



Wandsworth Older People's Forum

NEWSLETTER NEW YEAR

Don't forget to fill in and return our questionnaire!



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Wandsworth Council Hub

If you or someone you know needs support and they don't have family or friends that can step in, call **020 8871 6555**
Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm, or email covid19support@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk for help and assistance.



We hope you had as happy a Christmas as you were able to under tier 4 rules and wish you, our dear members, a **Happy New Year**. And here's hoping, aided by the Covid vaccine, 2021 will be a little less extraordinary than 2020!

First Wandsworthians get Covid jab

Sir Ian McKellen (81) was "euphoric" after getting his Covid jab at Wandsworth's Queen Mary's hospital last month. The rest of us have not been quite that emotional.

Jane Heath (85), who lives near Wandsworth Common, was given her shot of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine at St George's hospital on 11 December and was "glad" to have had it. Jenny Fry (80), an ex-Wandsworth resident who had hers on 15 December, was "very pleased". Neither reported any serious reactions: Jane had a "slightly sore" arm and Jenny's arm "ached" a little, but both recovered quickly. They will return for their booster shots this month. Neither had any doubts about having it.

Before getting the jab, everyone must answer questions about their medical history, if they have known allergies or are on blood thinners. This shouldn't cause alarm and shows you are in safe hands.

Concerns about allergic reactions were raised on the first day of the Covid vaccine rollout in the UK when two health care workers had severe reactions. Both had a history of this and carried an EpiPen. Both recovered well.



Jenny (left) and Jane: vaccinated

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has now advised that people with a history of significant allergic reactions not be given the vaccine.

The question about blood thinners is simply because they prevent clotting, and this can lead to prolonged bleeding where people

Contd on page 2

Do you need to see a GP urgently?

A temporary GP primary care hub at Queen Mary's Hospital, in Roehampton, opened for local residents on 1 December and will provide up to 480 urgent and routine appointments each week. It will be open from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week. This is not a walk-in service and must be accessed via your own GP or by dialling 111 from a landline or mobile phone.

Patients with an urgent, but not life-threatening problem are also

being asked to dial 111 first if they think they might need to go to A&E.

This hub is in addition to the one already running at The Junction Health Centre in Battersea.

GP Access Hubs have been set up within Wandsworth to give patients better access to primary care services. Opening for longer hours means it's easier to get an appointment when it suits you or if there are no available appointments at your usual surgery. If the practice is closed, you can call 111 for more information about using the hubs and help booking an appointment.

Wandsworth streets never looked so *CHRISTMASSY!*

Every year someone comments on how Christmas comes around earlier and earlier. And, in that respect, 2020 was no exception. What was a little different was how Wandsworth's window boxes, gardens and facades were simply ablaze with Christmas lights as never before! As one newspaper described the rush to put up decorations in early November: "There was almost a festive sigh: well, there's not much else to do, is there?" Thus we spent our days – in lockdown, tiers 2, 3, and then 4 – cheering ourselves up by covering our houses in fairy lights! Night walks were like walking in fairyland.

Vicky Hutchings



Just a "staying-in-pyjamas" day

By the time you get this, it will be 2021 and we'll have done with Christmas in whatever way we did.



Talking to you about what your Christmas plans were, I was as usual knocked out at how philosophical you are. So many people said "It's only another day" or "Only another day . . . with a gravy dinner!". Many didn't want to travel to see family, preferring to wait till a golden time in the future when it will be safer and you can actually hug your grandchildren. Then London went into tier 4, and you had no choice but to stay home.

For those of us on our own anyway, we were looking forward to feeling no guilt about having a staying-in-pyjamas day, watching whatever we felt like on TV and eating strange things that don't

really go together. Quite a few said it would be a relief to watch the Queen's Speech without having to justify why you like it.

Some were keeping a particular jigsaw for the day and quizzes were popular – yet more examples of how resourceful you all are. Someone was saying they thought they would read more during lockdown and they haven't, but suddenly got back into it by what I call Comfort Reading – books you enjoyed as a child or a particular thriller writer.

