



Wandsworth Older People's Forum

NEWSLETTER SPRING 2021

You still have time to fill in our Readers Questionnaire. Your views will be published in the next issue!



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Don't forget!



On **Thursday 6 May** Londoners vote to decide the next Mayor of London as well as Members of the London Assembly. **The new deadline to register to vote is midnight on Monday 19 April.**

To apply for a postal or proxy vote, download, print and fill in the relevant application form which can be obtained from the Electoral Commission at: www.electoralcommission.org.uk

After completing the form and signing it, send it to the Electoral Services Team at Wandsworth Town Hall, SW18 2PU.

The deadline to apply for a postal or proxy vote is 5pm, Tuesday 20 April.

For postal voters, once you receive your ballot paper, fill it in and return it using the pre-paid envelope provided. Your completed ballot paper **must be received by 10pm on polling day.**

Covid jab for over-50s

People aged 50 and over who have not yet been contacted about being vaccinated or been vaccinated against Covid-19 are being asked to contact the NHS to arrange a jab.

- Online at <https://www.nhs.uk/>
- Or call 119 free of charge any time between 7am to 11pm, seven days a week.

Is this NHS privatisation by stealth?

Following articles in the *BMJ*, *The Guardian* and various local London papers, Wandsworth Older People's Forum has now written to Dr Rosena Allin-Khan, MP for Tooting, as well as to Wandsworth's two other MPs, Marsha De Cordova in Battersea and Fleur Anderson in Putney, about what can be done in face of the news that a US firm has bought a number of London GP practices.

understand that there are also a number of GP surgeries owned by another subsidiary of Centene Corporation. In all, there seem to be about 60 GP surgeries in England owned, and presumably to some extent controlled, by this American profit-making company.



We know that sales of GP practices have to be approved by the local CCG, the duty to do this and to see that there is a GP for every resident in their area having been passed to them by NHS England a year or two ago.

Wandsworth CCG is now amalgamated with five other boroughs into SWLondon CCG, on which there is only one

Contd on p2

Dear Rosena

I am writing on behalf of the Wandsworth Older People's Forum which asked me to write to you and the other two Wandsworth MPs about the sale of a number of GP surgeries, one in Furzedown, to Operose, a subsidiary of Centene Corporation, a US health insurance provider. We

Your chance to chat to ... a librarian

If you or anyone you know is feeling isolated or alone, the council has introduced its new "A Chance to Talk" scheme whereby a time will be arranged for a member of the library team to call you. The calls will be continuing after lockdown ends.

Don't worry if you're not a book lover, as the team can talk about a range of subjects – from current affairs to sport to gardening – and hopefully find a topic you are both interested in.

"I am proud to be part of a team that is committed to helping people feeling isolated and alone," Patrick Malone, Southfield librarian and manager/creator of the scheme said. "I hope and believe that the programme can give people a sense of optimism and confidence.

**Wanted:
"More
callers"**



"We started the scheme a few weeks ago and we would love to have more callers."

Please email patrick.malone@gll.org or call Southfields Library on 020 8780 1945 or ask at your local library

Wandsworth representative, I think, Dr Nicola Jones.

SWLondon CCG has yet to decide on a Patient and Public Involvement policy and as yet has not appointed a lay member. If there is a Healthwatch member, it will be one of the six from these boroughs. There is not much accountability here.

GPs own their practices, at least those who are partners. They may find the business side of managing a practice onerous and selling it to a company and receiving a salary may be a preferable option. We already have salaried GPs at Grant Road, Clapham Junction, but they are employed by Care UK, a British company otherwise running care homes. We do not want our GP service run as a profit-making business, nor do we want a profit-making business, used to American health-providing styles, controlling our GP service.

We think the GP service should be controlled ultimately as part of the NHS and accountable ultimately through the Department of Health and Parliament. The only control of what has happened here is in the CCGs of which the majority of the members are themselves GPs with a significant interest in the ownership of practices.

