



Agewell Magazine

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It's all systems go as we start a new era as an independent social enterprise.

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Welcome

Welcome to our spring/summer issue which celebrates the start of a new era for Agewell.



We've now become a Community Interest Company (CIC) which is a type of social enterprise. CICs reinvest any surplus funds generated into the communities they serve. So this means that we'll be investing in new services and initiatives to benefit an even greater number of older people.

Becoming a CIC also means that we're now an independent organisation.

We're delighted that Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (SWBCCG) has become a key commissioner of Agewell's services and would like to thank them and the Black Country NHS Cluster for supporting our transition into a social enterprise.

Andy Williams, Accountable Officer at SWBCCG said: "Agewell's excellent consultative and preventative work enables older people to have their say and to stay fitter, healthier and independent for longer. We look forward to working with them for the benefit of older people across Sandwell and West Birmingham."

If we think back to when Agewell first started 15 years ago, we're so proud of how far we have come. In 1998 we began with a handful of volunteers and just look at us now! We're an independent, dynamic organisation which is renowned as a respected voice and provider of services for older people.

Today, we have over 1,300 members and we're growing all the time. Our members have always been a vital part of Agewell and this will continue in our new structure which sees members at the very heart of Agewell - on the Advisory Committee and the Executive Board itself.

There are nine individuals on the Executive Board as pictured on the front page. Alongside myself and fellow Agewell Directors Pauline Withey and Kuldip Bahia are Agewell members Edna Barker (Agewell Chair), Dot Gospel (Chair, West Bromwich Forum) and Clive Atkins (Chair, Rowley Regis Forum).

Also sitting on the Board are three Non-Executive Independent Directors Jayne Salter-Scott, Wendy Garcarz and Steve Corton. A warm welcome to you all!

Being an independent organisation brings more opportunities for us to expand our areas of expertise. Our plan is to join forces with an even greater range of older people and partner organisations to enable us to provide better services together.

We already have an excellent reputation in Sandwell which we will build on as we expand throughout West Birmingham and beyond.

We are actively looking for new members, volunteers, befrienders, partners and commissioners to join us and work with us. Together we can make a lasting difference to the lives of even more older people.

Exciting times are ahead!

Deb Harrold, Agewell CEO

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Being a good neighbour and pointing people in the right direction is second nature for Agewell member Jinder Ubhi.



The 72-year-old, who lives in Hill Top, West Bromwich with his wife and two sons, plays a key role in ensuring members of his local community are kept well-informed.

Mr Ubhi, who is an Agewell member and regularly attends the West Bromwich Agewell Forum, says he's often asked for information and advice by people he meets when he's out and about locally.

And he believes his links with Agewell mean that he's ideally placed to point people in the right direction.

He says: "People ask me all sorts of questions, from where they can get smoke alarms and home safety advice, to where they can get help with health concerns or information about community activities.

"I often point them in the direction of Agewell as I know that way they'll get the correct information and advice they need."

Mr Ubhi also ensures that members of his community are well-informed about issues which have been

highlighted by Agewell. This winter he volunteered to be an Agewell Flu Ambassador and was kept busy helping to spread the word about free flu jabs for the over 65s and those with chronic conditions. He was in fact the Flu Champion talking to more than 220 people in West Bromwich, filling in a fantastic 15 Flu Bingo cards in total.

Mr Ubhi, who worships at the Ramgarhia Sikh temple in Birmingham's Jewellery Quarter, says: "I'm always out and about so it was easy for me to talk to a lot of people. I talked to people waiting at the bus stop and those at the various day centres I attend!

"Most people I spoke to were already keen to have the jab but I think it helped to remind them."

And Mr Ubhi himself has benefitted from the services provided by Agewell. A fall at home really knocked his confidence but after attending one of Agewell's Falls Prevention groups at Rowley Regis hospital, he was taught some special exercises and could see a big improvement in his balance and mobility.

He says: "I really enjoyed going to the Falls Prevention group and it helped restore my confidence. I found my walking really improved and I was also more flexible. I make sure I continue to do my exercises regularly as being able to get out and about is very important to me.

"This is just one of the many ways in which I've benefitted from being a member of Agewell."

Do you know someone who deserves some recognition for their work in the community? Please give us a call on 0121 289 3038 ●

CELEBRATIONS & FESTIVALS

There are lots of important dates across the year, celebrated by different cultures and communities. Here we take a look at what some of these dates mean and see how the community has or will be celebrating them.

17th March St Patrick's Day

This day celebrates St Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. St Patrick was a child slave in Ireland who escaped to Britain where he decided to become a priest. He returned to Ireland as a missionary and spread the message of Christ.

