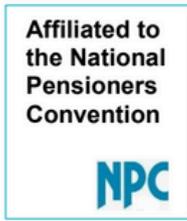




WANDSWORTH OLDER PEOPLE'S FORUM NEWSLETTER



WWW.WOPF.ORG.UK



WOPF INFORMATION

Registered charity: No 1096322

Correspondence: Wandsworth

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Business Centre, Charlotte
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Tony Tuck **Vice-Chair**

Dawn Killeen **Hon Secretary**

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Council leader Simon Hogg (left) and WOPF Chair Syeda Islam (centre) in conversation with a delegate.

WOPF Conference 2025: Accessible Transport for All

On 14 October 2025, St Peter's Church in Battersea was alive with energy as more than 100 residents, community organisations, and transport professionals gathered for the Wandsworth Older People's Forum (WOPF) annual conference. The theme, "Improving Accessible Transport for All", captured the spirit of the day: ensuring that every journey is safe, inclusive, and empowering for older and disabled residents.

The event was supported by the Mayor of Wandsworth and Council Leader Cllr. Simon Hogg, alongside representatives from Age UK, Transport for London (TfL), Wandsworth Council, London TravelWatch, and Wandsworth Community Transport. Together, they joined local people in tackling urgent issues such as step-free access, bus reliability, pavement safety, and the future of the Freedom Pass.

Mayor Jeremy Ambache praised the Forum's role in championing older residents, remarking, "I just wanted to reminisce a bit about the forum. It provides a vital service making sure all of us pensioners have a strong and hopefully influential voice. If it didn't exist, we'd need to invent it" His words reflected the value placed on WOPF as a vital voice for the community. Council Leader Simon Hogg echoed this commitment, saying, "We do listen to Syeda, we do listen to Wandsworth Older People's Forum" Together, their remarks underlined the importance of the Forum in shaping local policy and ensuring that older residents are heard.

Speakers from **Age UK Wandsworth and Age UK London** shared inspiring campaigns on age-friendly transport, while TfL and Council officers explained practical services such as Dial-a-Ride, Taxi Card, and Blue Badge schemes. Wandsworth Community Transport delighted attendees with stories of their shopping shuttles and day trips, which bring friendship and independence to so many.

Delegates spoke openly about the everyday barriers they face when travelling around Wandsworth and London. Concerns included the lack of step-free access at stations, uneven pavements, poor lighting and signage, and the absence of seating or shelter at bus stops. Reliability of services such as Dial-a-Ride and Taxi Card was also raised, alongside worries about e-bikes and scooters on pavements. Attendees highlighted the need for clearer information, more toilets across the transport network, and better wheelchair access on buses. These honest contributions gave the conference its strength, ensuring that the working group will be guided by the real experiences of older and disabled residents.

I stand by what I said at the conference: transport is about more than getting from A to B – it is about independence, connection, and belonging. The conference showed that when residents, councils, and transport providers come together, change is possible. WOPF will now put together a dedicated working group to address the issues and concerns raised by residents and transport users, ensuring that practical solutions are developed and followed through.

Syeda Islam MBE



Over 100 members came to engage with the conference.



A delicious lunch, and music too, for the audience and speakers to enjoy.

Forthcoming Meetings

Tuesday 13th January 2026

General Meeting Keeping Warm, Well, and Income maximisation during the winter with Crew Energy, Thames Water and Wandsworth Borough Council speakers on Income Maximisation

Tuesday 10 February 2026

Using your NHS & Health Services

Including how to use NHS apps, Pharmacy, McMillan, Power to Connect, Patient Participation Group, Healthwatch, Mental Health Wellbeing

Tuesday 10 March

Spring Into Action 1 - Keeping active in Nature

Physiotherapist, Parks and Recreation

Venue: **Anchor Centre, 273 Garratt Lane, SW18 4DU.**

BATTERSEA COMMUNITY FESTIVAL

This annual celebration of Battersea took place on the afternoon of Saturday 6th September in Shillington Park, WOPF's own Joe Stuart led the parade around the festival grounds, welcoming festival goers from the stage. As usual, we ran a stall, where interested people could chat to our Chair, Syeda Islam, Joe himself, committee members Bharti Kotecha and Vicky Hutchings, as well as Hermione, Sandra and Joanna, volunteers from the wider Forum.