The Forum would like you to take an interest in this.

A group of NHS bodies and other individuals concerned have written a letter to Matt Hancock, Secretary of State for Health, asking for a CQC Inquiry and we have sent a brief letter saying that we support this. Yours sincerely,

Lilias Gillies

Hon Secretary/Wandsworth Older People's Forum

Fares rise but 60+ Oyster remains safe

On 1 March, fares in London rose by an average of 2.6% across all services – although some single fares remained unchanged.

Members stay 'very resilient'

"Grit is living life like it's a marathon not a sprint." That quote is from somebody called Angela Duckworth, who I must say I'd not heard of before. This time in our lives has truly been a marathon – and there's no real sign of the finishing line yet.



And how are you all coping, so far? Certainly, with grit. And determination, and just by hanging on in there. Many say you "take things as they come" and "try not to let things bother you". And I'm always pleased at how altruistic you can be, saying things like: "Oh *I'm* all right, I'm managing – I'm more worried about other people."

Sometimes things you started off doing (a YEAR ago! Can we believe it?) have faded away and other things taken their place – you got bored cleaning out the cupboards and took up drawing,

or you're watching more telly, or went through a "reading block" and started playing patience – how apt! One member has rediscovered an interest in horse-racing and enjoys studying form and watching in the afternoons. And no, she's not turned into a rabid gambler! Someone said to me the important thing is just to remember there's no such thing as a Guilty Pleasure.

Let's hope the weather gets better as the days get lighter and those who can get out do so – we're blessed in Wandsworth with parks and commons, and older people are so very good about wearing masks and socially distancing.

I'll finish with another quote, this time by Louis Pasteur, who you'll be relieved to know I *have* heard of: "*My strength lies solely in my tenacity.*" So that's all of YOU, and I'm thankful for it and for the way you are so *very* resilient!
Su Elliott/ Membership Secretary

Latest scamming news

According to *Which?*, it has now been reporting on the scandal of unsolicited calls to victims trying to persuade them to sign up "for worthless or non-existent insurance policies for their home appliances" for over two years.

Which is interesting, as last month I got two calls about the insurance on my washing machine. Each time I answered my landline, "Robyn" (or "Mandy") said in her high, oddly-accented voice that it now needed renewing as it was about to expire. I laughed out loud. My washing machine is more than 10 years old and after the warranty expired over eight years ago I've never insured it in my life. An easy one to dodge!

Two further scams highlighted by *Which?* are, first, a fake email purporting to be from Just Eat. This tries to tempt recipients into claiming a £50 gift card they've been "chosen" to receive. Clicking on the link will take you to a phishing website, which then tries to steal your personal info. We are all using takeaway delivery services much more these days "so it's worth being cautious about such communications", says *Which?*

The second scam involves *Which?* itself. Victims are receiving calls on their landline, seemingly from the Which Legal Team number. But the callers then claim to be from Amazon ringing to inform the victim their account has been hacked. Put the phone down immediately.
Vicky Hutchings

The London Mayor, Sadiq Khan, said: "Unfortunately, this year ministers insisted on an RPI+1 per cent fares increase in order for TfL to get the emergency government support needed as a consequence of the global pandemic", adding:

"Public transport should be affordable to all, so I am pleased that I was able to fight off even worse government proposals to scrap free travel for under-18s and concessions for over-60s as well as bigger fares increase."

How we kept sharp through lockdown

To understand the appeal of bridge, you only have to look at the notable names who were advocates of this extraordinarily addictive card game: Winston Churchill, Somerset Maugham, George Burns, Omar Sharif, Gandhi, Dwight Eisenhower, Deng Xiaoping and . . . James Bond. Movers and shakers all.

According to one bridge club website: “Bridge is one of the best ways to practice the ‘use it or lose it’ advice for maintaining mental sharpness in older age.” Research has shown that regular bridge playing improves reasoning skills

and long- and short-term memory. Says the club website: “You’ll feel the neurons firing not only while you play, but long after.”

