

# **SWINDON SENIORS FORUM**

A Voice for Swindon's Senior Citizens

Patron: Shirley Ludford DL

#### **NEWSLETTER – October 2020 – Issue 25**

**Communicate Connect Celebrate** 



Swindon Seniors Forum
Open Meeting

# **Message from the Chair: Norma Thompson**

Welcome to Swindon Seniors Forum (SSF) Autumn 2020 Newsletter.

We hope you all have been keeping safe and well.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown has meant that many people will have experienced loneliness for the first time in their lives, and as you know that loneliness and social isolation was a real experience for many people before lockdown and may well continue to be beyond, when the rest of the world returns to their socially connected lives.

Life is particularly hard for those who live alone, must remain indoors and have no family. We would like to use the empathy and understanding for loneliness that COVID has brought to gather stories from people and carry out a questionnaire.

I want to stress that loneliness certainly is not an inevitable part of ageing and in fact that it affects people of all ages, communities and cultures. We can only encourage people to remember the kindness and neighbourliness that lockdown has brought and to help to embed it into life after the pandemic has subsided.

We are very aware that self-isolation will, for many older people, lead to increased loneliness, social isolation and possible mental health issues thus the need to seek support early. The free TV license for those over 75 ended in August.

This is not good enough, but I doubt the BBC realises how much older people (especially those who are housebound or live alone) rely on the TV and radio for information and to combat loneliness. They often have it on in the background for company.

Loneliness is a massive problem, harmful to physical and mental health. This is especially so for older people. The ability to connect with others is particularly difficult for many of us without access to a computer or social media, if we make the effort to stay connected, we can make a big difference to people who are feeling alone at this time.

Hopefully, when safe to do so the SSF will eventually be able to start its meetings and activities. We will continue to keep you up to date through our newsletters and website.

I look forward to seeing many of you, hopefully face to face – don't forget to wear your mask, stay safe and alert.



# The Forums Annual General Meeting/Open Meeting 2020

Due to current government regulations on large gatherings the Forum's AGM, which is normally held in October, is being deferred to 2021.

We hope to resume planning for the AGM as soon as it is safe to do so and will be in contact with our membership with invites.

# Committee News, Forum Activities Out and About



As lockdown lifts, you can help us make sure older people are not forgotten. Due to the pandemic we were unable to hold our AGM/Open Meetings for 2020.
As Chair I have been representing SSF at Virtual meetings and AGM's, having also attended the Community Fair event October 2019.

The Management Committee have been having virtual meetings with those members who were able to take part. SSF and Robert Buckland MP sent a press release out during

the pandemic about loneliness, with contact details and support if needed.

Our priorities for the year 2019 - 2020 were not fully met as we could not meet face to face to carry out the work that we needed to do.

Our meetings, AGM and Loneliness Summit was cancelled, but we hope to carry on with the work that we are doing in 2021. I sent a letter to Swindon's MP's about the free TV licence which was sent to the appropriate person in the government; Baroness Barran has replied to the letter.

# **Update on Loneliness Summit:**

We hope that the 4th loneliness summit would be able to go ahead in 2021 as this would allow us to get feedback from our key partners from the voluntary, statutory, community, business, Mental Health and GP's of what they have achieved so far and to look at the best way to do that so that we can reduce loneliness for the people of Swindon.

I attended a virtual special coffee morning call to mark Loneliness Awareness Week in June, Keir Starmer and Dr. Rosena Allin-Khan joined some of the UK's leading charities for this special morning.

# Membership Matters: Meet the SSF Membership Secretary, Mina Bhogal



I work as a full time ENT Receptionist at the Great Western Hospital. In my spare time I support various local voluntary sector groups and associations; having a role on 4 other Committees keeps me busy and enhances my knowledge, skills and

experience. I joined SSF as a member and now am the Membership Secretary. The Open Meetings and discussions have helped me understand what loneliness is and how I am not alone. Through SSF I have met some wonderful people who have shared some amazing experiences.