Pictured Joe above



WOPF stall pictured above

From the chair



As we come to the end of the year, I want to thank our members and our new committee for the support and enthusiasm you've shown since I took on the role of Chair October 2024. We have achieved a great deal together, and I'm grateful for all the encouragement along the way.

This issue of the newsletter is an interim one while we reflect on the layout, content and direction of the publication going forward. We want to ensure it continues to serve our members well and reflects the Forum's growing activity.

It has been a full and productive year. Our annual conference was a major success, with excellent speakers, **over 100 attendees and highly engaged delegates**. Together we identified key concerns and agreed action points that we will continue to work on in the coming months. This year's focus on transport proved particularly valuable, **reflecting the issues many of our members had raised with us**.

We have also held a series of well-attended forum meetings on topics that matter to our members, including staying warm and safe at home, and health and wellbeing. Simon Hogg, Leader of the Council **"Its a hugely influential organisation that does a huge amount of good and I want to re-assure you that we listen to you at the Council"** Our summer get-together offered a welcome chance to connect socially.

On 11 November, I was honoured to lay a wreath on behalf of WOPF at the Remembrance Day service in Battersea Park, an occasion that was deeply meaningful for our community.



It was also a pleasure to meet many of you at the Brighter Living Fair on 13 November at Battersea Arts Centre, organised by the Council and Age UK Wandsworth. It was a very good day, and lovely to see members who stopped by our stand. In September we were delighted to take part in the Battersea Festival as well.

I would like to extend my thanks to three committee members who stepped down in the last year — Vicky Hutchings, Fred Roberts and Mo Smith. We are grateful for their hard work and long-standing contribution to the organisation, and we wish them all the very best in the next chapter of their lives.

My thanks also go to Wandsworth Council for their support throughout the year, including guidance and assistance with our meetings and activities.

We look forward to our **Christmas Party** on 9 December at the Anchor Centre — a chance to relax and enjoy some festive cheer together.

Wishing you all a warm and joyful festive season, and a very happy New Year.

SYEDA ISLAM MBE

Preparing for Winter

ADVICE FROM BY 50PLUSMAGAZINE ARTICLE
WWW.50PLUSMAGAZINE.CO.UK

While we really don't want to think about the colder, darker months ahead in Winter this Autumn really is the right time to make practical plans. We all know that, even in a mild Winter, there are going to be cold temperatures and strong winds and our homes have to cope with all the damp conditions this season means.

Alongside increasing fuel costs for the average household, though, is also the fact that professionals are called out far more to emergency repairs on boilers that won't work and gutters blocked with leaves.

Simple checks can prevent costly repairs and keep your home warm and safe. Give your boiler a full annual service, bleed radiators and book a qualified engineer early if you notice issues. Ensure pipes and your water tank are properly insulated to stop heat loss and reduce bills. Loft insulation is a worthwhile investment that keeps heat in during the colder months.

Check your roof, gutters and downpipes for cracked tiles, slipped slates, leaf build-up and debris, as these can cause leaks, damp and damage – especially when frozen. Clear blockages and arrange repairs early, as roofers get busy in Winter.

Outside, secure fences, gates, sheds and garden structures against high winds. Clear moss and leaves from paths and drains to prevent slips and improve drainage. Inspect doors and windows for gaps and draughts; replace worn seals, use sealant, consider secondary glazing and fit draught excluders. Thicker winter curtains and door curtains help retain warmth, while rugs add insulation to hard floors.

Use heating timers to warm the home before you wake or return, rather than turning the thermostat up suddenly. Avoid leaving heating on all day unnecessarily.

Test all smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, replacing batteries as needed. As increased heating affects ventilation, ensure extractor fans are clean, working properly and that external vents are unblocked to prevent damp, mould and poor indoor air quality.

Small changes help with comfort too – move sofas away from radiators, keep curtains and drying clothes clear of heat sources, and use throws during colder evenings.