As far as the vaccine goes, some of you will have had it already. There's been some trepidation but most people have welcomed it. If you like and trust your doctor it's probably a good idea to call them and get them to call you back so you can discuss it. The GPs are very keen for us to take it up. So there we are! 2021 rolls along and there is a silver lining and as my Great Auntie Ettie used to say, I wish you all you wish yourselves.

Su Elliott, Membership Secretary

Contd from page 1

cut their skin. However, the British Heart Foundation says the Covid jab poses even less of a bleeding risk than other types of jab.

One man was overheard by Jenny worrying whether the vaccine "had mercury in it". Mercury-based preservatives have been removed from most UK vaccines now, as a precaution, though they were used in the 2009-10 and 2010-11 flu seasons. No harmful effects have ever been linked with the minute levels used in vaccines. In any case, the Pfizer vaccine contains no mercury as an ingredient.

Clarification

With reference to an article in our October newsletter ("Forum can still provide help to Wandsworth elderly"), we wish to make clear the shortcomings reported to the Forum from residents of sheltered housing have been only from voluntary-sector landlords. The Forum has had no issues reported from the 23 council-run homes. We have taken up the issues around a shortfall in expected standards with the appropriate landlord(s).

High-tech help to keep Wandsworth's vulnerable residents connected

Since our last newsletter in October, Wandsworth Borough Council has announced that "in partnership with Alcove", the council is making Carephone tablets available to "vulnerable or clinically vulnerable people who receive a care or support package".

This allows video calls to be easily made by care workers and approved service providers as well as by family and friends.

According to London Councils, "Alcove is fundamentally disrupting the traditional telecare market by embracing the world of connected, widely available smart technologies to help providers cut costs and improve delivery of care while allowing people to remain independent in their homes for as long as possible."

Notwithstanding the Covid vaccine,

it is expected that tiers and local lockdowns will last until Easter, so it's timely that the council has stepped up its efforts to extend home monitoring and connectivity to the oldest and most vulnerable.



No technical expertise needed

The Video Carephones can be used by people with little or no technological expertise and will help reduce the risk of Covid transmission by allowing care workers to have personal contact with residents when face-to-face visits have to be dispensed with.

Wandsworth Council's cabinet member for health and social care, Cllr Clare Salier, said: "Some people struggle with new technology, so we have found a really easy-to-use way for them to remain connected and receive care."

"The system is designed to supplement regular face-to-face care visits – not replace them – and this will allow residents to receive care virtually for identified tasks. It has the added benefit of giving friends and family the ability to check in on their loved one and be reassured that everything is OK."

Vicky Hutchings

If you feel a Video Carephone would help a relative or friend in receipt of council care or a support package, please email: digitalsupport@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk for more information.



**Are you interested
in applying for
sheltered housing?**

We offer independent living in purpose-built apartments at schemes throughout Wandsworth.

If you are aged 55 or over and would like to find out more 020 8871 6840
www.wandsworth.gov.uk/shelteredhousing



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Automatic sensors and push-button alarms to help you remain living in your home.

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www.wandsworth.gov.uk/telecare

WD 907 (2.17)





60+ Oyster cards A battle to come?

In November, older Londoners celebrated the retention of the 60+ Oyster card, which allows people aged between 60 and pensionable age free travel on public transport in London. However, six months from that date, on 31 March, a new funding deal must be negotiated with Transport for London (TfL) – which may then be under more pressure to cut travel concessions. Age UK London and other bodies protesting against any curtailment of these worry that the real battle may have only just begun.

The Freedom Pass, which allows pensioners aged 65+ free travel, is not under the same threat as it is a benefit provided by the 33 borough councils and not TfL.

The campaign was started in June when free travel was temporarily suspended during morning peak hours for 60+ Oyster card holders, as it was for those with Freedom Passes, in order to help maintain social distancing among those going to work by public transport. However, it rapidly became evident, according to Age UK London's senior campaigns officer John McGeachy, from "behind-the-scenes updates" that "the scrapping altogether of the 60+ Oyster card [was a possibility].

