



Reg. charity no: 290874

Welcome to the latest issue of the Age Concern newsletter especially for older people living in Basingstoke & Deane. Please pass this copy on to a friend when you have finished with it. Further copies (including large print) are available from the Age Concern office & Café.

2009 has been a very busy year for everyone at Age Concern - our services have been very popular, events have been well attended and the 'phone is always ringing! Whilst the staff work very hard, we could not achieve these results without our wonderful team of volunteers. This year we have recruited several new volunteers enabling us to expand services and help more local older people. We would like to thank them all for their support which is really appreciated by us and by our clients.

Read on to find out more about Age Concern's local services as well as information from other local organisations which we think may be of interest to you. If you would like to submit an item for inclusion in our next newsletter, please contact Tracey at Age Concern on 01256 423874 or email tracey@ageconcernbasingstoke.org.uk

NEW YEAR, NEW YOU?

Improve your mobility & fitness in 2010 with Age Concern's EVERGREEN EXERCISE for the over 50s. The class meets at St Andrew's Church hall, South Ham on Mondays from 2-3pm & is only £3.50 a week. Why not give it a go? Just pop in or 'phone Tracey at Age Concern on 01256 423874 to find out more.

Please note there is no class on Monday 28th December.

HANDY HINTS FOR WEATHERING THE WINTER

- don't forget your flu jab (in addition to swine flu), over 65s can also have a jab which helps protect against pneumonia and septicaemia
- dress warmly with lots of layers, inside the house and out, and try to keep active
- adjust your heating thermostat as it gets colder - the ideal temperature is 21°C by day and 18°C at night, draw your curtains at dusk to minimise heat loss
- have your heating serviced annually & electric blankets checked, insulate your loft, draught-proof windows & doors
- eat well & keep healthy - try to eat your '5 a day,' have at least one hot meal each day and regular hot drinks,
- order repeat prescriptions in time so you don't run out
- keep a torch, batteries, candles and matches handy in case of power cuts
- claim the benefits you are entitled to, including winter fuel allowance

Call Age Concern on 01256 423874 for further information & pick up a copy of the Keep Warm, Keep Well guide from the Café or office.

Newsletter produced by Age Concern Hampshire in Basingstoke
The Orchard, White Hart Lane, Basingstoke, RG21 4AF.
Tel: 01256 423874 (Open: 9 to 1, answerphone available)
Email: info@ageconcernbasingstoke.org.uk
Website: www.ageconcernbasingstoke.org.uk

Concerned about crime & safety? Visit Age Concern's Café to chat to local police officers about any concerns:

**POLICE MOBILE
BEAT SURGERIES**

20th January 2010

17th March 2010

10.30 to 1

Church Cottage
behind St. Michael's Church
Basingstoke

To report a non-urgent crime such as anti-social behaviour you can call 101 or for general enquiries call 0845 045 4545.



Assisted by
**Basingstoke
and Deane**



Supported by
**Hampshire
County Council**



Did you know.....

.... un-insulated cavity walls can lose 35% of your home's heat & lofts can lose 25%?

The good news is you could be entitled to free or discounted insulation through the government's Carbon Emission Reduction Target (CERT) scheme - which challenges the big power companies to reduce their customers' need for gas and electricity by making their homes more energy efficient.

If you are over 70 or a benefit recipient and own or privately rent your home, you could get free loft and cavity wall insulation*.

If not you could still get the insulation carried out at a 50% discount.

For FREE, impartial, independent advice on how to cut fuel bills, and get information on grants and discounts, contact

the Environment Centre (tEC) on
0800 804 8601

*You don't have to apply for a grant or fill in lengthy paperwork. You just need to prove you are over 70 or in receipt of certain government benefits – that's it!



OPEN SIGHT - Hampshire's leading organisation working with people with sight loss, is opening a new office in Basingstoke.

Open Sight can provide many services including a comprehensive home visiting service which gives information, advice and guidance for people to adapt and manage their lives with visual impairment.

A friendly social group meets fortnightly in Kempshott Village Hall. The group encourages peer support and social interaction through a wide variety of activities and events for local sight impaired people.

Open Sight also offers information & guidance on eye health issues, preventative measures and sight awareness training for carers.

The new Open Sight office is at Basepoint Business Centre, Stroudley Road, Chineham.

