



Wandsworth Older People's Forum

NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2024

Future WOPF events, p4



In this issue

- 1 Winter fuel payments; falls prevention classes
- 2 Forum meetings you may have missed
- 3 Being Fred; plus Useful tel nos
- 4 Join WOPF/Future speakers

WOPF November Conference

The Wandsworth Older People's Forum conference will take place on Tuesday, 12 November at the Anchor Church Hall at 273 Garratt Lane. Open from 1.45pm onwards and finishing at 5pm. There will be the usual exciting speakers, including Simon Hogg, Leader of the Council, and a notice will be appearing on the website soon. Members will receive further details nearer the time. Tea & refreshments will be provided.



Fancy a (cheap) cuppa?

In a blind-tasting, *Which?* got 79 tea drinkers to rate 12 tea bags from supermarket own-brands to big-brand PG Tips, Twinings, Tetley and Yorkshire Tea. And the result? Asda took the top spot – and it's at least half the price per cup of the big-brand options. An Asda tea bag costs 2p as against 4p for Yorkshire Tea and 6p for Twinings. **As the saying goes, it has to be Asda!**

To heat or to eat, that may be the question

This winter, as energy prices continue to soar, only 1.4 million pensioner households will be eligible for the winter fuel payment, down from the 11.6 million who received it last year. Looking for savings, Chancellor Rachel Reeves decided that only the poorest pensioners receiving Pension Credit can get it. Means-testing the payment this way will save £1.4bn.

Age UK's estimate is that there are as many as two million pensioners who really rely on the winter fuel payment (WFP) who won't receive it under the new rules – while well-off older people at the other end of the spectrum will hardly notice that it's gone – which is "a social injustice". There is clearly a case for targeting WFPs at poorer pensioners, but why has Reeves made such a hash of it, with "mean" and "stupid" being just two responses to these cuts to the WFP.

The two million are mainly made up of pensioners who are just over the Pension Credit threshold plus a further 880,000 who don't claim it, not realising they are eligible. These are people, says Age UK's Caroline Abrahams, who may well find



Reeves vs Abrahams



themselves in "a horrible eating or heating dilemma this winter".

With 880,000 eligible households not claiming Pension Credit – worth on average £2,677 a year – this means an underpayment of about £2.3bn, even before taking into account the other benefits that being on Pension Credit unlocks. Saving the full £1.4bn thus rests on these eligible pensioners continuing to NOT claim what they're entitled to. The recently reported surge in claims for Pension Credit makes that now seem unlikely.

So what next? Age UK's petition to save the WFP for all "struggling" pensioners isn't far off its 650,000 target. A motion to reverse the WFP cuts was passed at Labour conference – embarrassing to the leadership but not causing a U-turn. However, it may spur Reeves on to announce an alternative plan in the Budget. Meanwhile, please do claim your Pension Credit if you're entitled to it before **21 December**. If you need help with this, call Wandsworth Age UK or Citizens Advice (see our useful nos on p3). VH



Strictly no falling!

Wednesdays 11.00am - 12.00pm, Roehampton Sports & Fitness Centre, SW15 4JB

Thursdays 1.15pm - 2.15pm, Putney Leisure Centre, SW15 1BL

Fridays 1.15pm - 2pm, Balham Leisure Centre, SW17 8AN

Falls prevention classes at Places Leisure centres in Wandsworth are helping older adults maintain their independence. Led by experienced instructors, the programmes are designed to improve balance, stability, co-ordination, flexibility and help you regain your confidence: www.placesleisure.org/contact-us/#site

The first speakers at the July meeting were **Helen Liley**, Head of Volunteering, and **Samreen Mulji**, a Volunteering and Early Years Administrator, from Learn 2 Love 2 Read, a charity that has been operating in Wandsworth since 2014 supporting children who find reading challenging or are starting school badly prepared for learning to read. In Wandsworth, 27% of key stage 1 and 25% of key stage 2 children did not reach the expected standard when tested in summer 2023. And the pandemic had a huge impact on children's fluency and confidence in reading. They have about 70 volunteers spread out across eight primary



schools and will take on men and women of all ages who are kind, enthusiastic and able to read English. Those volunteering will start with a training session, and police checks will be made. To volunteer, go to: www.learn2love2read.org.uk/pages/4-volunteer

Next to speak was **Ranjeet Sohal**, a senior officer from Trading Standards Service, part of The Regulatory Services Partnership serving Merton, Richmond & Wandsworth Councils. Their motto is "Safe Not Scammed". He started with the scary numbers: 73% of UK adults – or 40 million people – have been approached by scammers, with 35% – or 19 million – being scammed and losing money. Yet fewer than a third actually report the crime.