During this unpredictable time many thoughts have gone through my mind. Coronavirus has made us stop and think about the way we live our lives. Like it or not, life will never be the same as it was before, but I don't think that is a bad thing. Society had got to a point where it was all about instant gratification. The 'I want it and want it now!' way of thinking, convenience and having every impulse immediately satisfied. With everything that is happened recently, humankind will reach a point of complete decadence where hopefully there will be somewhat of a closure to many things that are wrongly happening around the world. To move forward we need to change and work together for a better future.

# **COVID Diaries by Carol Brownlee, joint founder SOPF now SSF**

COVID-19 - Mixed blessing or a real life changer? Have you missed seeing your friends and family as often as you would have liked much as I have? I know that has been the worst part of COVID-19 for all residents. My youngest grandchildren have grown and instead of being toddlers have become preschool independents (still love a cuddle though). My children and grown up grandchildren are all fed up with not being able to meet friends and working from home.

Luckily none have been made redundant. My hubby has had a short stay in hospital followed by several follow up hospital appointments; these have meant COVID tests first for each one – that's almost been each morning gone just for that. Sadly, I have not been able to be there for him when having the procedures (good job I like reading as it has meant a reading session in the hospital car park for me). He cannot go out much for fear of catching it and is unable to really do much of what he would like to due to arthritis in his hands.

I help to organise community events including social afternoons several times a year for our older and vulnerable residents but these have been sadly suspended and are much missed.

However, it has not been all doom and gloom as my garden is now looking (nearly) as I like it. The cats and guinea pigs have thrived on the extra attention.

I have been able to give them and I have managed to, at last, catch up on recorded programmes on the T.V., listen to more radio - the cricket has been wonderful and have even found time to listen to whole matches (while doing housework chores, you understand!!) and have been able to read far more (thank goodness our libraries have put on a click and collect service). And I have actually nearly mastered my I pad! Bonus!

So, thank you for the small mercies COVID-19 BUT PLEASE can you disappear soon.

# **Memory Lane: photos of past events**



# BBC refuses to budge!

Free TV Licence Campaign: The BBC has announced its scrapping free TV licences for the over 75s. From 1 August 2020, there will be a new scheme.

Under the new scheme, anyone aged 75 or over

receiving Pension Credit, will be eligible to apply for a free TV Licence, paid for by the BBC. Pension Credit can be in the name of the licence holder, or in their partner's name if they are a couple. If Pension Credit is not received – either in the licence holder's name or their partner's name if they are a couple – the TV Licence will need to be paid for.

But if you are over 75 and claim Pension Credit you could still be eligible for a free TV licence.

Age UK can check your entitlement to pension credit.

Call them on 01743 233123, or call the pension credit claim line on 0800 99 1234.

Anyone registered as blind (severely sight impaired) receives a 50% concession. But there is no discount if you are partially sighted. More information can be found on the website.

https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/check-if-you-needone/for-your-home/blindseverely-sight-impaired-aud5.

You don't need a license to listen to BBC radio, nor do you need one to watch Netflix or Amazon Prime, however you do need a licence to watch TV online, such as BBC I Player or Sky.

TV Licensing says it will write to all over-75 licence holders starting in August. "This letter will let you know what action you'll need to take for your next licence," it says, adding: "We'll give people plenty of time to set up a payment plan or to apply for a free licence if they are eligible."

BBC now has a new Director General, who will be having a video conference meeting online with organisations.

More information on this concession, including eligibility information and details on how to apply, can be found on the TV Licensing website: https://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/fags/FAQ78

# Beware the TV Licence scammers!

Criminals are using the coronavirus as an opportunity to con people out of their money.

Inevitably, older people will be targeted by fraudsters pretending to be from TV Licensing.

A scammer may try to approach you on the doorstep, by post, over the phone or online. They often pretend to be someone they are not, or make misleading offers of services or investments. Beware of copy websites.

Contact Action Fraud 0300 123 2040 if you have received any scam emails or messages.

#### **Health Awareness:**

Do not forget to have your flu jab - contact your GP Surgery as soon as possible.



# Do not Wait and Worry

The NHS, regardless of coronavirus, is always ready to offer care, help and support to those who need it, and encourages patients who are experiencing unusual symptoms that could be cancer, to contact their local GP practice.

Telephone and video consultations with GPs are available and patients will only be asked to come to their local GP practice or go to hospital if it is safe to do so if in any doubt, contact your GP Surgery.