Apparently, bridge exercises both sides of your brain, using – and improving – your skills in logic, communication, math, memory, visualisation and psychology. A truly unique mental workout!

So what has happened to all those bridge clubs across the UK during lockdown? Why, temporarily they have gone online – with online bridge becoming the latest thing to be taken up. As the *Times* put it:

“Sociable and all-consuming, online bridge has become the latest lockdown craze” – adding that Bridge Base Online (BBO) is currently the favoured online bridge site for players deprived of their usual face-to-face play.

How has one of our own clubs in the area, the Lavender Bridge Club, been faring during lockdown? We asked co-founder **Andrew Stimson**, awarded a British Empire Medal in 2018 for services to older people in Wandsworth, about what’s been happening in the world of bridge in Battersea.

‘It’s a friendly club’

My wife and I started Lavender Bridge Club in Battersea some 28 years ago and have loved every minute, although it has been very hard work. It’s a friendly club accommodating all levels of ability. For retired people, we feel the social aspects of bridge are as important as the cards. At the club, we provide partners for those who come alone.

As bridge requires a good deal of mental dexterity, it appears the expression “use it or lose it” applies particularly well in this case. As far back as 20 years ago, research carried out in New York into the leisure activities of the elderly indicated that those aged over 70 who played bridge had as much as 75% less chance of developing Alzheimer’s Disease when compared with those whose activities did not include mental challenges. Even we were surprised to hear that playing bridge made such an enormous difference. Recent research has found that bridge exercises at least three different areas of the brain.

Bridge clubs not only keep their members mentally alert, they also facilitate social interaction between like-minded people from all walks of life. Many members of the Lavender Bridge Club have, over the years, formed close friendships with fellow members. And many others have taken advantage of the numerous bridge holidays and cruises offered by various organisations, where they can both socialise and play bridge with their new-found friends.



Above, the Lavender Bridge Club in full swing, pre-pandemic. Left, Andrew Stimson who, with his wife, Anne, founded the club

Before Covid, our bridge club attracted about 80 players twice a week. Currently, the league we play in online uses Bridge Base Online and our website suggests that our membership join BBO. I suspect that some members will continue to

play online for a while until they are absolutely certain that the pandemic is well and truly over. We, of course, hope to reopen soon.

Andrew Stimson

If you’re interested in joining the club, contact andrewstimson@yahoo.com or call 07940 354203

Bridge Base On Line

Join the largest community of bridge players. Play with your real-life partner, or find a partner online. Relax and kibitz world-class players. Chat, hang out, and meet players from all over the world. <https://www.bridgebase.com/>

Reporting back from the Forum

While there have been no meetings for members, the Forum has continued to invite guest speakers to its Zoom meetings of the Forum's management committee

At the January meeting, **Charlotte Blayney** spoke of her role on a Project Team set up to pilot a new first point of contact for Adult Social Services. They hope to be more linked into the community and to talk to people coming out of hospital or to those in the community who need help. So far the team have taken on all the referrals and the work will be reviewed after the first three months. The pilot will run for nine months. People will be assessed and issued with equipment they may need in order to have digital contact with the team in the future, using text, Alexa, Facebook, or Skype. People without digital devices will be issued with one, and given training: maybe the Alcove Carephone which is very simple and probably will be able to be used by people with dementia.

Our other speakers were **Naomi Good**, Patient and Public Engagement Manager at NHS Wandsworth, and **Dr Kieron Earney**, a GP in West Wandsworth, who talked about immunisation in Wandsworth for Covid. They wanted to give people confidence in having the vaccine. If anyone has a particular problem with having it, patients are advised to contact their GP

and talk about it. Both the Pfizer BioNTech and the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccines are being used here and are safe and give high levels of protection, though there had been some problems with distribution.

