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# Agewell Magazine

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There are now 11 Community Offers for older people up and running across Sandwell

Special feature on pages 6-10

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# WELCOME

Welcome to the Winter/Spring issue which is sponsored by Sandwell Council's Community Offer.



**It's over 12 months since Sandwell Council's first Community Offers for older people went live. On the centre pages we've featured some of the important work that we and our Community Offer partners have been undertaking to help improve the health and wellbeing of local older people.**

There are now 11 Community Offers up and running across the borough offering free services for older people. Make sure you, or a loved one, doesn't miss out.

One of Agewell's priorities is to reduce the number of older people having a fall. Whether you're 65 or 95, there are many positive and easy steps you can take to age well and protect your health and independence. See back cover for how to get a copy of our new 'Staying Steady, Staying Safe' self-help guide.

Last issue, we touched on the exciting news that Agewell had opened its first Community Hub for older people in Old Hill High Street. Our Goodwill Shop located here has really taken off and there's a programme of activities and events taking place – see page 5 for details.

Now, we're delighted to confirm that we will shortly be opening a second Hub within the Outpatients Department at Sandwell Hospital. Agewell Chair Edna Barker (centre) is pictured above with me and Estelle

Greenwood, the Volunteer Lead for Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust's Mi Volunteers service in the new Agewell Community Shop, which will sell a range of items including newspapers, sandwiches and snacks. Agewell staff and volunteers will also be reinstating the popular trolley-round to all wards. Look out for us in our purple T-shirts!

We are very excited to have a permanent presence within the hospital which will build on the valuable hospital to home befriending, advocacy and support service (known as Edna's Army) already provided by Agewell. Do pop in and say hello. We are interested to hear what items you would like to see on sale in the Hospital Shop.

Before I finish, I'd like to officially welcome our newest Older People's Champion, Deb Pierson, who will be a familiar face to some of you, having worked in Sandwell for over 30 years. Deb (pictured left) is working closely with our other Champion Karen (right) and Postural Stability Instructor Alison and is enjoying getting to know older people across the borough, encouraging them to become more active in their communities.



Finally, please can I ask as many of you as possible to fill in the enclosed Good Neighbour questionnaire. Being a good neighbour can make such a difference to isolated and vulnerable older people and we're keen to find out what you are doing to help others. Every completed questionnaire will be entered into a prize draw to win a £50 gift voucher.

*Deb Harrold*

**Deb Harrold, Agewell CEO ●**

# MAKE VOLUNTEERING YOUR RESOLUTION THIS YEAR!



It's a New Year and the perfect time to try out new interests, so why not make volunteering in 2016 one of your New Year's Resolutions?



**Nearly 40 individuals already give up their time on a voluntary basis to support Agewell and its work with older people in Sandwell and West Birmingham, but more are needed.**

Volunteer Ann Brown (pictured above), who joined the team after retiring from her job as a technician in the textiles industry, says she hasn't looked back.

Ann volunteers in the Goodwill Shop at Agewell's Community Hub in Old Hill and helps out at the knit and natter group, Talking Threads, which takes place every Wednesday from 10.30am to 12.30pm. She also helped to organise Agewell's successful Christmas Fayre and has plans for other similar events this year.

She says: "When I retired I didn't just want to sit around and do nothing so I decided to do some voluntary work. I had a walk around Old Hill where I live and just happened to see a sign for volunteers outside the Agewell Hub. I'm very used to organising things. I used to organise all sorts of activities for the staff where I worked, so it's great for me to be able

to put my skills to good use. Everyone at Agewell has been very helpful and friendly."

Ann is currently hoping to organise a craft fayre and a fundraising coffee morning, as well as a summer fete.

She says: "We need more volunteers of all ages. Agewell is for anyone over the age of 50 and it would be great to see more younger volunteers too. I love talking to people and meeting new people so volunteering for Agewell suits me down to the ground.

"When my mum was alive she was visited by someone at home for a cup of tea and a chat, so I know how valuable the work of Agewell is and how important it is to support it."

## Opportunities available include:

- Becoming a Hospital, Home or Telephone Befriender
- Helping out at the Goodwill Shop and with events and activities at the Community Hub in Old Hill, and in the new Community Shop at Sandwell Hospital
- Providing administration support in our busy office
- Supplying handyman / DIY skills
- Escorting older people to hospital and GP appointments
- Helping with specific consultations and campaigns for issues which affect older people including our annual Winter flu campaign

**Interested? Give us a call on 0121 796 9333 to find out more. We are happy to hear from individuals and companies who'd like to support us. ●**

# COMMUNITY POLICING CONCERNS TACKLED HEAD ON

Agewell ensures the voices of older people are heard loud and clear when it comes to issues which affect them.



