



agewell
sharing experience

Agewell Magazine

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Kingfisher Buddies client Archie is enjoying a reminiscence activity using our motion-activated projection system. Find out more in the Kingfisher Buddies feature on page 10.

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WELCOME



We are delighted to welcome you to another Agewell magazine, packed with news and information about our services for older people across Sandwell.

Our cover stars this issue are Kingfisher Buddies Community Pathfinder

Sandra Graham and client Archie Slater, who are having fun swiping away clouds to reveal an image of London's Leicester Square. Find out more about our 'magic table' and other meaningful activities for people living with dementia within our Kingfisher Buddies feature starting on page 10.

Since the last magazine, our weekly **Kingfisher Buddies groups** have continued to grow in popularity but with funding due to finish in March next year, we have been looking at new ways we can continue to provide this much needed service.

The good news is we have secured funding from the Better Care Fund to pilot our first **Kingfisher Dementia Services Meeting Centre** at St James Church in Oldbury. Following the Meeting Centre Model already operational in other parts of the country, this new service started on Thursday 7th November and will take place weekly in addition to the existing Kingfisher Buddies groups. Exciting times indeed!

Another big area of work this year has been in relation to the **Better Lives Dementia Strategy for Sandwell 2019-2025** which Agewell has been a key part of. The draft strategy has been out for consultation - we made sure that our Kingfisher Buddies clients were able to have their say - and has now been signed off ready for publication.

The strategy is important as it provides a pathway for dementia care in Sandwell and includes 9 key promises. Keep an eye on our website where you will be able to read and download a copy.

Other services you can read about this issue include an update on the **SPARCS befriending service** which Agewell delivers in partnership with Murray Hall Community Trust, our popular **Sapphire Service** for Sandwell residents in Sandwell and Russells Hall hospitals, delivered in partnership with the West Bromwich African Caribbean Resource Centre and our **Staying Steady Staying Safe service** which aims to reduce the risk of older people having a fall.

If you've been thinking about getting a little more active, why not join one of our Tai Chi classes? There's a special feature on page 6 where you can find out more.

Or you may prefer to try volunteering instead. Have a read of 60-year-old Derek's story on page 7 to get inspired.

There's also news of the Agewell Local Forums in Rowley, Tipton and Wednesbury on pages 8 and 9. They meet once a month and all are welcome to come along for a cuppa and a chat, listen to interesting speakers, and take part in social activities and trips out.

Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, visited Rowley Forum in September, where more than 70 older people were able to put forward their issues and concerns on a number of topics.

Finally, in our news round-up section on page 15 you'll find out about a new way of raising funds for Agewell, as well as some of the new staff members that have joined our team this year.

Good reading!

Deb Harrold, Agewell CEO ●

DEMENTIA CARE IN THE COMMUNITY

AWARDS RECOGNITION

Agewell's continued commitment to supporting local people diagnosed with dementia has been endorsed with two awards.

In February, Agewell and Your Health Partnership received the Partnership Working Award at the Rowley Regis Community Awards 2019.

Through the Kingfisher Buddies project, Agewell has built a close relationship with Regis Medical Centre, part of Your Health Partnership, enabling patients with a diagnosis of dementia to be easily referred to Agewell's six week information & support primary care programme held at the centre.

In July, Kingfisher Buddies Community Pathfinders, Debra Pierson and Sandra Graham,



were shortlisted for the national Margaret Butterworth Award 2019 for excellence in dementia care.

Presented by Dementia Pathfinders CIC, this annual award recognises the achievements of front line staff who work to improve the lives of people with dementia.

At the awards ceremony in London, Debra and Sandra were delighted to be commended with distinction.

"Most important to us is the difference our Kingfisher Buddies service is making in Sandwell," said Sandra.

"Hearing some of the testimonies sent in to support our nominations really brought that home. We felt very honoured."

ACTION TAKEN

During Dementia Action Week in May, Agewell staff and volunteers were out and about in the community, sharing information and offering the chance for a friendly chat.

On the Tuesday, local people were invited to call in to the Information Point in Morrisons Café in Wednesbury and talk to Agewell's dementia-trained Community Pathfinders about any difficulties they may be experiencing.