Tea Dance Success

More than 100 older people in Great Barr celebrated St Patrick's Day in style with a real knees up!

The St Patrick's Day Tea Dance was organised by Mytime Health at Holy Name Parish in Great Barr on 7th March. Everyone took to their feet for an afternoon of dancing with live music from Little Jimmy on the organ.

"There was a fantastic atmosphere!" said Kath Bench, Healthy Lifestyles Specialist. "It was great to see so many older people getting active and enjoying themselves."



26th March Passover

Passover is one of the most important Jewish religious festivals. Jews celebrate the Feast of Passover to commemorate the liberation of the Children of Israel who were led out of Egypt by Moses. The celebrations last for seven or eight days.

31st March Easter Sunday

Easter Sunday is the culmination of Holy Week and is the most important Christian festival. On Good Friday Jesus was crucified and his body was taken down and buried. Easter Sunday commemorates his resurrection.

In the Greek Orthodox Church, Easter is commemorated on 5th May.

13th April Vaisakhi

Vaisakhi is the Sikh New Year festival and is one of the most important dates in the Sikh calendar. It also commemorates 1699, the year Sikhism was born as a collective faith. Gurdwaras are decorated and visited, and the celebrations include music, singing and chanting, scriptures and hymns.

23rd April St George's Day

St George is the patron saint of England and is identified with the English ideals of honour, bravery and gallantry. The story of St George says that he rescued a fair maiden by killing a dragon.

25th May Vesak or Buddha Day

This is the most important Buddhist festival, which is celebrated on the full moon in May. It celebrates the Buddha's birthday with much colour and happiness. Buddha means 'one who is awake' and is used to describe a person who has achieved the supreme wisdom and compassion of Enlightenment.

9th July Ramadan

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar when Muslims fast during daylight hours. The Qur'an was first revealed during this month and so Ramadan is often called 'month of the Qur'an'. Muslims believe that their good actions bring a greater reward than at any other time of year. They try to give up bad habits during Ramadan and increase self-control in all areas.

3rd August Laylat al-Qadr

This celebrates the Night of Power, the most important event in Muslim history when the Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. To pray on this night is said to be better than a thousand months of worship. Some will spend the whole night in prayer and it is a good time to ask for forgiveness.

8th August Eid al-Fitr

This is when Muslims celebrate the end of fasting and thank Allah for helping them practise self-control during the previous month. The festival begins when the new moon is first seen in the sky. Everyone wears their best or new clothes and decorates their homes. It is a time of forgiveness and making amends.

5th September Rosh Hashanah

This is the Jewish New Year festival which lasts two days and commemorates the creation of the world. It is also a judgement day when Jews believe that God balances a person's good deeds over the last year against their bad deeds, and decides what the next year will be like for them. It is celebrated in the synagogue and at home with a special sweet meal. ●

22nd June Windrush Day

There are calls to create a Windrush Day on 22nd June and make it a national holiday when we acknowledge the contribution of black, Asian and other minority communities to British life over the past 65 years.

Anniversary Event

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the landing of the SS Empire Windrush at Tilbury Docks on 22nd June 1948.

The ship was carrying just under 500 passengers who came to

Britain from the West Indies to make a better life and to help rebuild the country ravaged by the aftermath of the Second World War.

To mark the day, West Bromwich African Caribbean Resource Centre showcased a DVD made in 1998 which commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Windrush.

The video recordings of the event were co-ordinated by Windrush Sandwell, which is supported by Sandwell Council.

Following the DVD, there was a discussion about what has changed for the community

since 1998 and individuals were able to share their thoughts and hopes for future generations.

Shane Ward, who chaired Windrush Sandwell, said: "It is important to research, gather, preserve and pass on the knowledge that we have about our history and the contributions that we, as a community, have made to British life.

"Pictures, recordings and written pieces create a rich picture of what life was like and enable us all to appreciate the real issues that communities have had to overcome."

For more information, contact the Resource Centre on 0121 525 9177.

WHY A WALK COULD PROLONG YOUR LIFE!

We all remember our mothers telling us to go out in the fresh air and get some exercise. And we've probably all said it to our own children and grandchildren over the years. But why is it so important to spend time in the great outdoors? Is it true that something as simple as a walk could add years to our lives?

Being active outdoors brings so many physical and mental health benefits...

Losing weight:

As we get older, our metabolism slows down which means we're more likely to put on weight. It's important to use up more energy than we take in by doing some exercise which burns off some calories.