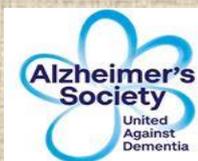
The speaker at the February meeting was **Manuel Button** from Wandsworth Community Transport. WCT has been keeping as much going as has been possible in a Covid-safe way. They are transporting people for their Covid jabs booked both by people who know them and by GPs for their patients. Dial-a-Ride journeys and shopping shuttles are both working. WCT will also deliver people's shopping. They had done some KidsOut journeys in the summer and hope to be able to start that again soon. They usually do two newsletters a year, but now things change so often they are sending out e-news more frequently. About 40% of members are not on email and, of those who are, many only look occasionally, but this is changing.

Terence Joe, Head of Patient Experience based at St George's Hospital, came to speak to us in March. His remit also includes going out to Queen Mary's Hospital as well as managing the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), complaints from patients and volunteering. The most important role for him is "listening to the voices of patients at every stage". Over New Year, he said, 370 out of 900 beds were taken up by Covid patients. It was down to under 50 on the day he spoke at the Forum meeting. Asked about staff who refuse vaccination, Terence said it was not compulsory, but they are encouraged to get it and given information to refute falsities on social media. He said about 70% of white staff had been vaccinated so far, 60% of Asian and Chinese, and 30% black.

Lilias Gillies/Hon Sec

Alzheimer's Society

The Alzheimer's Society supports anyone with, or who is caring for someone with, a diagnosis of any form of dementia. The core Dementia Support service has proved more vital than ever through the pandemic.



Zoom groups and activities you can join

We are working with **Merton Adult Learning** and will shortly be offering free **Dementia-Friendly IT Courses** to enable computer-beginners to learn how to access support and activities via the internet (the 4-week workshops will cover using tablets and Alexa as well as keeping safe on the internet). Contact: **Sue Pritty** at sue.pritty@rhacc.ac.uk or call her on **0741 509 3489** if you would like to join these classes.

Currently running on Zoom are our ever-popular

- **Singing for the Brain** on Thursday afternoons;
- **Creative Sessions for Carers** on Tuesday afternoons;
- **Activity Group** on Tuesday mornings

We are also running **Love to Move** every Wednesday 2:30-3:30pm, fun seated exercise sessions to music, led by **Cherry Tolcher** from the **British Gymnastics Foundation**. For info, visit <https://britishgymnasticsfoundation.org/lovetomove/>

To join one of these groups or ask for a call from a Dementia Support Worker, please call 020 8687 0922 or email wandsworth@alzheimers.org.uk

Volunteers wanted

- Have you suffered from problems with an enlarged prostate and been catheterised for 3 months or more?
- Have you recently accessed support or advice from your GP, consultant or nurse?
- Do you live and use healthcare services within South West London?
- Or are you a carer who has supported a person that has been catheterised for 3 months or more and has accessed support within South West London?

If so, your input would be invaluable

If you would like to get involved, please get in touch with **Clare Thomas** to discuss the best way to share your input at clare.thomas@swlondon.nhs.uk or by calling **020 3458 5231**.

How will your feedback be used?

People need the right support and treatment for long-term catheter use. So developing a standardised way to access services across South West London so patients receive the same quality of care in the right place at the right time is a priority. You can help that to happen.

Hidden world of elder abuse



Domestic abuse has been in the news a lot during the pandemic, with police forces reporting an increase and charities receiving more calls from people seeking help.

It can be easy to think domestic abuse involves only physical violence, but that isn't the case. It includes a wide range of behaviours designed to control the victim. These often take place over a long period of time. Here are some examples:

- Destroying objects, such as the TV;
- Restricting access to money;
- Threatening to leave or get a divorce;
- Reading private emails, texts or letters;
- Tampering with, or refusing access to, medication;
- Making fun of personal values,
- Excluding family members or friends.

Often, as people age, they become more reliant on a single person for care and support. Abusers may claim that they are trying to keep an older person they are abusing safe. Covid has meant many older people have had to shield and reduce contact with the wider family or friends and abusers may use the pandemic as an excuse to keep that person isolated. An abuser may be able to restrict access to support and vital services – for example, by refusing to take them to the GP.