For further details on services, information, volunteering or donating, contact

Open Sight, Basingstoke on 01256 406648
or 01256 406649

www.opensight.org.uk

OVER 60s GARDENING SUPPORT SERVICE

In July, Hampshire County Council launched a new service to assist residents aged 60 and over to maintain their gardens. The service is delivered by Shaw Trust*, whose fully qualified & experienced team, supported by volunteers, provide a professional garden maintenance service in Hampshire including Basingstoke.

For those in receipt of a means tested benefit, the basic service is at a reduced rate. It is also available at the standard rate for those who do not receive a benefit.

Shaw Trust has over 20 years' experience of delivering horticultural services and all staff and volunteers have a Criminal Records Bureau check. For further information, including prices & details of how the service operates, please contact:

Telephone: 0845 6044 643

Email: grounds.maintenance@shaw-trust.org.uk

Website: www.shaw-trust.org.uk/hampshire_gardening_service

*Shaw Trust is a national charity providing training and employment services to thousands of disabled and disadvantaged people each year.

Alzheimer's/ Dementia Support Meetings

ST. THOMAS' CARE HOME

11.00 am

2nd Tuesday of the month:

8th Dec, 12th Jan, 9th Feb

Meetings are for residents' families & friends and anyone in the community who would like to attend. They are informal & give everyone a chance, if they wish, to share their experiences.

Tel: 01256 355959 for more information.

CALLING ALL BOOK LOVERS.....

As mentioned in the last newsletter, the new Library Club at South Ham Library is now up and running .

Book lovers who find it difficult to get out and about can have transport to and from the library and enjoy a cuppa & chat whilst they are there.

Tel: 01256 814280.

Transport can be arranged from South Ham, Winklebury, Buckskin, Kempshott & Brighton Hill.



The basics of Budgeting

Christmas can be expensive with extra food & drink, presents, trips etc. Thinking about your finances now can ensure you enjoy the festive period & beyond without the burden of debts.

Spending a few minutes a week reviewing your finances can help you live within your means.

How to draw up a budget ...start by adding up your income - pension, benefits, interest etc. Then look at your outgoings, including

Household - food, utility bills, mortgage/rent, service charge, council tax, phone bill, TV..... Travel - fares or car insurance, tax, MOT, maintenance..... Leisure - going out, luxuries, holidays, clubs, books, magazines etc

Financial - repayments, credit cards, pension contributions, savings, investments, insurances

Other - clothes, shoes, toiletries etc

Do this weekly or monthly and don't forget those payments that come once or twice a year only. Take the total expenditure away from the total income to work out what is left over and how much you have to spend on those extras for special occasions.

If you are regularly struggling to make ends meet, try to increase your income or reduce your spending. At least by drawing up a budget you can start to manage your finances.

Need further information?.....Basingstoke CAB can help with budgeting & debt, benefits, relationships, immigration, employment issues & consumer rights.

Drop-in (upstairs, Basingstoke Library)

Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri 10 - 3.30pm, Sat 10 - 12.

Or call the Advice Line on 01256 322814.

BASINGSTOKE MORNING TOWNSWOMEN'S GUILD

We are a friendly Guild for all women which meets every **2nd Tuesday of the month** with speakers about various interests.

Also during the month we have an Arts/Crafts group, ramble, coffee morning & a lunch which are optional. Outings are organised each year and we belong to the local Federation giving us even more events, interests and friends.

Meetings are held at Sarum Hall, Sarum Hill, Basingstoke from 10.00am – 12noon.

Why not come along as a visitor to find out more ? You will be made very welcome.

Winter is a good time to think about your garden and consider changes which could make it easier to look after, safer and better suited to your needs.
Published by Thrive and funded by HCC the 'Gardening Independence Guide' is FREE to local older people. It helps you think about changes such as design & safety, tools and low maintenance plants. You also receive a self-assessment questionnaire helping you to consider your garden and how you want to use it in the future as well as information on gardening help available for older people in the Basingstoke & Deane and Hart council areas.
Claim your FREE Gardening Independence Guide & questionnaire by calling the Green Circle Project at Thrive on 0118 988 4844.

BASINGSTOKE SEQUENCE DANCE CLUB

Meets every Monday in
St Michaels Church Cottage
Church Square, Basingstoke
from 7.45pm to 10.15pm

Anyone who enjoys dancing is welcome. The first night is free & it is then £2 a week.

We also organise a Saturday dance once a month (hall hire permitting). For more details contact Club Secretary, Bernard, on 01256 411440.