Maintaining a healthy heart:

Keeping physically active helps to keep your heart strong and reduces the risk of coronary heart disease. It can also reduce the risk of some cancers and can lower your blood pressure – high blood pressure is a risk factor for stroke.

Reducing the risk of diabetes:

In recent years, the number of people diagnosed with Type 2 diabetes has significantly increased. This is more likely to affect older people or those who are overweight. Regular activity could reduce this risk by a quarter.

Keeping bones healthy:

Doing weight-bearing exercise, such as walking, can help to strengthen bones and prevent osteoporosis. It also helps to maintain healthy muscles and joints and can help to control the swelling and pain of arthritis.

Improving your well-being:

Regular activity can be a great mood lifter! It will increase your feelings of general well-being and can

reduce stress, anxiety and help to relieve depression. When you're keeping active, you're less likely to feel isolated or lonely.

Maintaining a healthy mind:

Exercising regularly can reduce the risk of Alzheimer's Disease significantly and can slow down the progression of the illness in those who already have it. Research has also shown that keeping active may help to preserve your memory in later life as it encourages the growth of new cells in the brain.

Gaining free Vitamin D:

Sunlight is key to our health and well-being. When our skin is exposed to sunlight our bodies make Vitamin D which can help to keep our bone density healthy and can have a positive effect on muscle weakness, some cancers, multiple sclerosis and Type 1 diabetes. Sunlight also has a positive effect on our mood and is a natural antidepressant. Plus, it stimulates our bodies to produce melatonin which helps us to enjoy proper sleep.

But what do we mean exactly by 'exercise'?

Deb Harrold, Agewell CEO, says it's not so much about what you do, but the fact that you're doing something active regularly. "Walking is probably one of the best forms of exercise and something which is free and easy to do in your own time and at your own pace," Deb explains. "Health guidelines say that doing a brisk walk outdoors for 30 minutes every day can help increase heart rate, increase cardiac

output and reduce the risk of heart disease and high blood pressure long-term."

Current government advice recommends 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate activity each week for adults over 65 who are generally fit. Break this down into 15 minute blocks and it doesn't sound too onerous.

Moderate activity includes brisk walking at a pace which makes you feel a bit out of breath. Think about using the stairs not the escalator or lift, leaving the car at home and walking to the shops, or heading out for a country walk at the weekend.

Studies have shown that people who walk their dog for 20 minutes, five days a week, improve their mobility, flexibility, strength and balance. If you don't have a dog, just enjoy a daily walk anyway!

GET SET, GET STARTED!

If have any concerns about your health, check with your GP before you start doing any regular walking.

If you've not been doing any exercise for a while, start with a short walk and then build up. Aim for five to 10 minutes' exercise at first. Simply walk five minutes from your house, then turn round and walk back. You can then increase this each day.

To gain benefit from your walk, you should feel out of breath but still able to hold a conversation. When your pace feels too easy, speed up slightly or increase the length of your strides to increase the intensity.

Above all, let walking become an enjoyable part of your daily life and then reap the benefits! ●

GEOFF IS THE WALKING FIREMAN!



Keeping active, whatever your age, is something which Agewell member Geoff Tranter is keen to encourage.

The 64-year-old former fireman is very involved with Sandwell Stride (part of Mytime Health), which enables people to get fit while also getting out of their homes and meeting others from the area.

"Sandwell Stride encourages people to take part in physical activity, especially older members of the community who might otherwise be isolated," explains Geoff.

"It's been going for about 12 years now. Free guided walks are organised across Sandwell and I lead the Warrens and Bumble Hole walk on a Friday.

"We meet at the Bumble Hole Visitor Centre in the Dudley area and it depends on the size of the group and how they are feeling as to which walk we do. We usually go out for one and a half to two hours.

"It's mainly older people who come on the walks. There's one fantastic lady who's 86 who has wonderful stories to tell of her childhood and the Second World War as we walk along."

Geoff has real enthusiasm for leading his walk and is pleased to see people getting so much out of it. "The walks can benefit people in different ways," he says. "All the local GPs have referred individuals to us.

"A lot of people really enjoy going out on these walks, especially people who've been bereaved or are living alone. It can make a big difference to their lives. It's nice to all be out in the fresh air."

For more details about the health walks organised by Sandwell Stride, call 0121 366 0966.

JOIN THE GROWING NUMBER OF SILVER SURFERS



You're never too old to learn. That's the message from Margaret Everson, who at 73 years old is enjoying her newly-acquired computer skills.