The following day, Agewell were at Edward Street Hospital's Open Event in West Bromwich, providing details of their dementia services.

To end the week, Agewell held their own event at Rounds Green Library in Oldbury

where people were invited to drop in and meet others living with dementia, have their say on the draft Dementia Strategy for Sandwell, have a chat over a cup of tea and cake and enjoy a relaxing hand and arm massage or have their nails painted.

"We wanted to show the range of support we provide by bringing people together in a relaxed and friendly environment," says Community Pathfinder, Sandra Graham. "We met quite a few new people who now know that we're here to help."



SAPPHIRE SERVICE STRENGTHENED

Agewell's popular Sapphire Service is supporting even more patients at Sandwell and Russells Hall hospitals thanks to new partnerships and new staff.

Charlotte Wildman was a volunteer in the Agewell hospital shop before being taken on by the Sapphire Service on a part-time basis in February. She then joined the team full-time and is enjoying supporting older patients during their time in hospital and helping to prevent their readmission once they've been discharged.

The Sapphire Service, which Agewell delivers in partnership with the West Bromwich African Caribbean Resource Centre (WBACRC), has also joined forces with the Alcohol Team at Sandwell Hospital in an effort to support older people across a greater number of wards. Patients are being referred between the two services to ensure they receive as much support as possible.

"I cannot speak more highly of the Sapphire Service," says Amy Hunt, Alcohol Specialist Nurse.

"I cannot speak more highly of the Sapphire Service."

Amy Hunt,
Alcohol Specialist Nurse



"I am so happy to have a service I can refer to which treats every person as an individual and looks at how they can do their best to meet their current needs."



IMPROVING LYNDEN'S QUALITY OF LIFE

53-year-old Lynden gained independence, confidence and a much better quality of life during his last months thanks to the Sapphire Service.

When he was referred by the Alcohol Team in June, he was suffering from a brain tumour, cirrhosis of the liver and psoriasis.

"He found it difficult to get support due to his ongoing alcohol dependence issues," explains Amy Hunt, Alcohol Specialist Nurse. "The Sapphire Service saw past the alcohol issues and provided him with hope, confidence and individualised holistic support."

Following his discharge from hospital, the Sapphire team visited Lynden to discuss what would make his day to day life easier. His main priority was to be able to get out of bed and be mobile, so the team referred him to Sandwell Enquiry to provide extra grab rails, perching stools and a hoist.

They also arranged for a community alarm and key safe, made a referral to the STAR service

and helped him to reconnect with his family.

Lynden was also supported to move into an Extra Care Home where he could live independently in his own flat with 24 hour support on hand.

"When we first met Lynden he was very depressed," said Sapphire Service worker, Jason Denny. "We helped him to gain a social life by joining in the various activities with the other residents. He became much more relaxed and content."

Agewell CEO Deb Harrold is proud of the team and the level of service they provide. "We have a high percentage of complex cases which do require a greater input than the six visits we are targeted to undertake," she explained. "The Sapphire team always try to go above and beyond to make a difference to someone's quality of life."

Lynden sadly passed away on 11th September 2019. Our thoughts are with his family and we'd like to thank them for their kind permission to include this article in our magazine.

REDUCING YOUR RISK OF FALLING

With 138 referrals in just five months, Agewell's Staying Steady Staying Safe service is continuing to help prevent older people from having a fall. And with funding secured for a further six months, even more people are benefitting.

Agewell's Alice Williams, has been out and about holding coffee mornings in residential homes to try to get as many people as possible signed up to the service.

She explains: "We start by doing a mini assessment before handing out our Staying Steady Staying Safe self-help guide and an exercise leaflet.

"People say it's so convenient to be given a guide they can use at home which is filled with useful information, including lots of contacts for local support services and groups."



Recipients are advised to try to undertake 10 or 15 minutes' exercise each day, either seated or standing, to improve their balance and muscle strength. A week after they receive their guide, they are phoned by Agewell to see how they are getting on and a second call is made a few weeks later. The mini-assessment is then repeated to see whether their risk of falling has been reduced, and people are encouraged to attend one of Agewell's community-based exercise classes.

At Charles Pearson Court in Smethwick, a group of residents signed up to Staying Steady Staying Safe and now meet each week to do their exercises together. As well as helping to prevent the residents from falling, the group exercises provide a great chance to socialise, boosting their mental wellbeing.