# Understanding Hearing Loss:

Hearing loss is surprisingly common. In fact it affects 1 in 6 adults in the UK. It happens gradually, so you might not even realise it is getting worse. It can be a normal part of ageing or caused by experiencing too much noise over time.

Hearing loss can affect every aspect of your life, especially the things that are most important to you such as relationships with family, friends or work colleagues.

Emotionally and physically, untreated hearing loss can impact negatively on all areas of life. People who suffer from hearing loss often say that they feel isolated from the world going on around them. Common symptoms of hearing loss
There are a number of tell-tale signs that might indicate you have hearing loss. Do any of these seem familiar to you?

- You have the TV or radio volume uncomfortably loud for other people.
- Telephone conversations are hard work.
- You find it difficult to hear dialogue in noisy environments.
- You ask people to repeat things or misunderstand what they say.
   If you have experienced one or more of these situations you may benefit from a hearing test and expert advice from a hearing care professional.

# **Micro Suction Appointments:**



A Hello my name is Kelly
Greensides, Sister of the ENT
Department at the
Great Western Hospital
where I run the Aural Care
Micro Suction Clinic

During the coronavirus many of you have been affected by cancelled appointments which caused a great delay to all of your health issues.

With regards to Aural Care, unfortunately as well as appointments being postponed, we have also had to adapt to the new Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) changes for micro suction, which means, all patients now who require regular micro suction appointments have to be given funding from the CCG first before they can now be offered an appointment with us.

A certain criteria must be met in order for this funding to be granted, which means the GP must try to help you first before applying for funding. In most cases, when funding is approved you will then be granted 2 appointments per year indefinitely, however there are a few cases that only get granted funding for a certain amount of time.

I also understand some patients need this treatment more than twice a year, of which extra funding will need to applied for with evidence from myself on why this needs to be offered more than twice a year.

I can only apologise for the delay to any appointments that require micro suction, they will soon be back up and running and patients will all be seen in due course.

In the meantime, you can care for your ears in the beat possible way, such as regular ear drops.

If you don't have any contraindications, then plenty of water during showers or baths will also help soften your wax.

Please do not feel the urge to use cotton buds as this will only push the wax further down.

Hopefully clinics will resume soon and that this hasn't impacted you too much.

#### **Unknown Author**

We fell asleep in one world and woke up in another.

Suddenly Disney is out of magic

Paris is no longer romantic

New York does not stand up anymore

The Chinese wall is no longer a fortress and Mecca is empty.

Hugs and kisses, suddenly becomes weapons
And not visiting parents and friends becomes an act
of love

Suddenly you realise that power, beauty & money are worthless, cannot get you the oxygen you are fighting for.

The world continues its life and it is beautiful, it only put humans in cages.

I think it is sending us a message. You are not necessary the air, earth, water and sky without you are fine.

"When you come back" Remember that you are my guests, not my masters.



#### **Senior Moment:**

SSF Member talking about her experience coming out of lockdown:

I was in the McDonald's drive-through this morning and the young lady behind me leaned on her horn because I was taking too long to place my order.

"Take the high road," I thought to myself. So, when I got to the first window, I paid for her order along with my own.

The cashier must have told her what I'd done, because as we moved up, she leaned out her window and waved to me and mouthed "Thank you" - obviously embarrassed that I had repaid her rudeness with a kindness.

When I got to the second window, I showed them both receipts and took her food too.

Now she must go back to the end of the line start all over.

Do not honk your horn at old people.



# Recipe: Creamy Courgette Lasagne

#### Ingredients:

9 dried lasagne sheets
1 tablespoon sunflower oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
700g courgette (about 6), coarsely
grated
2 garlic gloves, crushed
250g tub of ricotta
50g cheddar
350g jar tomato sauce for pasta



Serves 4 Preparation:10 mins Cooking:20 mins

#### Method:

Heat oven to 220C/fan 200C/gas 7.