Margaret took the plunge and signed up for a course in IT skills at Oldbury Library after deciding that she was missing out on all the advantages of being computer literate.

She says: "It's like a lot of things, if you don't make the effort, you won't get anywhere. I could just sit in my flat all day and do nothing and talk to no-one but instead I like to get out there and keep myself and my mind active.

"When I started the course, I didn't even know how to switch on the computer. But I stuck at it and as time went on I learnt how to search the internet for information and to do all sorts of other useful things like put photos on the computer and make flyers.

"Although I don't have a computer of my own, I can use ones in the library as often as I want. I was a bit daunted at first but I am really glad I made the effort. I would have thought everyone would benefit from knowing the basics about computers these days."

Margaret, who joined Agewell around 10 years ago, is actively involved in a number of ways, including Agewell's work to safeguard vulnerable adults. "Over the years I've tried to contribute by putting the ordinary older person's point of view across because it's not always heard," she explains.

More recently she is putting her new IT skills to the test, helping out in the Agewell office, as well as starting a new 'Talking Threads' knitting group in Oldbury with Agewell Chair Edna Barker.

If you are interested in becoming a silver surfer like Margaret, and exploring a whole new world on-line, talk to **Agewell on 0121 289 3038** about the computer courses in your area.

You can also contact your local library or community centre, Sandwell College on 0121 667 5000, Sandwell Adult and Family Learning Service on 0121 557 0837, or Birmingham Adult Education Service information line on 0121 308 4318.



Planning for Retirement



Planning for retirement can seem quite daunting but Agewell's Midlife Planning Courses offer a helping hand.

The two day courses are aimed at anyone aged 45 and over who is currently in employment. Pictured above are employees at The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust.

Agewell's Kuldip Bahia, who runs the courses, says: "We cover the key issues which people need to think about for when they are no longer working and find themselves with lots more time on their hands.

"This includes managing their finances, looking after their health, thinking about their relationships and planning their leisure and relaxation time."

Courses are tailor-made for public sector organisations and small to medium sized enterprises.

To find out more, call Agewell on 0121 289 3038.

Word spreads about Flu

Hundreds of people across Sandwell were encouraged to take up their free flu jab last winter thanks to Agewell Flu Ambassadors helping Sandwell PCT to spread the word.

All Agewell members were sent information about the flu jab and asked to tell their families, friends and neighbours why it's so important.

Dr Susanna Roughton, Senior Public Health Registrar at Sandwell PCT spoke about the flu campaign at all the Agewell Forums in Sandwell and was delighted with Agewell's response.

"A number of Agewell members volunteered to be Flu Ambassadors. Armed with bingo cards and dabbers they dabbed a box each time they spoke to someone about the flu jab," explains Susanna. "The aim was to sow a seed of an idea in people's minds which they would hopefully act on."

And it worked! The ambassadors reminded over 550 people to get their flu jab so as to avoid this potentially serious winter illness. It's a great example of how well Agewell members rise to a challenge. Agewell also completed a call round of 400 potentially vulnerable patients for a GP practice in West Birmingham.

Community groups 'Stay Steady, Stay Safe'

Agewell runs a number of Postural Stability/Falls Prevention groups in the community to help older people to maintain their independence and to stay safe in their own home.

Older people are more likely to have a fall for many reasons, such as deteriorating eyesight, less strength and balance, medication and poor mobility.

The group members are helped to 'stay steady, stay safe' by learning how to strengthen their muscles

through gentle exercise and how to reduce the risk of having a fall at home.

To find out about forthcoming groups near you, call Agewell on 0121 289 3038.

New volunteers make a difference



Ten new volunteers have been welcomed by Agewell recently, enabling the organisation's valuable work to reach even further.

All the volunteers are older people themselves which means they understand the information, help and support which older people in the community need.

Four of the volunteers regularly help out in the Agewell office, providing administration support to ensure all members hear the latest news on any local or national issues which may affect them.

The other six volunteers are befrienders. They visit older people in their homes to offer some company and a listening ear to help stop individuals feeling lonely or isolated.

If you're interested in becoming a volunteer, call Agewell on 0121 289 3038. We welcome volunteers from the Birmingham area as well.

Ensuring your health needs are met

Community or hospital? This was one of the issues which Sandwell and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group asked Agewell to gauge opinion about recently to ensure local clinics meet local needs.

Agewell carried out a patient questionnaire at four clinics at the Neptune Health Centre in Tipton and Rowley Regis Hospital. Patients having an ECG or seeing a consultant were asked a range of questions about the community cardiology service. These included whether they preferred a community or hospital setting and whether the service met their needs.