Peace of mind for Margaret

Since signing up to Staying Steady Staying Safe, 76-year-old Margaret Williams has made simple changes to her home and lifestyle and her anxiety at having a future fall has been substantially reduced.

Margaret, who lives alone, was referred to the service as she was unsteady on her feet. Taking advice from the guide, she has gone around her house rearranging items such as rugs and electrical wires so they are no longer a trip hazard. She also makes sure she has something to hold onto when washing her hair and puts a cushion on the floor as a precaution in case she loses her balance.

When she suffered a fall a few years ago, Margaret struggled to get back up and this has worried her since.

She read in the guide that gentle exercises could be done seated and began exercising for 10 minutes a day to maintain her strength, balance and mobility.

When Margaret was first referred, she couldn't get up from a chair without using her arms. After just a few weeks of 'sit to stand' exercises, she no longer has to push herself up with her arms. She's also learnt how to get up correctly if she does have a fall and is far less worried.



Interested in taking part?

Would you like to receive a free copy of Agewell's Staying Steady Staying Safe booklet and sign-up for the telephone support?

Having a fall is not an inevitable part of ageing.
Email info@agewelluk.org.uk or call 0121 796 9333 and start to reduce your risk today.

TAI CHI CLASSES ARE CHANGING LIVES

"Agewell's community-based exercise programme is keeping us active and changing our lives!"

That's the message from members of one of several Tai Chi classes Agewell are currently running across the borough.

Pat and Ron Titley, who are both in their early seventies, have been attending a mixed ability Tai Chi session on a Thursday evening at Bleakhouse Library in Oldbury since it was launched around 18 months ago.

The couple, who live in Tividale, both have some health and mobility problems, and were finding it difficult to continue some of the more strenuous activities they'd previously enjoyed.

Pat, a former GP practice manager, says: "I picked up a leaflet at Sandwell Hospital about the Tai Chi classes and it seemed worth a go. We were both looking for some sort of gentle exercise to strengthen our muscles and joints.

"I go to cardio rehab and they said it would be a good choice of exercise for me. We joined the class within a couple of weeks of it starting and we haven't looked back."

Pat says that as well as being good exercise, there is also a lovely social element to the class. "Outside the family, we don't tend to mix that much, so it's been good to get to know some new people and we all get on well and have a good chat," she explains. "The exercises themselves are lovely – Ron says it feels as if he's dancing! And they are



just as beautiful to watch as to do.

"The tutor, Ron Woolley, is very good and will talk to you about what you're able to do depending on your individual health and fitness. We have people in their eighties coming to the class and we all get so much out of it!"

Ron Titley passed away peacefully on 25th November 2019. His wife Pat kindly gave her permission to include this article in our magazine. She wanted to add how much Ron enjoyed the tai chi class and the company of good friends. He will be sadly missed.



Sandra Walker, aged 71, from Langley, joined the Bleakhouse Library class after first trying Tai Chi a number of years ago. She says: "I'd been trying to find a class for a while and it's been great to get back into it. I suffer with back pain and the calmness and serenity of Tai Chi is brilliant for me. I feel so different after the class and I know it's doing me the world of good."



Call Agewell on 0121 796 9333 to find out more about our community exercise programme, which includes gentle exercise, strength and balance, pilates, yoga, zumba gold and tai chi, and find a class close to you.

VOLUNTEERING HAS PROVED A WIN WIN FOR DEREK

Just five weeks into his early retirement in June 2018, 60-year-old Derek Richards suffered a stroke and spent several weeks in Sandwell Hospital.

When his physiotherapist suggested becoming a volunteer to help his recovery, Derek decided to head straight to the hospital shop to offer his time to Agewell so he could give something back to the hospital.

"I've always tended to be an introvert," admits Derek, "so I've never done anything like this before. I started doing the trolley run on a Wednesday as I thought it would be good therapy to improve the movement in my left arm and leg.

"I walk from Hateley Heath to the hospital, load up the trolley and take it all round the wards, then walk home again. It tires me out but it's made such a difference.