Plan ahead by stocking up on grit, de-icer, torches, batteries and charged power banks in case of bad weather or power cuts. Keep a small emergency kit in an easy-to-find place. Fill your food cupboard and freezer with soups, tinned goods and frozen essentials so you're prepared if travel becomes difficult.

STAY SAFE IN COLD WEATHER

Advice from Wandsworth Council

Get your home ready for winter
Keep your home warm and free from damp and mould

Wandsworth Council

- Heat rooms you spend the most time in to at least 18°C.
- Reduce draughts by closing curtains and using draught excluders.
- Don't let your home get cold, but do open windows regularly to prevent damp and mould.
- Reduce condensation. Wipe down windows, cook with lids on pans and use extractor fans.
- Make sure appliances are safe and working well. (Checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer)
- Install a carbon monoxide alarm* and test it regularly. *certified to BS Kitemark or EN 50291

Get support with energy bills – call SWLEAP on 0800 086 2706.

Scan the QR code for more information on local winter support and services, from financial help to practical guidance.

Finding my inner swan

My body was creaking. My mind was gripped by gloom. I was all of 76 years old, and something had to be done. Exercise seemed a good place to start, but fitness workshops didn't appeal. Prancing amid a bunch of leotarded grannies to thudding music would only highlight my deficiencies. A friend offered a suggestion: ballet classes. Perhaps, I mused, here was a kind of exercise that might admit both elegance and dignity. According to Google, ballet can transform old folks' strength, agility, balance, co-ordination and posture, not to speak of its impact on memory, confidence and well-being. Getting stuck in wasn't a problem. Plenty of courses are available, many licensed as elderly-friendly through a programme called Silver Swans, run by the Battersea-headquartered Royal Academy of Dance.

The procedure was a warm-up march around the room, followed by concentration on a wide range of moves at the barre, then sorties into a few choreographed routines. Our teacher was impressively skilled, yet endlessly patient. It was a shock at first. The idea that my aged body should ape the footwork of my Sadler's Wells idols seemed embarrassing for about a minute and a half. Thereafter I was struck by the impression that I'd become a different person. It didn't matter that I was slow to grasp each move or had difficulty remembering it. Somehow I'd been released from the prison of old-age movement and mindset. An ugly duckling had indeed uncovered the soul of a swan and was taking flight. I didn't get good at ballet. I didn't need to. Instead, I managed to reconnect with a sense of grace, fluency and joy I had not known for years. The moment the music started, I felt lighter and more flexible. My spine stiffened, but my aches and pains gave way to a long-forgotten sense of serenity. After class, of course, the old problems returned, but not quite in the same way. Some how their burden had lightened.

Thank you, ballet.

Jill Chisholm

To find your nearest Silver Swans class, go to: royalacademyofdanceorg/dance-classes/



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- Home Help
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Get in touch today

Call **020 8871 0006**

Email **enquiries@hiscwandsworth.co.uk**

Visit our website **homeinstead.co.uk/wandsworth-lambeth**



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Obituary - Jasmin Elvie, 1929-2024

Jasmin Elvie moved to London from Jamaica in the 1950s to join her husband. She worked hard and eventually trained as a nurse, working in our local hospitals. She had six children and adopted another child. The family lived in Balham, where she became known as the “mother of Balham” because the local children would join her own children for a helping of her “Saturday Soup”.

Pictured below Jasmin Elvie



She, later supported by her second husband, continued helping in the community for the rest of her life. Jasmin joined the Wandsworth Older People’s Forum in 2012 and later became a member of the Committee. She helped in whatever way she could and enjoyed meeting other people. She was also Vice Chair of the Residents Association at Catherine Baird Court Sheltered Housing Scheme.

A very important part of the community, she helped to arrange outings and was part of the Craft Group. Tragedy struck the family on 3 May 1995 when Brian Douglas, Jasmin’s son, was arrested by Kennington Police and hit on the head. He died on 8 May as a result. Jasmin gave a speech to the angry crowd gathered outside the police station. She calmed them down, saying she wanted Brian to be remembered peacefully.