- Put a pan of water on to boil, then cook the lasagne sheets for about 5 minutes until softened, but not cooked through.
- Rinse in cold water and then drizzle with a little oil to stop them sticking together.
- Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large frying pan, then fry the chopped onion.
- After 3 minutes add the grated courgettes and crushed garlic and continue to fry until the courgette have softened and turned bright green.
- Stir in 2/3 of the ricotta and the cheddar, then season to taste.
- Heat the tomato sauce in the microwave for 2 minutes.
- In a large baking dish, layer up the lasagne, starting with half the courgette mix, then lasagne sheets, then tomato sauce. Repeat, top with blobs of the remaining ricotta, then scatter with the rest of the cheddar.
- Bake on the top shelf for about 10 minutes until the sheets are tender and the cheese is golden. Serve with garlic bread or salad.

# **COVID-19 Testing in Swindon:**

You may have seen reports that there are ongoing, national issues with the level of laboratory capacity to process COVID-19 tests – which is having a knock-on effect on the availability of sites for test bookings across England. This is being managed by the Government's Test and Trace programme.

We know that residents have been able to successfully book tests at both testing sites in Swindon, however there may be instances where residents try to book a test online and are not offered a test locally at a Swindon site. The Government advice is to try again later, as new test slots are added during the day.

Please note, testing capacity must be prioritised only for people experiencing coronavirus symptoms (rather than those who are asymptomatic wanting to test if they have coronavirus).

From September a new mobile testing unit has been operational from the Council's Civic Annexe on the Civic Campus, with the entrance from Beckhampton Street. Broadgreen Community Centre is a walk-through testing site.

Testing at the site will be bookable in the usual way through the NHS online portal or by calling NHS 119.

# Latest Update: The changing picture of both COVID-19

The Government has set out further changes to lockdown measures in England. And things can change quickly to help prevent the spread of infection by following Government guidelines and only going out if you do not have symptoms and wearing cloth face coverings.

Many social settings remain closed for now. Guidelines are updated regularly on television, Facebook and radio news.

If you need more information on any of the above services, please call 01793 445500.





#### www.goldieslive.com

or catch up with past sessions on our YouTube page <a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCktq1e5exyOQq">https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCktq1e5exyOQq</a> <a href="https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCktq1e5exyOQq">hfAfdlburg</a>

# **Black History Month**

This is celebrated in October in the UK.

What is Black History Month?

The month is dedicated as a means to counter the perceived invisibility of black people and challenge the negative stereotypes that were the only manner black people were pictured in popular culture.

# **Nutrition Puzzle**

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1	S	U	P	L	T	R	В	E	Α	A	T	P	٧	DIGESTION
Т	T	W	T	Α	В	Ε	U	R	Н	Α	R	1	R	EGGS
Ε	G	Α	F	R	Ε	Α	М	ı	Ε	0	Т	М	E	PROTEIN CARBOHYDRATE
R	Α	Т	Ε	Ε	1	Т	Т	L	T	Α	0	Р	N	MINERALS
С	0	Ε	G	N	Н	Т	В	Е	М	G	D	L	D	BREAD NUTRITION
X	Ε	R	G	I	1	G	I	1	G	Ī	Α	Ε	0	EXCRETION
Ε	Т	L	s	М	Α	N	N	0	N	E	С	Т	0	VITAMINS
L	Ε	G	U	М	Ε	s	L	χ	N	1	٧	Т	F	VEGETABLE
С	Α	R	В	0	Н	Υ	D	R	Α	Т	Ε	U	F	AVOCADO WATER
s	Α	٧	0	С	Α	D	0	Ε	L	R	В	С	F	FRUIT
U	R	1	N	0	1	Т	s	Ε	G	1	D	Ε	Т	FAT LEGUMES
s	1	Т	L	Р	0	R	R	Е	E	М	Ε	Α	E	LEGUIVIES

# Advice, Information and Organisations: Adult Social Care and support for older people in Swindon Borough Council.

Visit SBC website. E-mail: careline@swindon.gov.uk Phone: 0800 085 6666

**Age UK Swindon** (advice and information): Phone: 01793 687017

Age UK Wiltshire: Phone: 01380 727 767 Monday - Thursday, 9.00 am to 4.00 pm. Friday, 9.00 am to 1.00 pm.

**Community Nursing: GWH.** The Community nursing service provides care to patients at home or in residential homes, many of whom have long-term conditions or disabilities.