People who are being cared for can also be abusive. Carers may be reluctant to ask for help, thinking the abusive behaviour is caused by illness, and fear what will happen to the person they care for if they speak out.

Dial 999 if you are in danger. You can access silent help by calling 999 and if you can't talk press 55 and the operator will respond.

Women in Wandsworth can call Women and Girls Network on **0808 801 0660** and talk to an adviser or email advice@wgn.org.uk
Men in Wandsworth can get support at the Men's Advice Line on **0808 801 0327** or email info@mensadvice.org.uk

Cara Atkinson

Cara Atkinson is the Project Manager for Ascent at Solace Women's Aid. For futures free from abuse and violence, the charity offers free advice and support to women and children in London. Contact: www.solacewomensaid.org

South London and Maudsley **NHS**

NHS Foundation Trust

we are
withyou

St Mungo's
Helping Vulnerable People
Including You



Wandsworth Drug and Alcohol Services

Over-50s Alcohol Helpline (We Are With You)

As we get older, alcohol has more of an impact on our health and wellbeing. Changes in our lives and routines can lead us to drink more than we used to - and the health effects of alcohol can build up over the long term. If you're over 50 and have concerns about your drinking, or you're worried about someone else, our helpline is for you: **0808 801 0750**.

Via our website you can book a phone call or video chat to speak to a trained advisor at:

<https://www.wearewithyou.org.uk/help-and-advice/over-50s-alcohol-helpline/>

The helpline is open Monday to Friday 12pm - 8pm and Saturday and Sunday 10am - 4pm.

Older people living in the community who think they would benefit from having a Wandsworth Council-approved WATCH alarm system installed to give peace of mind that help is at hand in an emergency should get in touch. With every WATCH alarm, the service will offer a smoke detector that is linked, so on activation the alarm will trigger an alert to the call centre so appropriate help is deployed. Charges for the service remain fixed at the 2013 rate.

How do I join WATCH Lifeline?

Just contact Supported Housing Services to arrange an appointment with an emergency response officer who will explain how the service works.

Friends, relatives, GPs, social workers and other health professionals can also phone on your behalf to make a referral. Please call (020) 8871 8198.

Wandsworth Council, Supported Housing Services, Town Hall, Wandsworth High Street, London SW18 2PU

WATCH
Lifeline Alarm Service



Reassurance and peace of mind
at the touch of a button

Why BMI is a terrible way to monitor your health, according to five experts

MEDICALNEWS TODAY

How useful is body mass index?

Can we trust BMI to measure obesity?

Is it time to stop using BMI to measure Covid risk?

According to the British Heart Foundation: “Being overweight or obese increases your risk of dying from coronavirus.” So, too, says the Nursing Times website. And while Gov.UK begins its Covid advice by talking about “obesity or being seriously overweight” as risk factors, it soon forgets the “seriously” to comment on how almost two-thirds (63%) of adults in England and Wales are at added risk, being “overweight or obese”.

That 63% breaks down into 28% obese and 36% overweight and comes to us courtesy of the body mass index (BMI), which uses our height and weight to work out which band we are officially in.

But the one thing everyone knows about BMI is that it can't distinguish muscle from fat, nor differentiate subcutaneous fat from visceral fat, and thus may struggle to tell us whether we're healthy or not. A fact that most of the press has been pointing out for years, even the scientific and medical press.

The NHS.UK website itself notes that BMI is more an “indication”

that someone “might” be carrying around too much fat, as “people who are very muscular can [also] have a high BMI” due to the fact that muscle is far denser than fat.