At the inquest, eye-witnesses alleged that Brian was hit as he walked backwards from a police officer, with his hands empty and not posing any threat. Hundreds attended his funeral without any trouble. Brian Douglas’s death was nevertheless officially given as a result of “misadventure”.

The family continued to try and get justice for Brian. Jasmin’s ashes are interred with Brian’s. Valerie Hambelton See the Tribute to Jasmin Elvie at jasminelvie.muchloved.com/

Lavender Bridge Club meets at York Gardens Library Hall for tea/coffee, cakes and bridge every Wed and Fri. Call Andrew on 07940 354203 or email: andrewstimson@yahoo.com

Tooting Graveney Day Centre
Activities, exercise classes and lunch for older people, from 11-3pm, Mon & Thurs at 14-16 Lynwood Rd, SW17 8SA. Tel 020 3602 8251 for prices.

Sunflower Dementia Cafe Mount Court, 16 Weimar St, SW15 1SJ. First Saturday of the month, 2.30-3.30pm. Carers with/without the person they support can meet to find support and make friends over tea.

60+ Cafe A warm and friendly cafe for the over-60s held in Roehampton Methodist Church, Minstead Gdns, SW15 4EB. Activities & food. Thurs, 11-4. Tel 020 8487 8285 or email: admin@roehamptonmethodist.org.uk

Involved and Interested

Heart & Lungs Singing Group is a free, welcoming community choir based in All Saint’s Church, Brudenell Road, SW17 8DQ and open to anyone living with a lung or heart condition. Through music, breath-work and connection, we sing together, support each other, and have a lot of fun along the way! Fortnightly Thursday, 2-3.15pm, email kimhandlsg@gmail.com

Hestia Activity Centre for older adults from 10-4 every weekday exc Thursday. A range of social activities at 966 Garratt Lane, SW17 0ND inc tai chi, chair dance, choir, art, bingo and IT at low cost. For info and to book, call 020 8767 8426. Hestia also now runs an Age Well programme of activities for the over-55s in Roehampton, inc seated yoga, art and craft, quiz, lunch club and more. All welcome.

For info email **Rita Wing Hung** on kawing.hung@hestia.org

Iris Dementia Cafe St Luke’s Church, 194 Ramsden Road, SW12 8RQ. Third Saturday of the month, from 2-4.30pm. For carers and the person they care for to socialise with others affected by dementia and take part in activities over refreshments.

Katherine Low Settlement offers a meeting place, support, exercise and lots of activities as part of its Age Well and Core programme (including Table Tennis Club, Lunch Clubs, Craft Sessions and more) for people 60+ in Battersea. Tel 020 7223 2845 for more info about what’s on offer or email: elders@klsettlement.org.uk

Walk Wandsworth. For free walks around the borough’s green spaces, go to enablelc.org/walkwandsworth and click on Register online for a walk <https://forms.office.com/e/mzn05WLe8R>

Monday Club 2-3.30 on Mondays at St Barnabas Church, 146 Lavenham Road, SW18 5EP. Opportunity for over-50s to share refreshments and entertainment. Nominal charge. Call **Margaret** on 020 8870 5364.

Involved and Interested

Open House for Seniors. A weekly social group for older people. Refreshments, activities, trips. Every Monday, 10.30-12pm in Ackroydon Hall, Montfort Place, SW19 6QL.

For more info, call **020 8877 8940** or email info@ackroydonhall.com

Wandsworth U3A (University of the Third Age) was founded in 2002 and currently has over 400 members. We are a welcoming group and hold a monthly meeting, normally with a guest speaker, on the third Monday of the month in Burridge Gardens Community Centre, SW11 1AY. Meetings are 2.15-4pm, cost £1.00. We currently have over 50 interest groups. To find out more, go to wandsworth.u3a.org.uk/?s=groups

Singing for the Brain Run by the Alzheimer's Society in Wandsworth Libraries. Battersea Park Library: Tuesdays, 3-4pm (tel: 020 7720 4122); Putney Library: Wednesdays, 3-4pm (tel: **020 8780 3085**).