This did not happen, though the suspension of the pre-9am travel concessions still remains in place – with some fearing this may not return. In addition, fares are set to increase on 1 March. The battle to protect travel concessions for older people once things start to get back to some form of normalcy – be it retaining the 60+ Oyster card or seeking the return of free travel before 9am – is gearing up.

New Year Sudoku. *Answers on back page*

	6			9		8	5
9	4			6			2
	8	1		4			3
6				1		8	
			3				
2		8					9
3			1		8	4	
8			6		5	7	
4	7		2		3		

Each of the nine blocks must contain the numbers 1-9 within its nine squares. Each number can only appear once in a row, column or box.

As McGeachy says: "Many people have to travel before 9am, not because they want to but because they have to . . . Those in work in their 60s are proportionally more likely to work part-time because of caring responsibilities or health conditions . . . [And] living in a city with some of the highest living costs in the world could mean having to pay as much as an additional £50 a week on fares and drive more into poverty."

jmcgeachy@ageuklondon.org.uk



Covid: mental health worsens in elderly

Research by Age UK in England and Wales over seven days reveals that 37 per cent of over-70s surveyed last autumn had not left home or had left only for exercise, basic needs or health reasons. Forty-five per cent were uncomfortable or very uncomfortable about leaving their house because of Covid.

Two-thirds of older people who rely on public transport were less confident using it, and the same lack of confidence applied to health appointments and shopping. Many were less physically healthy from being cooped up, and this could lead to more problems in the future.

London data

Data from Independent Age showed over half of older Londoners say their mental health has worsened. Many have suffered from a host of problems: poor diet, isolation, lack of mental stimulation, anxiety and in some cases onset of dementia. These became more acute with the second lockdown and tier restrictions set to last into 2021.

Does someone depend on you?

Do you look after someone at home who needs support because of illness or disability and cannot manage without help? The coronavirus pandemic has meant that more of us than ever before are now fitting this description. Estimates show that the number of people in Wandsworth providing unpaid care has increased by a third since March 2020.

Support for carers

The council and its partners are committed to supporting you in your caring role and have dedicated adult social care teams that can help you get the advice, guidance and support you need.

All carers are entitled to a **carer's assessment**. This is simply a brief conversation with you that will help you and your needs be better understood, for example what physical, emotional and practical impact caring has on your life and what support and information are

needed. Once you've had a carer's assessment you can register for a Carer's Emergency Card. If you would like a carer's assessment or more information please get in touch with the Adult Social Care team (see below for contact details) or alternatively, you can complete your assessment online at: www.wandsworth.gov.uk/carers-assessments

Planning for an emergency

As a carer is it important to plan for an emergency should something unexpected happen and you are not able to provide care.

The **Carer's Emergency Card Scheme** can help you. The aim of the scheme is to provide you with peace of mind by ensuring that, if an emergency happens that stops you from providing care, arrangements for alternative planned care can be put in place for at least 48 hours. The Carer's Emergency Card Scheme is recognised by local health and

emergency services. They will be able to put in place your contingency care plan in the event of an emergency.

To register for the scheme, you will need to have a carer's assessment and complete a contingency plan giving details of the person you look after and their needs, including details on any medication that you administer.

Harmeet Bhundia

For more information and support for carers, please go to: www.wandsworth.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/looking-after-someone

If you prefer to talk to someone at the Adult Social Care Team, please call on 020 8871 7707 or email accessteam@wandsworth.gov.uk

Wandsworth Carer' Centre can be contacted on 020 8877 1200 or, if you prefer, please email info@wandsworthcarers.org.uk for local services that can support you in your caring role.



Home
Instead
SENIOR CARE
to us, it's personal.

Wandsworth's "Outstanding" provider of Quality care in your own home



Inspected and rated
Outstanding 

Care Quality Commission

Dementia Friends
An Alzheimer's Society Initiative

London
age UK

Business
Directory

TOP 20
AWARD
2020
homeinstead.co.uk

SERVICES INCLUDE:

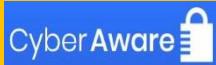
- Dementia care
- Live in Care
- Home help
- Companionship
- Personal care
- Overnight & 24 hour care
- Respite care

CALL US TODAY 0208 0225 238

email: wandsworth@homeinstead.co.uk
www.homeinstead.co.uk/wandsworth

National Cyber Security Centre

Advice on improve your cyber security this festive period



Due to coronavirus, more people are shopping online, especially during the festive period.