However, in many cases, BMI can be a fair proxy for whether you need to lose weight. It's not too difficult to work out that for people whose BMI is over 40, unless they're a sumo wrestler, say, that's

World Health Organization (WHO) Classifications for Obesity Corresponding to Body Mass Index (BMI)	
WHO Classification	BMI (kg/m ²)
Underweight	< 18.50
Normal range	18.50–24.99
Overweight	25.00–29.99
Obesity class I	30.00–34.99
Obesity class II	35.00–39.99
Obesity class III	≥ 40.00

Obesity: class I obesity is spoken of as “moderately” obese, class II “severely” obese, and class III as “morbidly” obese

usually all you need to know. And in the over-30 BMI bands, for every Arnold Schwarzenegger (BMI 32.1), there are thousands of body-shapes like Boris Johnson's (who lost



Little visceral fat

CT scans show that morbidly obese sumo wrestlers have little visceral fat, due to intense daily training that makes them very muscular and strong, but they do have plenty of subcutaneous fat through eating 7,000 calories a day. Yet they don't seem to suffer from heart attacks, strokes, or other symptoms

weight after Covid, going from a BMI of 36.3 to 34.2). There just aren't enough of the so-called “healthy obese” to subvert the generalisations of BMI. But there may well be enough “healthy overweight” in the 25-29.9 range to do so. And measuring their visceral fat will be crucial to finding that out.

You can do this, says the NHS.UK website, by “measuring [your] waist size”. Or your waist-to-hips (WHR) ratio. That's if you don't want to go to the trouble or expense of having a CT scan. For women, waists of 35 inches and over are red flags, ditto men with waists of 40-plus inches. WHR is another red flag if it's 0.96 or higher for men and 0.81 or higher for women.

Mirror, mirror...

Can't work out your WHR? Why not simply strip down to your underwear and look at yourself in the mirror, both head-on and in profile. If your waist *in either dimension* is bigger than your hips, you need to lose some poundage!

While it has long been known that there are health risks associated with being obese – and getting ill or dying with Covid is only the latest on the list – these days, being officially overweight (or “obese-lite” as one mischievous doctor recently renamed it) is treated as almost synonymous with obesity. The two words are rarely seen apart. This is happening, even though, as we have already said, a large proportion within the BMI “overweight” group may well be muscular and fit.

They might also be particularly curvy women. Besides not being able to register the difference between muscle and fat, BMI also can't account for male and female patterns of fat distribution, where men tend to store visceral fat in and around the abdomen, thorax and visceral organs, and women to lay down subcutaneous fat under the skin around the thighs, hips and breasts. Women, of course, can also put weight on around their middle, particularly after the menopause.



Left, Will Smith (BMI 28.2) who played Muhammad Ali (BMI 26.9 when he beat Sonny Liston in 1964). Above, Hillary Clinton, who says she's "battled" with her weight for years but remains officially at BMI 21.5, and Kate Winslet (BMI 29.4 before she was told to slim for *Titanic*). Right, Tom Cruise (BMI 26.1)

Now, according to the ScienceDaily website: "All body fat is not created equal in terms of associated health risks. Visceral fat is strongly linked to metabolic disease and insulin resistance, and an increased risk of death, even for people who have a normal BMI. Subcutaneous fat doesn't carry the same risks – [and] may even be protective."

So even those with a normal BMI should check out their visceral fat! And visceral fat is seen as specially dangerous for seriously ill Covid patients – whose symptoms will probably involve shortness of breath, making it hard to breathe and leaving them gasping for air.

An article ("The effect of obesity on lung function") on PubMed explains why: "The mechanical properties of the lungs and chest wall are altered significantly in obesity ... and likely contribute to the respiratory symptoms of obesity such as wheeze, dyspnea [shortness of breath], and orthopnea. The reduction in the respiratory system [occurs] because movement of

the ... diaphragm and the ... chest wall are restricted when fat accumulates within the thoracic and abdominal cavities."

As far as Covid is concerned, there are many known risk factors besides obesity. It has been found that male patients have almost three times the odds of going into ICU and higher odds of death compared to females. And according to the Office for National Statistics, around 73% of all Covid deaths have occurred among people aged 75 and over.

