with our Membership Secretary Beryl Mynett.

HASTINGS OLD PEOPLE'S ETHNIC GROUP

Hope-G is 10 years old this year.

I have been running it for 9 years. During my reign, as well as being Chair, I have had to take on the roll of Treasurer twice and Secretary for the past three years.

Last year, as Diwali (The Indian festival of light) fell on the same date as our November coffee morning, we decided to have a Diwali Celebration. The Chairlady gave a talk, explaining the event. We had Indian snacks and sweets which was enjoyed by 35 people. Some of the members dressed in their colourful Indian attire.

Older People Day – 1st of October is identified as Older People's Day.

Hope-G celebrated it by putting on two events. An Outing and Health & Wellbeing Day.

This year for our 9th Outing we went to Greenwich Park with a full coach. The area was well researched so we were able to give each member four pages of interesting places to visit and things to do as well as a map of the area. At our Outings, although we charge a small fee, everyone is given a goody bag – bottle of water, pack of crisps, fruit, chocolate & sweets.

Health & Wellbeing – This is a day of Pampering. This year was our 9th Health & Wellbeing Day. 80 people were involved. This event used to be free but some people abused it by

booking and not turning up. Now they are asked to donate a raffle prize. Some of the activities they enjoyed were: Shiatsu; Foot massage; Hand massage; Nail painting; Smoothie bike; Art & Craft. Also half-hour sessions of Yoga; Chair-based exercise; Pilates; Boot Camp – booking was not needed for the latter, they just joined in. It ended with a free lunch.

We have started a **Birthday Club**. Some of our members live on their own and it is nice for them to receive a birthday card on their special day. I visited a member who expressed how grateful he was to be remembered on his birthday. Another member had two birthday cards on display next to her TV, although one card was last year's and the other card was this year's birthday which was months ago. Both cards were from Hope-G. Every member is sent a birthday card. We now have 146 birthdays in our club.

Hope-G has signed up to work towards making Hastings & St Leonard's a *Dementia Friendly Town*. The Chairlady is a Dementia Champion and attends the meetings and events.

We now have our meetings at The Pop-In Centre in Hastings Town centre. Hope-G membership is 178.

Julia Wells, Chairlady



MERIDIAN MATURE CITIZENS FORUM

Member Marian Stanley's experience:

The Repair Shop and My Harmonium

I have a portable harmonium, which has been passed around my father's family for many years, and about two years ago it finally came to me. It was in a deplorable condition, unplayable and too costly to repair. It stayed in my conservatory for a long time until a friend of mine suggested that I apply to the BBC2 TV Programme *The Repair Shop*. So with great scepticism I applied and to my absolute astonishment after a very long process they agreed to feature it on the programme. I have since discovered that there were 5000 applicants!!

To be included in the programme as well as being an item of interest and obviously in need of repair there must be a history behind the item and my harmonium had certainly been an item of historic interest.

My father and his family lived in Stepney, East London at the beginning of the last century. It was the custom that at Christmas my Dad's family would visit members of their vast extended family who lived in Stepney and the harmonium provided

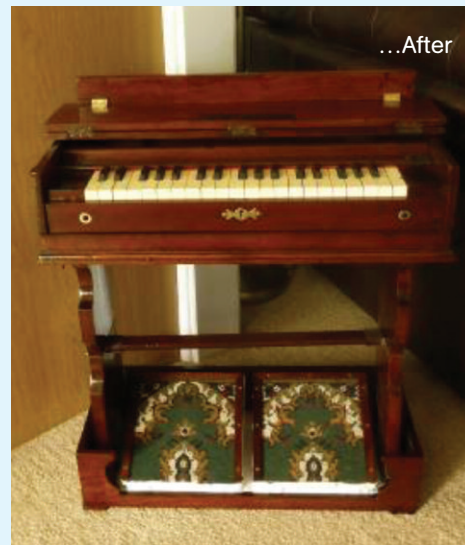
the soundtrack for many an East Enders "Knees Up". My Dad's group had a special name the *Forrow Wait*. "Forrow" being my family name and "Wait" being a term from medieval times for a band of travelling musicians. This tradition carried on until the 1930s when family moved away from Stepney.

I first took the harmonium to The Repair Shop, located in a barn in the grounds of the Weald and Downland Living Museum near Chichester, at the beginning of August 2019. I was filmed for two hours, I left it with them and returned in October to be filmed collecting it. What an amazing job they did and I can now while away my "senior's" time playing it. All the repairers and the camera crew made me feel very welcome and relaxed – it



was an experience I will never forget, and I would urge the formation of local "Repair Shops" – just think about all those "broken" items you have that can be restored back to life!!

Below: Marian with her vintage Harmonium and the Repair Shop team!