"When I'd had my stroke I could barely walk and I was told I'd never be able to move my left arm and never drive again. I thought 'no way'. One thing I won't do is give up. The doctors and physios have been brilliant and walking with the trolley has improved my movement such a lot. Now I can move my arm again and I'm able to drive."

As well as helping his recuperation, Derek's



volunteering has also been benefitting other patients. "When I'm taking the trolley round, I've been asked to have a chat with patients on the stroke ward about how I'm getting back to health," he says.

"It helps them to see how much you can improve with some determination. Now I want to get a t-shirt with 'I'm a stroke survivor' as I'm so proud!"

To find out more about becoming a volunteer, call 0121 796 9333 or visit www.agewelluk.org.uk to download a copy of Agewell's volunteering leaflet and a Volunteer Registration form.

SPARCS EXCEEDS TARGETS

With 557 referrals in its first year alone, the SPARCS project, which Agewell delivers in partnership with Murray Hall Community Trust, has exceeded all targets and expectations.

The 3-year programme was funded by The National Lottery Community Fund in June 2018 to reduce social isolation and loneliness in the over 65s in Sandwell.

By taking part in a wide range of events and activities in many different settings including hospitals, GP surgeries, supermarkets and social groups, the team has been reaching out to as many people as possible.

As a result, the referrals received have led to 1149 interventions by the team to provide a variety of support. This has ranged from providing information on local groups and activities to making referrals to other support agencies for benefits advice, aids and

adaptations and information on reducing energy consumption.

Agewell's Community Navigator, Nicola Groves, explains: "When we visit individuals at home we often find a range of different things they need help with. We assess what types of support would make a difference, such as meeting others in their community, and help them to access this so they don't feel socially isolated.

"The project is going really well and making a difference to many local people."

Time for tea!

If you fancy a cuppa and a chat, come along to Time for Tea on the first Monday of each month at The Bridge, St Marks Road, Tipton DY4 0SL from 1.30-3.30pm.

MAYOR VISITS ROWLEY FORUM



Older people in Rowley Regis have been making sure their voices are heard by inviting Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, to their Agewell Local Forum.

More than 70 older people came to Blackheath Methodist Church in September to meet the Mayor and put forward their issues and concerns.

Businessman-cum-politician, Andy ran John Lewis for ten years before being elected as the first Mayor of the West Midlands. His office gives him significant powers and influence over some of the region's biggest issues; such as transport and skills.

Following a short presentation about his background and his role as Mayor, Andy invited questions from members. The first focused on the lack of local policing in the area and that older people are feeling vulnerable because police officers are no longer visible on the streets.

Members also voiced their concerns over the lack of appointments at local surgeries and hospitals and the fact that it is becoming increasingly difficult to phone a GP.

Finally, members asked why the free TV licence for the over 75s is being withdrawn when many rely on the television to keep in contact with the outside world to prevent them feeling isolated.

Andy responded to each question in turn, promising to take action where possible to address members' concerns.

Chair of the Forum, Clive Atkins, said: "Talking direct to the Mayor meant we could get our concerns heard by someone who can really make a difference. We were also able to get some recognition for all the work which Agewell does to help reduce the social isolation of older people in our community such as our Local Forums, community exercise programme and befriending service."



OTHER FORUM NEWS

Tipton Forum

PEDAL POWER

Tipton Local Forum has enjoyed a busy few months with parties and trips around the country.

On August Bank Holiday, members headed to Blackpool for a memorable day out and had such a good time that they returned in October for the illuminations. A week-long Blackpool stay is already planned for 1st – 8th August 2020 including a pedal tour along the promenade in a hand-built cycle bus made from car and bicycle parts!

September saw members attending the Southport Air Show with aerobatics and historical aircraft. Christmas celebrations are now underway with a festive meal at the Lodge in Dudley planned for November, followed by a party with Father Christmas at Tipton Christian Church in December.

"We regularly get around 20 members at the Local Forum meetings each month," says Chair, Dot Abbey. "We've welcomed a few new members recently and it's always lovely to see new faces."

Rowley Forum

SEASIDE STAY

Members of Rowley Regis Local Forum were seaside bound in June.

The Local Forum's first overnight trip was a big success with 49 members staying in Weston super Mare for a traditional seaside break.