Do you enjoy a glass of wine or ale? If so you would find yourself among friends with members of the

BRIGHTON HILL AMATEUR WINEMAKERS

We meet at Hill Rise Hall, Bach Close, Brighton Hill, on the 4th Thursday of the month, 7.45pm & welcome new members of a mature age.

Our programme is "wine flavoured" but you don't have to be a winemaker. Talks on local history, general topics and social events are included with wine tastings, quizzes & competitions. Come and join us for vintage evenings in congenial company.

Any questions? Phone Val on 01256 842685 or Margaret on 01256 422082 to find out more.



The gift of independence

PERFECT GIFT FROM
£3.16
a week
plus installation

Age Concern's Personal Alarm

- No waiting list
- Installed within 48 hours

This Christmas give the gift of peace of mind for you and your family, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

For a no obligation demonstration* call Age Concern Hampshire in Basingstoke on **01256 423874** and quote AID0159. www.aidcall.co.uk/personalcare

AGE Concern Personal Alarm Service
The four national Age Concerns in the UK have joined together with Help the Aged to form new national charities dedicated to improving the lives of older people. *Demonstration does not apply if you buy online and Easy-Connect.

Bev & Tracey are pleased to announce they are fast becoming local quiz champions!

Winning regularly at The Crown in Old Basing & also at a quiz held in memory of Hilary Pote (Neighbourcare) on 21st November where, ably supported by Terry Jones, Donna & Andy Hill and our own George Hooper (Trading and Activity Centre leader), we competed against 22 other teams and won by a fair margin! Our team 'A teddy is for life, not just for Christmas' intends to continue this good form!!

So, can **you** beat us?

We will be holding our own QUIZ on
Saturday 20th March
at Church Cottage

There will be some changes to the quiz this time but it is suitable for all ages.

Please contact Bev on 01256 423871 for a team registration form. Details will also be on the website in January.

Keep the date free for a good value and fun evening out!

AGE CONCERN ENTERPRISES offers a range of products & services for the over 50s including home & contents, travel & car insurance and motor breakdown cover.

Please 'phone for a no obligation quotation when your insurance policies are due for renewal or when you book your next holiday in the UK or abroad. Our insurance arrangers Sue & George are waiting for your call and hope to be able to help with your requirements.

Tel: Age Concern on 01256 423874.

Are you interested in web design & maintaining an existing website? We are currently looking for a volunteer who can help us with this task. We use MS Expression Web but believe it is similar to other packages you may be familiar with. You would be volunteering in our office at The Orchard - probably for an afternoon once a fortnight.

If you are able to help please call Maria Mitchell on 01256 423874.



Did you know there is a **DISABILITY FORUM** for the Basingstoke area?

The Basingstoke Disability

Forum was set up to raise awareness of disability issues and address concerns. The Forum has been building on the success of the original Access group since it's re-launch in Jan '09 and represents all disabilities, including Mental Health, Learning, Physical & Sensory.

We recently hosted a Disability Awareness Day in Festival Place at which a variety of local voluntary and statutory organisations promoted their services and explained the help they can offer. We've received very positive feedback & hope to repeat the event next year.

To keep the Forum active and representative we need your help!

We need disabled people & organisations who work with disabled people, to commit time and energy to the Forum to keep it working well.

For information & to get involved contact:

Lisa Edwards, Basingstoke & District Disability Forum Administrator,

The Orchard, White Hart Lane
Basingstoke, RG21 4AF

Telephone: (01256) 423869

Email: disabilityforum@voluntaryservices.com

AN ODE TO DUSTING

*Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better
To paint a picture, or write a letter
Bake a cake or plant a seed
Ponder the difference between want &
need*

*Dust if you must
But there is not much time
With rivers to swim & mountains to climb
Music to hear and books to read
Friends to cherish and life to lead
Dust if you must, but the world's out there
With the sun in your eyes and the wind in
your hair, A flutter of snow, a shower of
rain. This day will not come round again*

*Dust if you must, but bear in mind
Old age will come and it's not kind
And when you go, and go you must
You yourself will make more
dust!*

Remember a house becomes a
home when you can write 'I
love you' on the furniture!



BASINGSTOKE POLICE want you to enjoy the festive season, & offer this simple advice for when you are out shopping.....

Be especially vigilant in crowded places and busy shops.

Keep your money and valuables in a secure coat pocket or keep the opening of your bag towards your body. Ensure bags are zipped/ buttoned up.