In the case of Covid-19, a few studies have started contrasting the outcomes for patients according to their BMI rating. One done in France found there was a higher ICU admission rate as patients' BMIs went up, but the death rates were almost the same for "normal", "overweight" and "obese". An unsurprising conclusion if it is visceral fat, which can affect people in all BMI bands, that is the enemy and not what band they're in.

Vicky Hutchings

Useful telephone numbers



Age UK Wandsworth 020 8877 8940

Alzheimer's Society 020 8687 0922

Citizens Advice Wandsworth
0300 330 1169

National Domestic Violence Helpline
0808 200 0247

Furzedown Project 020 8677 4283

Gas Emergency 0800 111 999

Katherine Low Settlement
020 7223 2845/6471

Men's Advice Line 0808 801 0327

National Dementia Support Line
0333 150 3456

NHS Urgent but Non-Emergency 111

Over-50s Alcohol Helpline
0808 801 0750.

Police Non-Emergency 101

Samaritans 116 123

Sil verline 0800 470 8090

Victim Support Wandsworth
020 7801 1777

Wandsworth Carers' Centre
020 8877 1200/020 8675 0811

Wandsworth Community Transport
020 8675 7460

Women & Girls Network
0808 801 0660

Wandsworth Hub is still here

If you/anyone you know needs support due to Covid and has no family or friends who can step in, call **020 8871 6555** Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm

Wandsworth Borough Council

- ◆ Switchboard **020 8871 6000**
- ◆ 24-hour Emergency **020 8871 7490**
- ◆ Council tax and housing benefit **020 8871 8081**
- ◆ Environmental services (noise & disturbance) **020 8871 6127**
- ◆ Adult social care **020 8871 7707**
- ◆ Housing **020 8871 6161**

Battersea Zoomers! And Computer Taster Sessions

At **Katherine Low Settlement**, Battersea Zoomers have been running Zoom socials since December and they are proving popular! It is as simple to **learn to Zoom** as it once was learning to work your TV. Using Zoom will enable you to join many social, exercise and activity groups and to see loved ones and friends. All you need is **access to Wifi at home** and a **smartphone, tablet or computer** (perhaps a family member has one you can use). Or phone the Elders Team at KLS to **register your interest** in learning more about Zoom and **basic IT skills**. It is available to **people aged 60+ living in Battersea**. Some of the skills can be taught with phone support, so **don't let the pandemic stop you making contact!**

Contact Kerry or Sarah on 020 7223 2845

Kerry: 07960 108103

kerry@klsettlement.org.uk or sarahg@klsettlement.org.uk





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WOPF Privacy Statement

We only use your data to send you the news letter or information about activities. We do not share your data with third parties. We hold your data securely.

Message to Forum members

Wandsworth Older People's Forum is hoping to have a proper AGM later this year as well as our usual members' meetings with speakers, hopefully when we're all vaccinated.

Meanwhile, we continue with our online monthly committee meetings on the first Tuesday of every month as well as speaking to authorities in their own online meetings. During the pandemic we have been inviting a speaker for the first half-hour of our meetings and anyone may attend. Let me know if you wish to listen to the speakers and a Zoom invitation link will be emailed to you in the week before the meeting. Our April speaker will take us on virtual tour of 575 Wandsworth Road and its intricate carvings fashioned by

Khadambi Asalache over 20 years that cover the walls and ceilings. Our May meeting will be a guided virtual tour of waste recycling by the Riverside Waste Authority.

New committee members wanted

We are always on the lookout for new committee members. We are all volunteers. The duties are attending our monthly committee meetings and the Forum members' meetings when they begin again. Most committee members also volunteer to attend one of the regular consultation meetings with authorities, all online just now, but not all do. Come along and see how we work and perhaps join us.

Lilias Gillies, Hon Sec

Membership Application/Renewal Form

If you would like to join or re-join the Wandsworth Older People's Forum, please complete the subscription form below and return with your payment of £5 (annual subscription for individuals or organisations) to: **Membership Secretary, Wandsworth Older People's Forum, FREEPOST, c/o WCEN, DRCA Business Centre, Charlotte Despard Avenue, London SW11 5HD.**

I wish to join/rejoin the Wandsworth Older People's Forum:

Name (individual or organisation)

Address

..... Postcode.....