The trip was the summer highlight of the Local Forum's busy calendar which has seen a host of activities including line dancing and yoga, plus

Wednesbury Forum

GLORIOUS GARDENS

With exotic plants from around the world, the stunning Birmingham Botanical Gardens proved the perfect venue for Wednesbury Local Forum's coach trip in September.

As well as wandering around the beautiful landscaped gardens and tropical glasshouses, the 25 members enjoyed lunch in the pavilion tea room.

Chair, John Allen, says: "The sun came out and the day was lovely. We've also enjoyed some really informative meetings with speakers from TV licensing to explain about the changes for older people and Wiltshire Farm Foods which delivers healthy frozen meals which older people can easily microwave.

"When members said they were concerned about local safety, we invited Sandwell Police to come and talk about what they're doing to combat crime in Wednesbury.

"We regularly welcome new members to the Local Forum and are always keen to see new faces."

speakers on subjects ranging from healthy lifestyles and safety in the home to welfare rights.

Clive Atkins, Chair, says: "We've got around 70 members now and the Forum helps everyone to feel less isolated by getting them away from the same four walls. All the information we provide goes out into the community so even more people benefit."

Everyone's Welcome

Offering a cuppa and a chat, plus social activities, speakers and trips out, it's no wonder that Agewell's Local Forums in Rowley Regis, Tipton and Wednesbury are attracting so many older people.

They meet once a month and are free to come along to, so why not give them a go?

Rowley Forum

Meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 1.00pm, at Blackheath Methodist Church, 134 High Street, Rowley Regis, B65 0EE

Tipton Forum

Meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 10.30am, at Tipton Christian Church, Waterloo Street, Tipton, DY4 8NR

Wednesbury Forum

Meets on the last Wednesday of the month at 10.30am, at The Old Post Office, Holyhead Road, Wednesbury, WS10 7DF

KINGFISHER BUDDIES NEWS



Agewell's trail-blazing Kingfisher Buddies project has been providing a welcoming and stimulating environment for people living with dementia and their carers for the past three years.

Delivered in partnership with Dementia Pathfinders CIC, the service includes home visits, dementia courses and training and weekly Kingfisher Buddies groups. Here's a round-up of some of the latest things that have been happening.

STARS ON FILM

Thanks to Kingfisher Buddies, two local people with dementia have become film stars and their life stories have been recorded for future generations of their family.

London-based dementia charity, My Life Films, have completed biographical films about two members of the Kingfisher Buddies group in Wednesbury.

The two families worked one-to-one with the film-makers who are specifically trained in working with people with dementia. During several meetings, they gathered stories, photographs, favourite music and interviews with the individual and family members to create a half hour Life Story Film which captures the individual's unique story.

The film is made up of several chapters with memories from birth to the present day, to celebrate and remember the individual's life. The highlights are also condensed into a five minute Profile Film.

My Life Films works on the concept that a dementia diagnosis does not define a person - their lives do. The disease is only one part of a person's much longer story. By focusing on the individual's life, the films increase their self-esteem and reduce their sense of isolation by bringing families and friends together and giving them a lasting memory of their loved one.

Sandra Graham, Kingfisher Buddies Community Pathfinder, explains: "The films capture a lifetime of memories of the person living with dementia in a special way. They enable them to share and celebrate their lives and maintain their identity.

"The longer film can be watched by the individual and their family regularly so they can reminisce and feel proud of their life when the memories are fading. The short film gives carers a quick introduction to them and helps them look beyond

the illness. Both provide a lasting memory for children and grandchildren."

Agewell staged a special premiere when members of the Kingfisher Buddies group viewed the Life Story Film of one member in the morning, enjoyed a fish and chip lunch, then watched the second Life Story Film in the afternoon.

"There's something really special about seeing people talking on film, not just looking at photos," adds Sandra. "The films are amazing."

A lovely experience

Julie Harris is delighted with the film about her dad, Tom aged 76.

"I thought it would be something to look back on when my dad has passed away," Julie says. "My mum died in 2017 and I would love to sit down and hear her voice again.

"It's really interesting for my dad as we often watch the film together and talk about it and it helps him to remember different times.

"The whole process was special from start to finish. The film-makers were brilliant and captured everything we wanted them to. Getting out the old photos brought back lots of family memories and we put them into different eras of dad's life such as his jobs when he was younger and my mum and dad's move to Spain.

