

Wandsworth Older People's Forum



NEWSLETTER Lockdown special issue

Registered charity
No 1096322



Helping out in Wandsworth

Age UK Wandsworth

Tel 020 8877 8940
info@ageukwandsworth.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society Dementia Support Service Wandsworth

Tel 020 8687 0922
wandsworth@alzheimers.org.uk

Citizens Advice Wandsworth

Tel 0300 330 1169
www.cawandsworth.org

Coronavirus Angels

Tel 0739 485 6557
angels@stmarybattersea.org.uk

Furzedown Project

Maintaining contact/food delivered
Tel 020 8677 4283
www.furzedownproject.org.uk

Katherine Low Settlement

Telephone support /friendship for any elders in Battersea
Tel 020 7223 2845
www.klsettlement.org.uk

RegenerateRISE

Contact and food/sandwiches delivered in SW11 and SW15
www.regenerate-rise.co.uk

South West London Law Centres

Tel 020 8767 2777
debt@swllc.org

Wandsworth Council Community Hub

Tel 020 8871 6555
covid19support@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk

Wandsworth Food Bank

Tel 020 7326 9428
www.wandsworth.foodbank.org.uk

We're all in this together

Welcome to this special lockdown two-page newsletter from the Wandsworth Older People's Forum (WOPF). We hope you find it not only informative, but also readable and entertaining.

If you are a member of the Forum, you will be used to a quarterly paper newsletter. In the current extraordinary situation, this is not practicable, so those of you with an email are receiving this electronically, while others will get a single paper copy.

If you haven't come across the WOPF before, I should explain that we work in partnership with local bodies involved in the welfare of older people in the borough and seek to provide a strong collective voice seeking to influence change through engagement with local decision-makers. In doing so, we work closely with officers of Wandsworth Borough Council, local health bodies, our local Age UK Wandsworth team and the other local organisations in a network of concern for the elderly.

We are all now subject to lockdown, so we are all in the same extraordinary situation. Those of us who have been declared to need "shielding" will face what looks likely to be an extended period when we can't sensibly go out of our homes.

So, in these uncertain times, do please look after yourself and your family. Be safe and stay safe. You are not alone

*Tony Tuck
WOPF:Chair*

Talking to our 'resilient' members



I've been ringing up our members and getting a bit of a feel for how you're coping.

People are having a lot of help from neighbours – some of whom they didn't know before all this started. And there's quite a lot of chatting over the garden wall – with the required distance being observed, of

course. I call it Les Dawson time.

As far as exercise is concerned, people are being really sensible and not jumping into their cars and driving to the Peak District – no, I know you couldn't, but you're not even going to Richmond Park.

Of course not everyone is near to a park or common. People have

Three cheers for the council

While other London boroughs have closed, reopened and again closed some of their green spaces during the lockdown, or taped off park benches (*below right*) to make sure no one could sit down to read or sunbathe, older or disabled residents in Wandsworth have been breathing huge sighs of relief at the commonsense attitude of Wandsworth Council – which has done neither (see *Wandsworth Common, top right*). And the council has been proved right. People need their green spaces.

On 16 April, new guidance was issued by the National Police Chiefs' Council and the College of Policing on how officers should interpret the lockdown restriction laws after concerns that some officers had misunderstood them

It is “acceptable”, said the advice, for a person to **stop for a break during exercise** and it is also “lawful to drive for exercise” if there is nowhere suitable near your



home. This had worried an older Londoner who, early on, had emailed the BBC to ask if she could drive a short distance to where she wanted to start her walk, as otherwise she would have to climb a steep hill. The answer? Use common sense and drive as short a distance as you need to. The police have now caught up.

Then, on 18 April, Robert Jenrick, the Communities and Local



Government Secretary, finally “made it clear” to councils that they must **keep their parks open** during the lockdown. As critics of the closures have pointed out, they risk making other green spaces that are still open in the area *even more* crowded. But even if all parks are open, people must still be sensible about social distancing and go home if the park is too full, returning when it is emptier.

As Mr Jenrick said: “We know the lockdown is much harder for people who don't have much living space. People need parks.”

And some of us who aren't as young as we once were need to sit down and have a rest while walking in them. Bearing in mind that wearing gloves or carrying handwipes might be a good idea in case you touch the bench. And don't forget to wash your hands when you get home!

Vicky Hutchings
Editor

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been climbing up and down their stairs 12 times a day; some use exercise videos they already have; and those with a computer and the internet have been Googling Exercises for the Elderly. If only we still had Eileen Fowler of fond memory. Or even the Green Goddess or Mr Motivator...

People have also dug out old jigsaws (Beware! There's bound to be a piece missing!) and packs of cards, and are remembering how to play Patience, and someone likes to play Canasta with himself. And why not?

People have found TV and radio an absolute godsend and again, if you have iPlayer and Catch Up,

you can indeed catch up on stuff you missed. And then neighbours have been exchanging books by leaving them on the doorstep, later phoning each other to talk about them – a sort of improvised Book Group.

In conclusion, we all have to find ways of getting round this and I'm very cheered by how resilient and pragmatic our members are – you're all a bit older than my generation and maybe it's the war, I don't know, but you all seem to have such a good attitude. But, let's not pretend: this is really, really hard and nobody can be upbeat all the time.

Last bit – I know you know this but it always bears repeating – don't

open the door if you don't know who's on the other side, but don't get paranoid and – as we used to say in the 60s – keep on trucking!

Su Elliott
Administrator/Membership Secretary

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