WOFA (Wandsworth Over-50s Activities) For £10 a year you get 4 programmes of up to 30 outings each, prices vary. Events range from free walks, museum and art gallery visits, meals out, minibus trips, concerts, socials and even holidays. We are not on the internet, but a call to 07958 440808 will ensure you are posted a membership pack. Or write to: WOFA, Training and Resource Centre, Alma Road, SW18 1AQ.

Wandsworth Asian Women's Association offers a lunch club Tuesday and Wednesday for older women who want to meet up socially or seek advice. Talks given. Exercise & English classes. Call 020 8875 9465 for further info on classes.

Roehampton Community Shed is run by Age UK. Weekly group where men (or women) over 60 can meet and work on practical projects such as furniture upcycling while enjoying tea and a chat. Every Weds 11-3pm. Portswood Place, SW15 4ED. **020 8877 8940.**

Regenerate-RISE open-access day centre in Putney provides lunches, activities including exercise classes, health and wellbeing topics, bingo and entertainment, plus an outreach programme. Tel 020 8780 9330 for more information.

Places Leisure runs activities for older adults across the borough that include line-dancing, falls prevention classes, Forever Active wellness classes and more. Search for "Older Adults Activities in Wandsworth" at www.placeleisure.org where you can find the activities held at every centre.

Sparkle Earlsfield: Weds 10.30-14.00, St John the Divine Church, Garratt Lane, SW18 4EH. Sparkle East Putney: Tues & Thurs 10.30-14.00, St Stephen's Church Hall, Manfred Road, SW15 2RS. Sparkle Battersea: Weds 10.30-14.00 St Michael's Wandsworth Common, Cobham Cl, SW11 6SP. Sparkle Roehampton: Tues 10.30-14.00, Holy Trinity Roehampton, 7 Ponsonby Road, SW15 4LA.

Sparkle To register, contact hello@sparkletogether.org or call **020 8877 3003** or visit sparkletogether.org to find out more about our intergenerational community centres

At Royal Trinity Hospice, we openly talk about issues relating to death and dying and this includes encouraging people to start planning ahead for their future.

We see firsthand the difference it can make when someone has taken time to think about the choices available to them, whether this is writing a will, thinking about treatments they would or would not want, or even deciding what songs they would like at their funeral. With this in mind, we have created a planner called 'What matters to me', to help guide you through a range of personal, medical, financial and domestic questions to fill in gradually and share with our loved ones.

Access a digital copy of the booklet on our website to fill it in directly or download. To get a physical copy, please reach out to trinitynews@royaltrinityhospice.london, or pick it up at the next WOPF meeting. Royal Trinity Hospice is the local hospice for all Wandsworth residents, providing free specialist palliative and end of life care. If you are interested in visiting the hospice to hear about the services available, attend our upcoming free Talk & Tour on February 19, 11am-1pm. Find out more and sign up via our website <https://www.royaltrinityhospice.london/> or contact us on connect@royaltrinityhospice.london / 020 7787 1000.



Furzedown Project's new bus is a hit with members.

The Furzedown Project's new minibus is already making a real difference to members. Recent outings have included seaside trips to Brighton and Eastbourne, as well as to Kew Gardens and Dulwich Park. The Project's old bus was stolen last September, but thanks to the support of the local community they were able to buy a new bus in May 2025. It has all mod cons including a wheelchair lift.

Director Sandra Shaw said: "Thanks to the new mini-bus, our members are exploring again – and loving every minute." One member commented: "The minibus makes me feel young again – I can get out, see friends, and enjoy the world."

Charles Runcie.



Thank you

The Forum would like to thank all our volunteers for their hard work, whether they have helped with refreshments, put out the chairs at meetings, proofread the newsletter or helped with the sound system. Thanks go to: **Mahid Condal, Rob Kennedy, John Flynn, Sandra Lo, Trish Loy, Jeff Barber and Zoe Chan.** If there are any others who would like to volunteer, please contact Syeda at syebat@hotmail.com

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 £10 (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 £10 cheque/PO payable to Wandsworth Older People's Forum

I have made a payment of £10 into the Wandsworth Older People's Forum

Account information: 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



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.