"It was a lovely experience and the film is something we'll have forever."



Memories recorded

"Harry's film makes us cry every time we watch it," says Judy Francis, "not because we don't want to see it, but because it brings back so many memories."

Harry, aged 65, was keen to have the film made about his life and loves the end result. His wife Judy explains: "The film-makers came out to see us quite a few times and filmed me and Harry, both our children and our six-year-old grandson.

"Harry found it exhausting because there was a lot of information to recall but we'd certainly recommend it. He chose Petula Clark's "Sailor" as one of his favourite songs and members of the Wednesbury group were singing along when we showed the film.

"Our daughter got married during the filming and our son turned 30 so we were able to include photos of Harry at both these events. The film ends with Harry making joke after joke and people say it's just like him!"



FRIENDSHIP, SUPPORT AND A NEW FOCUS

Through Agewell's Kingfisher Buddies groups, Reuben Harris has found friendship, support and a new focus in life.

12 years ago, Reuben's wife, Mal, was diagnosed with semantic dementia which means she has difficulty recognising familiar faces.

"The dementia progressed quite slowly initially," explains Reuben. "At that time there was little support about and I didn't know where I could go for help.

"The groups give me a break and Mal absolutely loves them. She can't wait for them to start and gets ready hours early!"

"You just had to get on with it. Mal did go to a group for a while but everyone was in their 70s and 80s and she was only in her 50s.

"By early 2018, I knew I had to give up work to look after her. I heard about Agewell's Kingfisher Buddies group which had just started in

Wednesbury and we went along. From day one I helped serve the tea and toast and it was great! We'd been stuck in the house 24/7 for so long. At the group I found other guys I could talk to while making the tea and we built up friendships, which is what you need when you have someone with dementia.

"When the group set up at Portway Lifestyle Centre we went there too and then I was asked if I'd like to help out when the Blackheath group started up. The groups give me a break and Mal absolutely loves them. She can't wait for them to start and gets ready hours early!

"From previously having nothing, this is brilliant. I talk to the other carers and we share our experiences and I know I can call on them and they'll help."

Reuben has recently become an Agewell volunteer, helping to unlock the rooms for the groups, set up the tables and chairs and do whatever's needed.

"I wouldn't know what to do without the groups," Reuben says.



ACTIVITIES GALORE

Kingfisher Buddies Community Pathfinders, Sandra Graham and Debra Pierson organise a wide range of meaningful activities for the groups, to help people with dementia – and their carers – continue to enjoy doing the things they love and to try something new.

"We are always on the look-out for different activities to bring to the groups," said Debra.

"Members have listened to storytellers and poets, enjoyed a relaxing hand and arm massage, tried out circus skills, listened to harp and accordion performances, met animals and mini beasts, and learnt a host of useful information from speakers on subjects including fire safety and community alarms.

Rangoli Workshop

When international Rangoli artist, Ranbir Kaur, held a photographic exhibition of her work at Wednesbury Museum & Art Gallery, the Kingfisher Buddies group, which meets at The Old Post Office, was invited to a special viewing.

Having looked at Ranbir's work, the group took part in a workshop to create a Rangoli of their own, using coloured rice and spices to make patterns.



'Magic Table' Activities



One of the most innovative activities involves the use of our new motion-activated projection system, which projects an image or game onto a table. An individual or a group of people can then interact with it.

It's fun to use and enables people to stretch, compete, think and be challenged, as well as socialise and enjoy meaningful activities together.

"Many people living with dementia experience a loss of motivation, interest, or become withdrawn, which has an effect on their overall well-being," explains Sandra. "Being inactive not only leads to stiffness in muscles but can result in boredom and depression too.

"With the person we are working with in mind, appropriate levels of activity can be selected and we're already seeing moments of happiness being created for people living with dementia and their loved ones."

Sandra is pictured using the 'magic table' with Archie Slater. Archie and his wife Carol attend the Kingfisher Buddies groups at Portway Lifestyle Centre in Oldbury and Elizabeth Prout Gardens in Blackheath. When Sandra projected an image of Leicester Square it provided a reminiscence session, as Archie's sister and son both live in London and he visits often.