ROTHER SENIORS' FORUM

It is with great sadness that, due to health reasons, Ron Sunderland has found it necessary to stand down as Chair of Rother Seniors' Forum.

He will be sadly missed by us all in ESSA and especially by me, who will be filling (or trying to fill) the great void he has left. I know that talking to Ron it was a great and long thought out decision.

We held our 'Older Peoples Day' celebrations on the 2nd September. This was our 'Tea Dance', which involved a very caring and capable dance tutor in Sarah Black, from Eastbourne. We informed Sarah that due to Age, Mobility and lack of ability she may find that not many people would be willing to participate, her response to this was 'I will get them up'. To our pleasant surprise this is just what she did! Well done Sarah, who provided her own music and style.

After the first session we had a wonderful Afternoon Tea, scones, jam and cream plus cakes, all prepared and served by a group of our members and supporters (this included our old friend June Pratley formerly from ESCC). Also Debbie Peters RDC who even dragged her screaming daughter to help (only joking, she was very willing). We then drew our raffle which like the rest of the afternoon was a great success.

We then returned back to the dancing and most of the 50-60 visitors got on the dance floor. We had nothing but praise for a very enjoyable afternoon. Most filled in their Feedback Forms.

Our next event will be The Fieldstone Boys, at The Emmanuel Centre, Battle on Thursday 26th March 2020.

Terry Steeples
Rother Seniors' Forum



LEWES DISTRICT SENIORS FORUM

Unfortunately, this year we have no report from Lewes District Seniors Forum.

Following the Chair's death, it is proving difficult to continue with the Forum, though efforts are being made to do so.

SEAFORD SENIORS FORUM



In April we organised a coach trip to Chartwell. Though quite a chilly day it stayed dry and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. Due to the success of this trip your committee has

decided we will organise another early next year. In June we held our Annual General Meeting and were pleased to enjoy three good speakers once the main business had been completed. Firstly we listened to an interesting talk about East Sussex Wildlife Trust, followed by two people from St Wilfrid's Hospice and lastly a talk about CTLA. We also enjoyed wonderful cakes made by the newest member of our committee, Jo, and thanks to Dee and Jo for arranging all the refreshments.

Our next event was our Older People's Day event on 11th October when we watched a film at Seaford Community Cinema. The film this year was "Fisherman's Friends" and we had over 80 people attend even though the weather was appalling. Our thanks once again to the Cinema for their help in organising this event.

Committee members have again this year attended all the Health Meetings and Community, Environment and Transport meetings as well as representing Seaford at East Sussex Seniors Association meetings. There has been a lot to talk about and discuss with all the changes that are happening not just in East Sussex but in Seaford in particular. The Health Hub has been high on the agenda for your committee and we have written to the planning department with some of our concerns.

Sadly Dee has left your committee for personal reasons so we are back to 5 members. Once again I am asking if anyone would like to join us, just a committee meeting every couple of months, and you would be most welcome.

Lin Neeve, Secretary



WEALDEN SENIOR CITIZENS PARTNERSHIP

Our forum exists to put forward a positive view of senior citizens in society and to help older people enjoy an active and independent life. It also acts as an umbrella organisation for Wealden older people's groups, and passes on information to the many senior citizens' organisations in the towns and villages of Wealden by means of a regular newsletter, "Grey Matters".

Membership, which is free, is open to all senior citizens living or working in Wealden, as well as any organisations and individuals of any age who have concerns connected with older people.

We have become increasingly aware that there are many older people in Wealden living alone and finding it difficult to get out and meet people. For this reason this year our small committee has organised four events, which have been very well supported. In May we arranged a Cream Tea at Barnsgate Manor and in July a Fish & Chips Lunch at the East Sussex National Centre. Another cream tea, this time arranged at the beautiful Holy Cross Priory near Heathfield in September as one of our events for Older

People's Day 2019, was fully booked and much enjoyed. At our final event in Uckfield Civic Centre in October we had an entertaining talk from "Lady Crabtree", whose topic "Growing Old Disgracefully" was very well received. On each occasion the food provided was delicious and much enjoyed by all. We had a good number at each event, from all parts of Wealden from Willingdon in the south, and help with transport was provided when needed.

We have a strong link with the Wealden Dementia Action Alliance, and are happy to publicise their events in our newsletter.

The Wealden Dementia Action Alliance helps make our towns and villages dementia friendly by showing and providing support for the residents and their carers who have to cope with dementia every day. The Alzheimers Society estimates that just under 3,000 people are living with dementia in Wealden, and expects this to continue to rise.



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East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is proud to support the East Sussex Seniors Association (ESSA). However, it would like to point out that ESSA is an independent organisation and that the views stated in its newsletter will not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the County Council.