He then listed some of the more common scams, including pension scams. Now that people over 55 can reinvest their pensions anywhere they want, the scammers are targeting them. His advice: before you start moving your money, carefully check that who you are dealing with is registered with the Financial Conduct Authority. Rajeev also brought literature on bereavement scams which target vulnerable people who have recently lost a loved one.

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For Further Information Contact:

Home Instead

020 8022 5240

enquiries@hiscwandsworth.co.uk

homeinstead.co.uk/wandsworth-lambeth

Tom Segurola from Citizens Advice Wandsworth was our speaker at the September meeting. Tom is Deputy CEO of CAW, and has been there for 12 years overall. He said while 98% cent of people in the UK are "aware of our service, only 46% think we are a charity". CAW employs 45 staff and 75 volunteers, has a diverse workforce, and they are funded from many sources. Anti-poverty is the main thrust these days, although help can only be offered to 1 in 5 applicants, so CAW work with other related organisations.

There are three key issues for older people: 1) Pension Credit and winter fuel payments, 2) Attendance Allowance, and 3) Social Isolation where CAW they aim to connect socially isolated people to available services.

Billions are left unclaimed by those people affected by the first two issues. It is worth using the Pension Credit Calculator on www.gov.uk to see if you qualify for Pension Credit.

Charles Runcie & Vicky Hutchings

Regrets? None!

There I was, chatting to the Assistant Manager in the Oxfam Bookshop on Balham High Road, and an innocent question about volunteers led to: "Why don't you join us?"

I left, pondering on this; for some time I'd been thinking about widening my social contacts in the area as my activities are very much Balham based.

Why not? – it's local – I'd meet new people from the team and customers that I knew – human contact being so important for us old 'uns. So I signed up as a volunteer. And have been sorting and shelving fiction for about a year now.



Fred hard at work among the books

It's enjoyable and there's plenty of opportunity to learn new skills, eg, on the till – the books are already priced, so I just take the money.

I'm glad I volunteered and I love the weekly contact with friendly people. Regrets? None! And I'd recommend volunteering as a way of improving life and having fun.

Fred Roberts

To volunteer, go online (oxfam.org.uk) or drop in at your nearest shop

My name is Deaba

...and I am over 60 years old. I enjoyed the Disco Era and did a lot of clubbing then ... and ageing hasn't diminished my passion for dancing. But I realised there weren't many places people like me could let their hair down and dance. Going to regular nightclubs, I have felt uneasy and sometimes shy – and it is not the same. Talking to older people I realised there were many like myself, wanting to dance, and I decided to create an environment that is spacious, provides seating for individuals to catch their breath in between dancing, and is an opportunity to meet and socialise with like minds.

I decided to start a Disco Dance Club for people like me to enjoy dancing again, in the comfort of a regular

venue, to the original disco music from the 60s, 70s, 80s and 90s. In November 2021 we decided to take the bull by the horns and the Disco Dance Club was born, officially opened by then councillor Jane Cooper, a former Mayor of Wandsworth.

Events are on the third Saturday of every month at Devas Club, 2a Stomont Road, SW11 5EN from 8pm 'til midnight. For tickets, go to: <https://discodanceclub.co.uk/>



Fit, Active, Involved & Interested

Age UK Wandsworth offers a range of activities at the Gwynneth Morgan Day Centre, including coffee mornings for older people, Silver Strollers, gentle chair yoga, and LGBTQ+ coffee mornings. We're always looking to welcome new faces. For more info on times, dates and class prices, or to book your place in

advance, call Reception on 020 8877 8947 or email info@ageukwandsworth.org.uk Address 52 East Hill, SW18 2HJ.