## **When cuts to community policing were announced, Agewell members put their concerns direct to the Police and Crime Commissioner himself.**

Last November, David Jamieson, Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands and Superintendent Jan Thomas-West (pictured above with Agewell Chair, Edna Barker) met with over 50 Agewell members and guests at a special borough-wide Agewell Forum in Wednesbury.

The meeting came about after Agewell urged its members to write to their MPs and the Commissioner about their concerns for proposals which could see the number of Police Community Support Officers

fall by 78% in the West Midlands by 2020. As a result, the Commissioner agreed to attend a question and answer-style Forum which enabled members from each of the six Local Forums to highlight their anxiety about the widespread cuts to policing proposed across the West Midlands

Members were united in their view of how reassuring older people find the presence of PCSOs in their community and how much their local knowledge helps to control some of the petty crime and nuisance in the area.

While the Commissioner agreed that the introduction of PCSOs had been a big success, he explained that the need to make the cuts was regrettable but unavoidable given the budget cuts West Midlands Police is facing. He went on to say that Neighbourhood Policing will remain in the West Midlands, but in a different, less visible, format.

The Commissioner urged Agewell members to continue to be heard by writing again to their MPs and local councillors about their concerns.

**If you'd like to find out about local, regional and national issues affecting older people, why not join your local Agewell Forum? Come along and make your voice heard. ●**

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## CYCLING SUPREMO IS AN INSPIRATION TO US ALL!

### **There's simply no stopping international cycling champion, Wally Fowler, who we first featured in our Autumn 2013 magazine.**

Now aged 81, the Stourbridge Cycling Club rider is continuing to break world records.

Last October, he smashed the one-hour World Record at the League of Veteran Racing Cyclists Championships at Newport Velodrome by more than six and a half kilometres.

He also holds the flying 200 metre and the standing start 500 metre track world cycling records in the 80 – 84 year old category and already has his sights set on his next challenge – the pursuit record at the World Masters in Manchester later this year.

**What an inspiration! ●**



# GOODWILL SHOP PROMISES TREASURES FOR ALL!

Our Goodwill Shop within the Agewell Community Hub on Old Hill High Street has taken off beyond all expectations.

**A vast range of preloved items have been donated including clothes, toys, books and CDs, bric-a-brac, sports equipment and furniture, and due to the swift turnover in stock, more donations are always required.**

"An item which someone no longer wants will be another person's treasure," says Agewell's Pauline Withey. "Often it's the more unusual items which sell really quickly. We've had a family of four wicker scarecrows donated, a bust, a leprechaun toilet roll holder and even a pair of Jimmy Choo shoes."

The shop is always looking for new items to sell, so if you're downsizing or having a clear out, please

donate your unwanted items to Agewell. Please note all furniture must have a fire label.

Pop in and have a mooch - and perhaps enjoy a cuppa and a chat too with our friendly staff and volunteers whilst picking up a bargain!

**Opening times: Monday to Friday 9.30am – 4.30pm and Saturday 9.30am – 12.30pm. ●**



## ACTIVITIES AT THE COMMUNITY HUB INCLUDE...

**Last Wednesday of every month  
Chat-inEar 12.30pm to 2.30pm**

**A brand new social group, Chat-inEar, has been launched at the Agewell Hub by Sandwell Deaf Community Association and Action on Hearing Loss. It's for people with hearing loss and their relatives to meet with others in a similar situation in a welcoming environment.**

"Many people with hearing loss feel isolated and are unsure what's out there for them," explains SDCA's Training Manager, Lisa Bowen. "We'll be bringing

in speakers to talk about local services, as well as encouraging people to access peer support by sharing their experiences."

Individuals will also be able to have a simple hearing check, if required, and receive information and advice about how to get referred for further help.

Roger Thompson, from Action on Hearing Loss, adds: "We're focussing not only on people with hearing loss but also their partners, especially men who might be a bit reluctant to seek help."

**Every Monday  
Strength & Balance Class 1.30pm to 2.30pm**

Find out which exercises will benefit you and learn how to do them properly at this fun class where you'll enjoy meeting others too.

**Every Wednesday  
Talking Threads 10.30am to 12.30pm**

Experienced and new knitters and crafters are welcome to join our friendly group. Come along for a knit and a natter over a cuppa or two!

**Just turn up on the day or call Agewell on 0121 796 9333 for more details.**

**There is a small charge for the activities. ●**



On 6th October 2014, six Community Offers were launched across Sandwell to help older people aged 65+ to stay well and healthy in their homes and communities.