Phone (Home).....

(Mob).....

Email.....

(This is important because, in future, because of funding, we may need to communicate with you by email, not post.)

♦ I enclose a £5 cheque/PO payable to: Wandsworth Older People's Forum

♦ I have made a payment of £5 into: the Wandsworth Older People's Forum account at **Lloyds Bank, Sort Code: 30-99-08, Account no: 22084368**
Please put your name as the reference or we won't know who sent it!

I might be interested in being a volunteer

I am a UK tax payer and would like my subs to be gift-aided

Signed Date\.....\.....



Removing the digital divide

The pandemic has brought home to everyone how many people, particularly the elderly who have been shielding or felt nervous about going out, have been cut off not only from seeing their family and friends, but from ordering their shopping, seeing a doctor, doing their banking – all because they have found themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide. Although the number of older people who are digitally connected continues to rise, according to the ONS in 2019 almost half the UK population of people at 75 and over (47%) had never used the internet. Age is still the biggest indicator of who is digitally excluded.

Battersea Zoomers!

Contact the **Katherine Low Settlement** about Zoom and computer taster sessions. See page 7 in the newsletter for details

In Wandsworth, a number of organisations funded by the council have been attempting to help ever greater numbers of older people feel comfortable with technology and get online. Sadly, our newsletter went to the printers too early to publicise all the information that we wanted to. On page 7 of the newsletter, you can read about the Katherine Low Settlement providing Zoom and basic IT sessions for older people in Battersea. Below, we feature the digital assistance on offer from two organisations that didn't make it into the newsletter.

Age UK Wandsworth can now support older residents to get online, whether in person or remotely



Friendly computer support for older people

Thanks to funding from Wandsworth Council, the **Digipals** service run by **Age UK Wandsworth** now has a number of devices (with paid-for 4G connectivity) to loan to older residents. The devices will be loaned for a period of 3 months and the Digipals team will be able to offer tutorials and assistance using secure remote support software.

Once restrictions are lifted, in-person sessions will recommence in local libraries, sheltered accommodation and Age UK Wandsworth's offices.

Emma Chisholm, Community and Wellbeing Lead at **Age UK Wandsworth**, said:

"The pandemic has highlighted just how important it is to be online and sadly how many older people are digitally excluded. Our Digipals sessions in local libraries were so popular and we were devastated to have to stop them just when older people needed us most. We are delighted to now have a means of addressing some of the main barriers to getting online, and also a way to support people we can't physically be with."

If you or someone you know of would **benefit from a loan device** and support from **Age UK Wandsworth's Digipals**, email: emma.chisholm@ageukwandsworth.org.uk or call **020 8877 8940**



CDARS is proud to announce this new digital programme funded by Wandsworth Council.

We seek to attract Wandsworth's residents, particularly older people who might find it difficult to engage with IT technology.

What Will I Learn? The course consists of 8 x 1 hour sessions delivered over Zoom.

Session 1 - Your tablet An introduction into how it works, its basic functions, terminology and how to get online independently.

Session 2 - Getting in touch Setting up an email address and sending emails.

Session 3 - Using Google

- How to search online, how to access websites.
- How to contact organisations online.
- How to access shopping online, eg, a weekly food shop.

Session 4 - Social Media An introduction to Facebook.

Session 5 - Social Media An introduction to Instagram.

Session 6 - Social Media An introduction to YouTube.

Session 7 - Exploring the App Store What is available that would be useful to you?

Session 8 - Music Downloading music, videos, magazine subscriptions and e-books.

The course is suitable for absolute beginners. You will be given an android tablet as part of the programme, which you can keep.

Please contact:

Tim Tweedy, CDARS Operational Manager, at: tim.tweedy@cdars.org.uk or phone: **07930 237056**