Afternoon Tea

More than 30 Kingfisher Buddies members enjoyed a relaxing afternoon tea at the Ibis Hotel in Oldbury last summer and the outing was so popular that a return visit is planned for December.



Trips Out

43 people living with dementia from all three Kingfisher Buddies groups, their carers and Agewell staff enjoyed a superb day out at Blists Hill Victorian town in glorious September sunshine.

Community Pathfinder, Sandra Graham, explains: "Members of the groups had been working hard to raise funds, including packing bags at Morrisons, so we decided to use it for a big coach trip.

"We arranged a guided trip on the Sabrena passenger boat along the River Severn in the morning before visiting Blists Hill.

"It was a real trip down memory lane for everyone, with one of the highlights being a visit to the Victorian fish and chip shop!"



NEW

Kingfisher Dementia Services Meeting Centre

We are delighted to confirm that thanks to funding from the Better Care Fund, our first Meeting Centre for people living in Sandwell with mild to moderate dementia is now operational.

Taking place every Thursday from 10.30am to 3.30pm at St James Church in Oldbury, the Meeting Centre is a social club where those living with dementia and their family carers can enjoy the

company of others, as well as a varied activity programme and a shared lunch.

You are welcome to attend as little or as often as you like. Preferably we would like people to book places and pay in advance to help with planning.

Charges apply. If you are interested, please call Agewell on 0121 796 9333 to find out more.

Kingfisher Buddies Groups

Come along and enjoy a range of activities, a cuppa and a chat at any of the following:

- Mondays 2pm to 4pm - Elizabeth Prout Gardens, Blackheath
- Tuesdays 11.30am to 1.30pm - The Old Post Office, Wednesbury
- Wednesdays 2pm to 4pm - Portway Lifestyle Centre, Oldbury

There is a small charge to attend each week.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GPs

Another part of the Kingfisher Buddies service is a six-week dementia programme that GPs can refer their patients and carers to following a diagnosis of dementia.

This free programme enables people to gain a whole range of advice, some of which will be useful straight away and some may be needed in the future. A variety of speakers advise on issues such as power of attorney, benefits and aids and adaptations, so people can start to prepare for the future.

Often an activity is provided which people with dementia can join in if they want a break from the session, and this also means carers have a chance to talk openly and ask questions on their own.

Around week four, participants are signposted to all the local support groups available, including the Kingfisher Buddies groups, so they can meet others and prevent themselves becoming isolated.

The first programme took place with Regis Medical Centre in Blackheath. Community Pathfinder, Debra Pierson, has now completed six programmes with the surgery, which is part of the Your Health Partnership, with a total of 105 people taking part.

"Receiving a diagnosis of dementia is very frightening for both the individual, their spouse, children and anyone supporting and caring for them," says Debra. "Our programme is designed to provide support for people and their carers in the early days of diagnosis, to enable them to be prepared, informed and equipped with all the information to allow them to continue living well."

Having seen how well the six-week dementia programmes were working, other surgeries in Your Health Partnership were keen to get involved. Debra has now also completed the first programme at Whiteheath Medical Centre in Oldbury, while Dementia Navigator, Claire Williams has run two programmes with Carters Green Medical Centre.

"12 people attended the first programme and it went really well," says Claire. "At least four of them now regularly come along to the Kingfisher Buddies group in Wednesbury."

Agewell has also been working with a second GP partnership, Citrus Health, providing a programme in conjunction with Walford Street Surgery in Tividale, Hawes Lane Surgery in Rowley Regis and Portway Family Practice in Oldbury.

Positive Feedback

"People with dementia and their carers can feel isolated. This programme gives them a wealth of information and enables them to make friends and develop a support network. It is a real pleasure to work alongside Agewell to share expertise. If I have a complex case, I know I can call on them and the patient will be given a range of support. Agewell provides a gold standard of care."

Amy Williamson, Practice Nurse,
Your Health Partnership

"We found the whole six weeks very informative and useful. Having been in the same position twice before with no help and advice, I personally have found I'm more relaxed and in control of the situation this time."

Comment from participant

ST ALBANS PARTNERS WITH AGEWELL

Thanks to additional funding from the Better Care Fund, Agewell has been able to partner with St Albans Community Association to deliver our six-week dementia programme in Smethwick.