**Funded by Sandwell Council's Adult Social Care department, each offer is led by a voluntary / community organisation, working in partnership with others.**

The aim is to help prevent or delay older people from needing to access more acute health and social care services, thereby saving money and improving lives at the same time.

"The voluntary sector has long said that with extra funding it could help to reduce the demand on more formal care and health services," commented Councillor Yvonne Davies, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health.

"By funding the Community Offers, Sandwell Council is testing this belief.

"12 months on, the Community Offers are delivering services and providing befrienders to tell people about all the help that is available to them in their community, and to help them to take up the services that they want.

"They are also helping the person to attend social events and get more actively involved in their community if they wish."

**Here, we take a look at the difference the Community Offers are making...**

## In Great Barr, Yew Tree & Newton



**agewell**  
*sharing experience*

Agewell is the lead organisation and is providing a range of services to help

local, older people who have had a fall, or who are at risk of falling, to become steadier on their feet and continue to live independently.

Agewell Postural Stability instructors have delivered bespoke home-based exercise programmes of up to 12 weeks, as well as 20-week exercise classes in community venues.

Individuals have also been introduced to other local services they could benefit from. Carers of older people and those with a diagnosis of dementia have also been supported.

### Achievements...

- In the first 12 months, 144 older people benefitted from the services on offer.
- Completers of the exercise programmes showed a 3% increase in general wellbeing, a 4% increase in mental health and wellbeing, a 10% improvement in mobility and a 28% improvement in confidence and balance.
- Friends of Yew Tree and Tamebridge Community Centre successfully applied for seed funding to launch First Time Online computer sessions for people aged 65+.
- The overall social value delivered to date totals £572,718 which means that the Social Return on Investment for every £1 spent with Agewell is £5.73.

## In West Bromwich Central, Greet's Green & Lyng



The Kaleidoscope Plus Group is the lead organisation and is signposting older people to existing services, support and groups in the local area.

An assessor visits the older person at home before suggesting services and groups which they may benefit from. A support worker then helps the older person to set in place a network of support and provides ongoing telephone support.

### Achievements...

- In the first 12 months, 246 older people benefited from the services on offer.
- Small pockets of groups have been formed across West Bromwich as part of the 'Making Neighbours Friends' initiative which connects individuals in their neighbourhoods.
- Through the Good Neighbours scheme, volunteers have helped older people to develop their confidence to attend social and community based activities, enabling them to become active members of their community.

## In Princes End, Tipton Green and Great Bridge



Health for Living is the lead organisation and is signposting older people to other local services which can make a positive difference to their lives.

These include access to adaptations and support in the home, enjoying a healthy and balanced diet, learning more about health conditions and staying healthy, and settling back at home after a stay in hospital.

### Achievements...

- In the first 12 months, 300 older people benefited from the services on offer.
- Over 30 events aimed at supporting voluntary organisations and small groups to reduce social isolation have been co-hosted.
- A VJ Day celebration was hosted in August in collaboration with Great Bridge Community Forum, St Peter's Church and Lee's Memorial at Farley Park in Great Bridge.
- The team took part in the Safer 6 Campaign in Wednesbury in October.
- A Christmas event for older people was held in partnership with the Jubilee Centre.
- New groups and activities are being established within the community and support provided to existing community groups.



## In Oldbury and Langley



BUDS is the lead organisation delivering the HAPPY Project – Healthy Ageing Project Provided for You.

Services on offer include advocacy and support, access to health checks and screening, befriending, BUDS clubs, training for carers, home safety checks, gentle exercise classes, vaccination reminders, hot meal delivery, walking groups and drop-in centres.

### Achievements...

- HAPPY has a total of 460 active service users, with an increase of 50% in the last six months.
- HAPPY received 200 referrals through GPs and health professionals in the last year.
- In the last six months, 274 members of the public have received advice and support and been referred to other services.
- Active volunteer numbers have increased by 60% in the last six months.
- The aim is to generate 50% more enquiries and referrals over the next 12 months.

## In Tividale and Rowley



Murray Hall Community Trust is the lead organisation and is providing a range of services which include

GP surgery-based volunteering, intergenerational befriending and a volunteer driver scheme for health, hospital and GP appointments.

The team is currently working with six GP practices to ensure older people access the services available to them and, in partnership with Rowley Regis Hospital, is providing a Community Offer Information Point in the hospital's reception area for older people attending the various clinics.

Intergenerational groups, offering a range of activities and days out, have been supported and established within schools, and a new group linking Oldbury Academy students with the over 60's from Barlow Homes is being launched.

Community groups are also being supported with regular visits and older people are being given help and encouragement to attend.