Wear your bag across your chest and keep it at the front of your body.

Put valuables in different compartments e.g. cheque book & bank cards separate. Don't carry too much cash.

Never keep anything in your handbag that identifies your home address.

Never leave your bag unattended, e.g. on a shopping trolley, on a restaurant table.

In restaurants look out for "Chelsea Clips" under the table where you can hang your bag rather than have it on the floor.

Do not put your bag on the floor in changing cubicles or public toilets, use the door hook.

Keep purses & wallets in coat inside pockets.

Do not keep wallets in rear trouser pocket.

Remember to put all your valuables (money, pension book, purse etc) away before leaving the post office, bank or shop.

NEWS ABOUT PENSION CREDIT The capital disregard for Pension Credit increased from £6000 to £10000 from this November. If you didn't qualify for Pension Credit in the past because of your savings it may be worth checking again.

Call 0800 991234 to apply or use the Pension Credit calculator on the website to check if you are entitled to Pension Credit.

PENSIONS REFORM CHANGES from 6th April 2010

Most changes from the Pensions Act affect people who reach State Pension age on or after 6th April 2010, ie women born on or after 6th April 1950 & men born on or after 6th April 1945.

Women's State Pension age is increasing. If you reach 60 after 6th April 2010 the age at which you reach State Pension age will be later (between 2010 & 2020 it increases in steps from 60 to 65). By 2020 women will have the same State Pension age as men (65) however between 2024 & 2046 this will increase for everyone to 68. You should consider how this will affect your retirement plans. The DWP will be writing to women born between 6th April 1950 and 5th April 1955 about their State Pension age and the changes.

Age threshold for other pensioner benefits will rise to 65. In line with State Pension age increases, age limits for current benefits such as Pension Credit & Winter Fuel Payments will also change.

State Pension contribution conditions are also changing from April. The number of qualifying years needed for a full basic State Pension will reduce to 30 for both women and men, meaning more people will receive a State Pension.

For more information on State Pension age and how the changes will affect you go to the website www.direct.gov.uk/pensions which includes a State Pension age calculator.

ARE YOU PAYING THE RIGHT TAX?

You might expect your tax affairs to be simpler after retirement but the reverse is often true. Whilst you may have less income, your money comes from more sources and you may receive communications from one or more tax offices.

The following advice is from Tax Help for Older People - a registered charity helping people aged 60+ with their tax affairs. Their service is free but limited to single people or couples with an annual income after tax of £17000 or less.

How can you tell if you are paying the right amount of tax?

First check your tax allowances are correct:- (figures are for tax year 2009-10)

1. Age related personal allowance - when a person reaches 65 the allowance increases, from £6475 to £9490. The new allowance is given at the beginning of the tax year in which you are 65. The allowance increases again at 75 to £9640.
2. Married couple's allowance - usually available where at least one spouse or civil partner was born before 6 April 1935. The allowance is £6965 but because it provides only 10% relief the coding notice will show only £3483.
3. Blind person's allowance - can be claimed when a person has registered as blind with the local council. A claim can also be made for the year before registration provided evidence is held, such as an ophthalmologist's certificate. But - there is always a but! - the first two allowances are subject to restrictions where the claimant's income exceeds £22900. However unused amounts of the last two allowances can be transferred between spouses/ civil partners. TOP provides a tax health check, explanation of PAYE Notices of Coding & help with forms, claiming refunds & corresponding with the tax office.

Call TOP's helpline on 0845 601 3321

If the matter can't be dealt with on the 'phone you can usually have a meeting with one of TOP's experienced independent tax advisers.

Website: www.taxvol.org.uk .

KEEP IN TOUCH ... Find out the latest from Age Concern in between newsletters by reading our monthly column in the Gazette Extra (usually on the last Wednesday of the month). We also have a website:

www.ageconcernbasingstoke.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society Leading the fight against dementia Basingstoke & District Branch

Have you been caring for your partner or family member but the caring is now over? We have a monthly group 'Moving On' held in Suzanne's home for friendship, chat & laughs!

We would also like to invite you to meet some of the friends of the group on Monday 25th January 2010, 2 pm - 3.30 pm in the chapel at St Thomas's Nursing Home, Darlington Road, Basingstoke, RG21 5NW

For more information including Suzanne's address & number please call 01256 363393.

"What are you doing on Sunday?"

You may already have plans but for many elderly people Sunday is a day they spend like most days - alone.