Furzedown Project is open every weekday for a range of activities for the over-50s from yoga to bingo to bridge to singing and includes LGBTQ+ coffee mornings. 91-93 Moyser Road, SW16 6SJ. Call 020 8677 4283 for info on membership & classes.

KLS offers a meeting place, advice, support, exercise and lots of new activities as part of its Age Well programme (including the LGBTQ 50+ Club, Men 60+ Club, Photo Walks and more) for older people in Battersea. Tel 020 7223 2845/6471 for more info about what's on offer.

Our full Fit, Active... section can be found on our website when space constraints occur here, see: www.wopf.org.uk/

Useful telephone numbers



Action Fraud 0300 123 2040

Age UK Wandsworth (AUW)
020 8877 8940

AUW Handyperson Service for older people 020 8877 8949

Alzheimer's Society
020 8687 0922

Citizens Advice Wandsworth
0300 330 1169

Elays Advice & Advocacy
020 7720 6864

Gas Emergency 0800 111 999

Mushkil Aasaan 020 8672 6581
National Dementia Support Line
0333 150 3456

National Domestic Violence Helpline 0808 200 0247

Opening Doors London support services for LGBTQ+ over-50s 0207 183 6260

Over-50s Alcohol Helpline
0808 801 0750

Relatives & Residents Association Helpline
020 7359 8136 (care homes)

Rethink Advocacy
0300 790 0559

Silverline 0800 470 8090

Victim Support Wandsworth
020 7801 1777

Wandsworth Carers' Centre
020 8877 1200/020 8675 0811

Wandsworth Community Transport 020 8675 7460

Wandsworth Council

• Cost of Living Hub
0808 175 3339 (free)
Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm

• Switchboard **020 8871 6000**
• 24-hour emergency helpline
020 8871 7490
• Parking & Streets/Inc pavements **020 8871 8871**
• Noise **020 8871 6127**
• Adult soc care **020 8871 7707**
• Housing **020 8871 6161**

Wandsworth Wellbeing Hub (NHS)
020 3880 0308



**Registered charity
No 1096322**

Correspondence

Wandsworth Older People's Forum, FREEPOST, c/o WCEN, DRCA Business Centre, Charlotte Despard Avenue, SW11 5HD

Newsletter

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Membership

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

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Affiliated to
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WOPF Management Committee

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Mo Smith Treasurer
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WOPF Privacy Statement

We only use your data to send you the newsletter or info about activities. We do not share your data with third parties and hold your data securely.

**VOLUNTEERS
WANTED**



Wandsworth Welcomes Refugees is looking for local volunteers who want to help make Wandsworth a welcoming place for refugees and asylum-seekers. The role can be tailored to suit the volunteer's interests, time constraints and circumstances. We support local organisations (schools, cafes, libraries, gardens) to apply for Sanctuary status and are working with Wandsworth Council after their recognition as a Borough of Sanctuary. Go to: www.wandsworthwelcomesrefugees.org/get-involved/volunteer

**WOPF at the
Battersea
Community
Festival**

... which took place on 7 September.

Top, WOPF Chair Wendy Speck poses with Marsha De Cordova MP for Battersea and Sana Jafri, the Mayor of Wandsworth, at the start of the parade. Below, WOPF's Su Elliott joins the group in front of the Forum's stall



Price rise

Forum members please note: it is with regret that we have to announce that in January the price of membership will be going up for the first time in over 20 years to £10 per annum.

Forthcoming meetings of the Forum

Tuesday 8 October

The speaker will be Claire Hitchcock from Wandsworth Welcomes Refugees

Tuesday 12 November

❖ Forum conference ❖

From 1.45pm to 5.00pm with speakers and refreshments. Look out for updates on our website

Tuesday 10 December

Christmas party with music, food and fun!

Meetings held at 2pm at Anchor Church Centre, 273 Garratt Lane, SW18 4DU (buses 44 or 270)

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).....

(mobile)..... Email.....

(This is important as, 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 (NB: the price increases to £10 from 1 January 2025)

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

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