### Achievements...

- In the first 12 months, 329 older people benefitted from the services on offer.
- During October the team supported the flu clinics at four GP Practices to encourage patients to get vaccinated.
- A new intergenerational group started at St Michaels School in Rowley Regis which links the young students with an older population. The group regularly attracts around 20 older people.
- To help reduce social isolation, 24 community groups are being supported.



## In Blackheath, Cradley Heath & Old Hill



**agewell**  
sharing experience

Agewell is the lead organisation and is providing a range of services to help

local, older people to improve their quality of life, maintain their independence and be better connected socially.

A befriending and community navigation service of up to 6 weekly visits is delivered by Agewell Older People's Champions, who are also supporting individuals to take part in the Agewell Healthy Passport scheme where participants earn points for undertaking healthy activities. Carers of older people and those with a diagnosis of dementia have also been supported.

### Achievements...

- In the first 12 months, 282 older people benefitted from the services on offer.
- Results show an 18% increase in general wellbeing and a 29% increase in mental health and wellbeing for completers of the full befriending and community navigation programme.
- The overall social value delivered to date totals £1,465,310 which means that the Social Return on Investment for every £1 spent with Agewell is £14.65.



## In Abbey, Soho & Victoria



In August 2015, Friends & Neighbours were appointed to lead a new

Community Offer, bringing the total to 7.

Since then they have been working to improve the quality of life for local vulnerable residents by drawing up a personal plan with the individual, their carers and family members, to enable the individual to access a network of established voluntary and community organisations and commercial services which can provide help and support.

The aim is to empower the individual by providing all the information they need to make their own decisions about their future. Family members and neighbours are encouraged to offer long-term involvement and support.

### Achievements...

- So far, 61 residents have benefitted from the services on offer.
- A range of assistance has been provided including helping individuals to access the right equipment, providing advocacy services and helping with more complex needs.
- Participants at Drop in Sessions have shown a change in social attitude and a greater confidence to participate with others in the community.
- Close links have been established with local groups, agencies and ward neighbourhood teams to identify individuals who would benefit.

# THERE'S STILL TIME TO GET INVOLVED

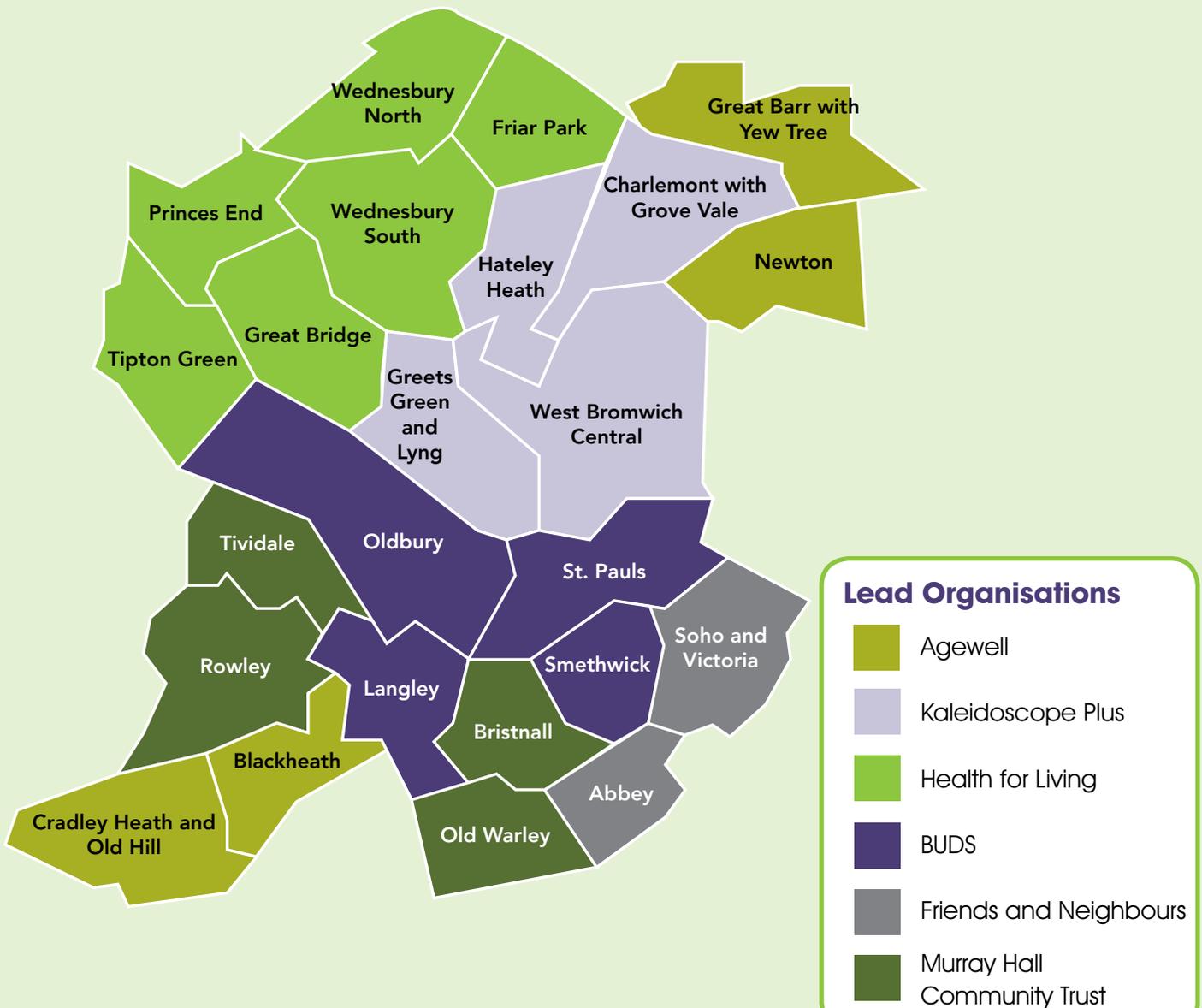
The good news is that all seven Community Offers featured on the previous pages are being funded for a further 12 months to 30th September 2016, and four new ones have been introduced.