Phone: 01793 463333 (choose option 4)

**Healthwatch Swindon:** Ensures that public views on local health and social care services are heard. Sanford House, Sanford Street, Swindon. Phone: 01793 497777 Website: www.healthwatchswindon.org.uk

**Leaflets** of charities, organisations and information are available in reception at Sanford House Sanford Street, Swindon SN1 1QH

Men in Sheds: Kevin Prosser Phone: 07540726432

Email: kevin.prosser@outlook.com

# NHS Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Clinical Commissioning Group.

The Pierre Simonet Building Gateway North Latham Road, Swindon SN25 4DL · Phone: 01793 683700 Visit, www.bswccg.nhs.uk for information.

#### **Robert Buckland, MP for South Swindon:**

Phone: 01793 533393 Website: robert.bucklandmp@parliament.uk

Silver Line: Phone Helpline: 0800 4 70 80 90

Website: www.thesilverline.org.uk

### **Swindon Borough Council:**

Euclid Street, Swindon. SN1 2JH.: 01793 445500.

**Swindon Circles:** Befriending Service.

**Live Well Swindon Hub**: Information, advice and triage service. Tel: The Live well Hub: 01793 465513

Email: livewell@swindon.gov.uk

**Swindon Carers:** Centre Sanford House Sanford Street, Swindon SN1 1HE · 01793 531133

#### **Swindon Citizens Advice Bureau:**

Sanford House Sanford Street, Swindon SN1 1QH

Phone: 01793 681781 Email: advice@swindon.cabnet.org.uk

Websitewww.citizensadviceswindon.org.uk/contact

National Advice Line: 08444 994 114

National website: https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk

**Swindon Dial A Ride:** Newcombe Drive, Hawksworth Trading Estate, Swindon, SN2 1DZ Tel (01793 616 dial a ride 01793 617828 community transport.

Swindon Equality Coalition: Phone: 01793 538398

Website: www.vas-swindon.org

#### **Swindon Local Offer:**

Local Offer is a website in Swindon for children & adults who have support needs, giving you correct information and advice at any time. <a href="https://localoffer.swindon.gov.uk/home">https://localoffer.swindon.gov.uk/home</a>

**Swindon Mind:** Mental health support, Sanford House Sanford Street, Swindon SN1 1HE · 01793 432031

#### **Swindon North End Bowls Club:**

St Marks Recreation Ground, Ipswich Street, Swindon SN2 1DB, Phone07561 058825 swindonnorthendbowls@icloud.com www.swindonnorthendbowlsclub@weebly.coms

### **Swindon 105.5 Community Radio:**

Tel: 01793 611555 www.swindon1055.com info@swindon1055.com. Radio Studios, Liden Centre, Barrington Close Swindon, SN3 6HF

#### **Justin Tomlinson, MP for North Swindon:**

phone: 01793 533393, Website:

justin.tomlinson.mp@parliament.uk. Orbital Shopping

Park, Thamesdown Drive, SN25 4AN.

### **United Community Social Club:**

A friendly social club for the over 50s at Broadgreen Community Centre, Salisbury Street, Swindon, with activities

ranging from singing to keep fit; sewing and crafts to talks on health matters.

Contact: Gloria Morgan or Keith Duffus Phone: Gloria 01793 613310 keith21947@gmail.com Mondays 11:00am to 3:00pm.

**Voluntary Action Swindon:** Phone: 01793 538398 Website: www.vas-swindon.org Email: info@vas-swindon.org

#### Wiltshire and Swindon Users Network:

Phone: 01380 871057 Website: www.wsun.co.uk

Wiltshire Sight: Phone: 01380 723 682

Email: info@visionwofe.org.uk

# **Emergencies:**

#### Wiltshire Police:

Phone: 101 In an emergency always call 999

Website: www.wiltshire.police.uk

#### **GP Out of Hours Service:**

To contact the GP out of Hours Service please dial 111. You can also access 111 Online: Website: www.nhsdirect.uk

### **Opening times:**

Weekdays: 18.30 to 08.00 Weekends: 18.30 Friday - 08.00 Monday Bank Holidays: 18.30 previous evening – 08.00 on the next working day after the bank holiday.