The first two programmes run by St Albans took place at Regent Street Medical Centre and Hill Top Medical Centre. Both proved very successful, with positive feedback being received from those taking part. The programme also incorporated flu vaccinations and health checks. A third and final programme will take place in January 2020.





NEW STAFF WELCOMED

Three staff members have joined the Agewell team this year.



Alice Williams was appointed Business Support Officer in February. She was already a familiar face, having helped out in the office and at the hospital shop before starting college.

More recently, Alice has been leading the Staying Steady

Staying Safe service before going on maternity leave at the end of December.

Claire Williams joined Agewell in March as a Dementia Navigator. Her 12-month contract is funded by the Better Care Fund which aims to join up health and care services so people can manage their own health and wellbeing.



Claire, who was previously a pharmacy technician for 15 years, has first-hand experience of dementia as both her nan and her father-in-law had it.

"I thought this role was a fantastic opportunity and I absolutely love it," says Claire.

Nicola Groves became Agewell's Community Navigator on the SPARCS (Social Prescribing for Active Resilient Communities in Sandwell) project in March.

Delivered in partnership with Murray Hall Community Trust, the project's aim is to reduce the social isolation and loneliness of the over 65s across Sandwell.

A fully trained Smoking Cessation Practitioner, Nicola has worked in the community, with GP surgeries, schools, hospitals and pharmacies.

She also worked in GP surgeries carrying out NHS Health Checks for people between the ages of 40 and 74.

"After working in the Stop Smoking Service for nearly six years and seeing a rewarding decline in the reduction of smokers, I was ready to find a new career, helping people in other ways to enjoy a healthy, happy life," says Nicola.

EASIER PAYMENT

It's now even easier to pay at Agewell's shop in the Outpatients Department at Sandwell Hospital!

We have invested in a card reader so shoppers can pay by card or cash. As a result, daily takings have increased and the shop is busier than ever.

As well as selling a wide range of newspapers, snacks and toiletries, the shop is also used to share information on Agewell's services. The team has been busy outside the shop promoting the Staying Steady Staying Safe service to reduce the risk of falls.

AGEWELL AND YOUR BIG DAY

Surprise your loved one with a present from the past – and raise funds for Agewell at the same time.

Your Big Day produces innovative video gifts tailored to a specific date in history, drawing on the extensive film and television archives of ITN and Reuters.

The 5-minute videos are presented by former BBC and ITV newscaster Sir Martyn Lewis and are delivered direct to your mobile, tablet or desktop device. Plus each one has a unique, personal message from the sender embedded in the opening titles.

Agewell is a charity partner with Your Big Day which means we receive a donation each time a video is ordered using our unique code.

Please call us on
0121 796 9333 before
you order.



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

**STAYING
STEADY
STAYING
SAFE**



Balance Exercises

These exercises will help improve balance regularly.



Heel Raises

Stand tall, feet hip width apart and flat on the floor, holding the back of a sturdy chair or the kitchen sink. Lift your heels off the floor to a slow count of 5, taking your weight onto your big toes. Then lower with control to a slow count of 5. Repeat 10 to 20 times.

Toe Raises

Sit tall on the chair, feet hip flat on the floor to a slow count of 5, taking your weight on your with control to a slow count of 5. Repeat 10 to 20 times.

www.agewelluk.org.uk

Raising funds for Agewell

Agewell's mission is to help older people to 'age well'. Our work enables them to live happier and healthier lives, remaining independent for as long as possible.

There are many ways you can raise much needed funds for Agewell including:

- Organising a fundraising event or activity
- Making a one-off donation, or a donation in memory of a loved one
- Shopping online through **Easyfundraising**
- Purchasing travel insurance, equity release, stairlifts, personal alarms, pre-paid funeral plans and independent living aids through **Advant-age**
- Purchasing a video gift through **Your Big Day**
- Leaving a gift to Agewell in your will

Any support you can provide will help us to deliver more services to local, older people.

Contact us on 0121 796 9333 to find out more.

Contact Details

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

T: 0121 796 9333

F: 0121 217 0025

E: info@agewelluk.org.uk

W: www.agewelluk.org.uk

get social:



Partnership working