Agewell has also been busy getting a snapshot of why people are visiting the Accident & Emergency department at Sandwell Hospital.

The team undertook several two hour sessions at A&E finding out whether patients were aware of the other services available such as NHS Direct, local pharmacies and walk-in surgeries.

They handed out details of these alternative services in a bid to ease congestion at A&E and ensure local people receive the most appropriate medical attention.

Dementia friendly communities

Agewell is proud to be part of the national movement to improve the lives of people living with dementia.

We are one of the many community-based organisations supporting the National Dementia Declaration, drawn up by the Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) to improve the lives of people living

with dementia and their carers. The aim is to work together to create dementia friendly communities.

There are currently 750,000 people living with dementia in the UK and by 2025 there will be over one million.

Dementia is an incurable condition which can affect memory and communication. People with dementia face many challenges going about their daily lives, such as going shopping, using public transport,

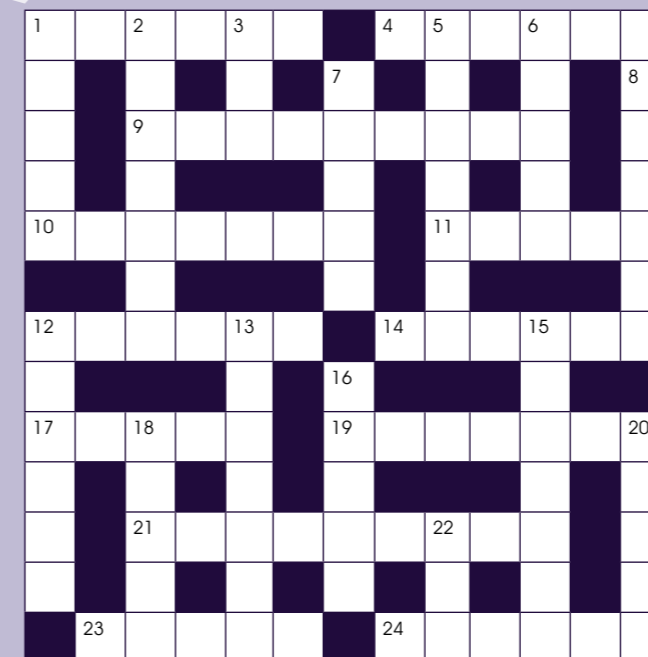
socialising and getting involved in their community. This can lead to people becoming isolated.

Community-based organisations, such as Agewell, can help to ensure that people living with dementia can continue to be an active part of their communities for as long as possible.

To find out more have a look online at www.dementiaaction.org.uk

COMPETITION CORNER

Get your brain in gear and have a go at this fun puzzle!



Across

1. Bank employee, who can say (6)
4. Balance found in muesli bran (5)
9. Crumbling old places fell down (9)
10. Not as old as that confused Reno guy (7)
11. Plenty of land in tarmac resort (5)
12. Opposed to poetry (6)
14. Purloins duck between beginning and end of shifts (6)
17. Last letter in some game (5)
19. Tolerates some token duress (7)
21. Alter code when moved (9)
23. One of the Earps, sounds interrogative at first (5)
24. Shuffle a paper then come into view (6)

Down

1. Sum up tall youth, essentially (5)
2. Let cure become a lesson (7)
3. Find a fish in a wee lake (3)
5. Begins tantrum in a moment (7)
6. Palindrome instrument (5)
7. Found in large scale drama crowd (5)
8. Hesitates to use spa turbulence (6)
12. Committee on a ship (6)
13. Evidence of injury, allow for redness (7)
15. Shorten a river crossing (7)
16. Serenity, sounds like part of something greater (5)
18. Nobleman with ponytail is before his time (5)
20. Grasp earnest weapon, essentially (5)
22. High point found in octopus (3)

If you manage to crack it, send your entry to:
Agewell Crossword, Suite 9, Vision Point, Vaughan Trading Estate, Sedgley Road East, Tipton DY4 7UJ

Closing Date: 31st July 2013

The first correct entry out of the hat will win a £10 gift voucher.

Name:

Address:

Telephone no:

Email:

Come along to your Agewell Local Forum



Open to everyone aged 50 or over

- Meet monthly
- Key speakers
- Topical issues
- Free to attend
- Make new friends
- Have your say
- Make a difference
- Across Sandwell & West Birmingham

Contact Details

For more information about Agewell and our services, contact us as follows:-

Agewell CIC
Suite 9, Vision Point,
Vaughan Trading Estate,
Sedgley Road East,
Tipton DY4 7UJ