This means there are now 11 Community Offers for older people up and running across Sandwell, covering all 24 council wards.

Anyone aged 65+ who lives, or is registered with a GP, in Sandwell, is eligible for the free services on offer. Referrals can be made by GPs, other health and social care professionals and by individuals themselves.

**Make sure you, or a loved one, doesn't miss out! Call the Community Offer Helpline on 0121 557 5812 or email [community.offer@nhs.net](mailto:community.offer@nhs.net) to find out more. ●**

## Who to contact in your area:





## Local Forum News

Rowley Regis and Tipton Forum members enjoyed a busy December socialising and getting out and about.

Rowley Regis Forum members stepped back in time with a wonderful trip to the Melton Mowbray traditional Victorian Fayre.

Clive Atkins, Chair of the Forum, organised the trip to the award-winning fayre which takes over the entire town of Melton Mowbray with lots of stalls and traditional entertainment including morris dancers and a town crier.

"We've been raising funds through the Forum for the trip and were able to take 45 members for a really memorable day out."

Tipton Forum members made the most of the festive period too. 27 members and friends enjoyed a Christmas dinner at The Lodge in Dudley for the second year running.

"We had a raffle with some really good prizes and it was lovely to get together for a general chit chat," says Dot Abbey, Chair of Tipton Forum.

Members also met up for a Christmas tea party at Tipton Christian Centre where the Forum's monthly meetings are held.

A number of events are already planned for this year including a day out at Chester Zoo in March, a trip to Disney on Ice in April and a Blackpool weekend in August.

**There's an Agewell Local Forum in each of the six towns in Sandwell. New members are very welcome. See Diary Dates on our website or call 0121 796 9333 for more details. ●**



## Review of the Year

The Agewell 2014/15 Annual Review is now available online.

Visit [www.agewelluk.org.uk](http://www.agewelluk.org.uk) to read about our achievements during the past 12 months.



## Christmas Dinner Delivered!

Older people in Old Hill enjoyed a delicious Christmas dinner with all the trimmings thanks to Agewell.

We teamed up with local café, Bostin Bites, to deliver 30 meals to people's homes on Christmas Eve. The dinner included a roast turkey or vegetarian main course, plus either Christmas pudding or a mince pie to finish.

We contacted a range of organisations to obtain referrals for the Christmas treat, which was funded through the Community Offer.



Sam Devonport and Sam Handley from Bostin Bites said: "It was an enjoyable, rewarding and emotional experience for both of us. We would like to thank all our staff for their hard work on Christmas Eve."

# Having a fall **IS NOT** an inevitable part of ageing.

With the right knowledge and support, you can help yourself to stay steady on your feet and protect your health and independence.

Whether you're 65 or 95, there are many positive and easy steps you can take to age well and reduce your risk of falling.



Call Agewell today for your **FREE** copy of our 'Staying Steady, Staying Safe' self-help guide for older people.

Available for everyone aged 65 and over, who lives in Sandwell, or is registered with a Sandwell GP.



0121 796 9333



info@agewelluk.org.uk

[www.agewelluk.org.uk](http://www.agewelluk.org.uk)



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## Contact Details

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

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