However Sunday can be even lonelier as most activities for elderly people are closed.

Contact the Elderly - a national charity with 371 groups, aims to alleviate the loneliness felt at the weekend by housebound older people. We organise small groups of elderly people and volunteer drivers. One Sunday a month the drivers pick up the same people and take them to a volunteer host's home where they enjoy afternoon tea and chat like any group of friends getting together.



Sunday tea in a family home - what could be simpler? But it is a lifeline of friendship to our elderly members.

For more information please call Suzan Hyland on 020 7420 5811 or email suzan.hyland@contact-the-elderly.org

Local Co-ordinator - 0800 716543

BASINGSTOKE ADVOCACY SCHEME acts with & on behalf of people (with mental health illness or experiencing mental distress) who struggle to get their point of view across & their wishes, needs & rights acknowledged. The service is confidential & free. Currently open to 18 - 65 year olds only, from 1st January we will provide advocacy to the over 65s too.

We also provide specialist advocacy to people detained in hospital and those lacking mental capacity. We cover Basingstoke, North and North East Hampshire. Referrals are accepted from individuals, family, friends and organisations.

Tel: Susan Alexander on 01256 328080.

DIARY DATES



Thurs 10th Dec	BVS Charity Fayre, The Malls & Age Concern Christmas Raffle Draw
Fri 11th Dec	Christmas Tea Dance, Carnival Hall, 2 - 5pm
Wed 16th Dec	Café Christmas Party, 10.30 - 1
Wed 23rd & 30th	Café closed
Wed 24th Dec	Office closes for Christmas at 1pm

Please ensure any insurance renewals due over Christmas & the New Year are with us by 12 noon on 23rd December.

Mon 4th Jan	Office re-opens 9am
Wed 6th Jan	Café re-opens
Wed 27th Jan	Information Day "Social Clubs & Activities" * Church Cottage, 10.30 - 1 (see page 4)
Sat 20th March	Quiz evening (see page 5)

For further information on events please call 01256 423874.

AGE Concern Hampshire in Basingstoke
The Orchard,
White Hart Lane,
Basingstoke
RG21 4AF

Tel: 01256 423874

Open: 9 am to 1 pm
(other times by appointment)

Please call for information about our local services:

- Activity Centres
 - Annual Holiday
 - Benefits Surgery
 - Cafe at Church Cottage
 - Computer Learning Centres
 - Exercise & Yoga Classes
 - Foot Clinics
 - Funeral Plans
 - Home, Motor & Travel Insurance
 - Information & Advice
 - Pendant Alarms (Aidcall)
 - Tea & Company at the Cafe
 - Volunteering opportunities
- See front page for website & email.

CHRISTMAS CHARITY FAYRE

Thursday 10th December
Castle Square, The Malls
10am to 4pm
14 stalls selling Christmas cards, gifts, wreaths, table decorations and puddings + tombolas, lucky dips, Christmas music & entertainment to get us in a festive spirit.
Supported by The Malls & organised by Basingstoke Voluntary Services, the event gives charities, voluntary & community groups a chance to raise funds & promote their services for local people.
Charity Fayre Coordinator,
Penny Hampson 01256 423827

USEFUL 'PHONE NUMBERS

Adult Services (Social Services) 0845 603 5630
Age Concern 01256 423874
Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council 01256 844844
Carers Together 01256 353290
Community Furniture Project 01256 320700
Consumer Direct 0845 404 0506
Dial a Ride 01256 462101
In Touch Home Improvement Agency 01252 771350
NHS Direct 0845 4647
Pension Credit Application Line 0800 99 1234
Police 0845 045 4545
Shopmobility 01256 476066
Winter Fuel Payments Helpline 08459 151515



OVER 55's TASTER ACTIVITIES EVENT

Saturday 6th February, 2 - 5 pm

Oakridge Hall for All, Forsythia Walk, Oakridge Village, Basingstoke.
Mosaic Workshop, 2pm to 5pm - Join Mosaic Artist Tori Hodgson to find out more and have a go at this absorbing ancient craft.
Music from the Cinema - 2.30 pm performance - Enjoy the music and recall some of the great Hollywood films of our time.
Living Links Project - Come & find out what information Hampshire Record Office holds about Oakridge's past & bring your own photos.

Open to all and free. Why not bring a friend?

Tel: 01256 475844 to find out more.



The newsletter is issued quarterly - March, June, September & December.
Next issue - 1st March.