This means more opportunities for hackers to carry out cyber-attacks. They often do this by targeting people and businesses using:

Email and website scams

Malware – software that can damage your device or let a hacker in

If hackers get into your device or accounts, they could access your money, your personal information, or information about your business

You can improve your cyber security by taking action

- **Use a strong and separate password for your email**
- **Create strong passwords using 3 random words**
- **Turn on two-factor authentication – this is where a user has to verify at least one trusted phone number to enroll in 2FA (Apple iOS, Google Android and Windows 10 all have apps that support 2FA)**
- **Update your devices**
- **Back up your data**

www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberaware/home

Thought for New Year

Age is something that doesn't matter... unless you are a cheese.

Actress Billie Burke, who died in 1970 aged 86

The do's and don'ts of clear face masks



Last autumn, it was announced that around 250,000 clear face masks were to be delivered to frontline NHS and social care workers. Designed with an anti-fogging barrier, the Clear Mask will help staff deal with patients who find opaque masks a barrier to communication.

The problem is that there are an estimated 12 million people in the UK who suffer from hearing loss, eight million of whom are over-60, and that's not even counting those with learning disabilities, autism or dementia who could also benefit.

It is thought 6.7 million of those with hearing loss could profit from a hearing aid, but just about two million have one, with the rest using lip-reading to help get by. Around 900,000 are severely or profoundly deaf and rely solely on lip-reading or sign language.

Current exemptions for mask wearing in England include those speaking to or providing assistance to someone who relies on lip-reading or facial expressions to communicate. Which could amount to a lot of people not wearing masks.

A further problem is that the 250,000 clear face masks destined for the NHS had come from the US. There is no major UK manufacturer as yet. And while this mask can be ordered

Left, NHS-approved Clear Mask; right, French entrepreneurs Kelly Morellon (r) and mum Sylvie who sell their own clear face masks

direct from Clear Mask (see below), please note they're single-use and sold in bulk.

In the meantime, lots of small manufacturers have sprung up, in the UK and abroad, selling online. *Which?* magazine has now published some tips about what to look out for if you buy.

Anti-fogging is key

The majority of the feedback *Which?* received, said "clear masks were overall better for communicating than opaque masks". But the magazine went on to say the level of satisfaction was "heavily dependent on... how badly the mask fogged up and how comfortable it was to wear" as plastic panels can sometimes be too rigid.

Some masks use anti-fogging or moisture-repellent coatings or materials, but simple clear vinyl is more likely to fog up. Suggested solutions included washing-up liquid, shaving foam or specific anti-fogging sprays (eg, for motorbike helmets).

Vicky Hutchings

www.theclearmask.com
www.which.co.uk/news/2020/12/clear-face-masks-what-to-know-before-you-buy/ - *Which?*

Reporting back from the Forum

Although the Forum has not been able to host its usual monthly members' meetings since February, we have continued with meetings of the Forum's management committee on Zoom to which speakers have been invited.

At the October meeting, Sanita Ellis and Jane Eastaway spoke about the **Wandsworth Drug & Alcohol Service**. Sanita said her job working with Richmond and Wandsworth councils was to commission services for people with drug and alcohol addictions in the two boroughs. The service is run by a consortium of charities, St Mungo, We Are With You and South London & Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. Clinics are held in Battersea and Tooting, and in a number of GP surgeries. People come when they have a problem, sometimes with a friend or relative, usually having been referred by a GP, but self-referral is allowed. During the Covid pandemic, most services have been online or by telephone.

The service has links with research through Professor Colin Drummond, formerly in St George's and now at King's College, and Professor John Strang, also of King's. Some people have to go into hospital for a medically supervised detox or into a residential setting after detox, which will be arranged. Staff work with people to help get them involved and avoid the boredom or isolation that has led to their problems with alcohol or drugs. There are greater risks for people being lonely and isolated during Covid. Staff work closely with the Carers' Centre.