#### **Swindon Samaritans:**

5-6 Curtis Street, Swindon SN1 5JU · 01793 537373 the Samaritans offer support and advice to people feeling suicidal or vulnerable 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

#### **Links from Swindon Seniors Forum:**

Age Action Alliance: Phone: 0207 449 7008

Website: www.ageactionalliance.org Email: info@ageactionalliance.org

### Age UK Forum pages Website:

www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved/older-peoples-forums

## **Ageing Well Legacy:**

Website: www.local.gov.uk/ageing-well Beth Johnson Foundation: A charity championing positive ageing Phone: 01782 844036 Website: www.bjf.org.uk

## Campaign to end loneliness:

website: https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org

Elders Council Website: www.elderscouncil.org.uk

**Link Age Phone:** 0117 353 3042

Mature Times: Website: www.maturetimes.co.uk

### **Pensioners Campaign Forum: Website:**

www.pensionerscampaignuk.org.uk

#### **Pensioners Forum:**

Website: www.pensionersforum.co.uk

## **Royal British Legion:**

Alexander House, 19 Fleming Way, Swindon SN1 2NG Local contact Samantha Baker. Email sbaker@britishlegion.org.uk Phone: 08457 725725

#### **South West Seniors Network:**

Membership shall be open to any body corporate or unincorporated association which is comprised of and representing older people including but not limited to Forums. All organisations to be accepted into full membership will have the following common features: <a href="mailto:martinwillard.pain@yahoo.com">martinwillard.pain@yahoo.com</a>
<a href="mailto:www.southwestseniors.org.uk">www.southwestseniors.org.uk</a>

### **United for All Ages:**

Website: www.unitedforallages.com Phone: 01692 650 816

### **Swindon Shopmobility**

Swindon's Shopmobility scheme is available for anyone with limited mobility and provides a selection of manually-propelled and battery-powered wheelchairs and scooters. These are provided to help people with mobility difficulties when using the facilities in Swindon's town centre. Swindon Shopmobility is situated at the back of Sanford House in Sanford Street,

For further information please contact us on: using the contact details below

Swindon Shopmobility

brought to you by Swindon

Telephone: 07379 689128

Email: Shopmobility@vas-swindon.org

# Swindon Seniors Forum: Get involved: Join us, it's free!

Share a voice and influence our local services. If you would like to join SSF to become a member of the Swindon Seniors Forum, 'Contact Us' on our website; swindonseniors.uk or either email <a href="mailto:info@swindonseniors.uk">info@swindonseniors.uk</a> phone 078284 46672.

Membership is free and open to over 55+resident within the borough of Swindon, in middle and later life, or anybody with a particular interest in older people's issues. We welcome.

- . A member of a faith group.
- . Identify as disabled.
- . Are from a BAME group.
- . LGBTQ+

As a member you will, unless you notify us otherwise, receive our newsletter twice a year by post or email. Invitations to our open meetings or any other event.

The forum currently needs more volunteers to get involved in a range of activities, including helping at events, as well as gathering views of seniors on issues that affect them and putting these views forward to policy makers and service providers. You might want to encourage a friend to come to our open meetings.

#### **SSF Website Volunteer wanted:**

Description: update and maintain the website. Keep it current and interesting, find ways to utilise the website's communication with members. Attend some of our management committee meetings. Someone with interest in the cause and knowledge of designing/updating websites.

### Change of your contact details:

It is important that we are informed of any changes to your email / postal address / telephone number.

Swindon Seniors Forum is committed to ensuring that your privacy is protected by using your data fairly, lawfully, securely and solely for the purposes for which it is required.

Full contact details on back page of newsletter.

Your feedback is greatly appreciated – any comments, constructive criticism or compliments please get in contact.



#### **SWINDON SENIORS FORUM**

#### A Voice for Swindon's Senior Citizens

Registered address:
Chair - Swindon Seniors Forum
c/o Voluntary Action Swindon
1 John Street
Swindon, SN1 1RT

Telephone: 07828 446672

Email: <u>info@swindonseniors.uk</u>
Web: <u>www.swindonseniors.uk</u>

Newsletter Editor: Norma Thompson



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