During questions, Tony Tuck asked if there were many over-65s among their clients. The largest age cohort was aged 35-45, but the over-65s were represented, the over-80s being very small.

The November meeting welcomed Lorrie Beasant from the

Alzheimer's Society in Wandsworth. When people have received a diagnosis of dementia, Lorrie makes contact, gives them information and advice, eg, about power of attorney and wills, and tells them about the services available in the borough to help them to stay active and independent as long as possible. People generally don't know what is available but find there is much more than they thought.

In answer to questions, she said Alzheimer's Society has online groups for activities, sedentary or movement, and music. There are also volunteers who can phone regularly each week, especially for people who cannot join online. Singing for the Brain face-to-face meetings cannot happen at present, but there are volunteers who will help people with singing together on the telephone. Home visits are possible if it is felt necessary and after risk assessment. The phone line to the office (see right) is answered. She said if people are worried they should ask their GP who can refer them to the memory clinic for an assessment. There are various tests that people can do themselves and there is information online and in leaflets. Su Elliott said a friend had visited the memory clinic recently and had reported that the person who interviewed her was sympathetic and very empathetic and she had enjoyed the visit.

Naomi Good from **NHS Wandsworth**, alongside Shaneez Dhanjee, a pharmacist colleague, came to speak at the December meeting about staying well over winter and the flu immunisation programme in the the borough. Both stressed how important it was that older people had the flu jab. Possibly due to Covid, 20 per cent more were getting vaccinated against flu than last year, they said.

Lilias Gillies, Hon Sec

Useful telephone numbers



Age UK Wandsworth 020 8877 8940

Alzheimer's Society 020 8687 0922

Citizens Advice Wandsworth

0300 330 1169

Katherine Low Settlement

020 7223 2845/6471

National Dementia Contact Support Line

0333 150 3456 (7 days a week)

National Domestic Violence Helpline

0808 200 0247

Samaritans 116 123

Silverline 0800 470 8090

Wandsworth Carers' Centre

020 8877 1200/020 8675 0811

Wandsworth Community Transport

020 8675 7460

Wandsworth Borough Council

- Wandsworth Hub **020 8871 6555**
- Main switchboard **020 8871 6000**
- 24-hour Emergency line **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**

Get a brain workout...

And support people living with dementia. *Brain Workout* is the **Alzheimer's Society** puzzling puzzles subscription. For a monthly donation, you get sent a varied pack of puzzles every month. Call **0330 333 0804** or email enquiries@alzheimers.org.uk

H		I	G	T
E		I	T	R
S		E	E	S
C		N	O	Y
G		A	V	L
A		M	I	E

Put letters into the grid to make six words reading across. The name of an artist will then be spelt reading down the yellow squares!

Answer on p8



Registered charity
No 1096322

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We're on the Web
<https://www.wopf.org.uk/>

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WOPF Privacy Statement
We only use your data to send you the newsletter 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 in the summer, as well as having our usual members' meetings with speakers, hopefully when we are all vaccinated.

Meanwhile, we are continuing with our monthly committee meetings online (on the first Tuesday of each month, except for January when it will be on Tuesday 19 January) and speaking to authorities in their own online meetings. During the pandemic we have been inviting a speaker for the first half-hour 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 January speaker is Charlotte Blayney from Wandsworth Adult Social Services.

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

7	6	2	3	1	9	4	8	5
9	4	3	5	8	6	7	1	2
5	8	1	7	2	4	6	9	3
6	3	4	9	7	5	1	2	8
1	9	7	8	3	2	5	6	4
2	5	8	4	6	1	3	7	9
3	2	5	1	9	7	8	4	6
8	1	9	6	4	3	2	5	7
4	7	6	2	5	8	9	3	1

The answers to our Page 4 New Year Sudoku puzzle

And the name hidden in the Alzheimer's Society puzzle on page 7 was the American artist Edward Hopper

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 organizations) 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 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 might be interested in being a volunteer

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

Signed Date \ \