

Join in With The 'Big Knit'



This is your chance to get creative and support local Stockport people at the same time! We will use ALL monies raised in our support services.

The Big Knit is the campaign that Age UK has run in partnership with Innocent drinks since 2003, where we ask you to knit little woolly hats which then go on to their smoothies. For every hat that we send in, Age UK Stockport receives 25p.

We started the campaign in December and are extremely grateful for the hats we have already received, but we would still like some more!

We have some lovely new patterns for both knitted and crocheted hats which can be downloaded [here](#) or if you get in touch we are happy to post them to you. The patterns include all those pictured above, but you don't have to stick to the pattern as long as they are about the right size!

Every hat is important, whether it's as neat as a pin or as homemade as a pasta portrait. Knit one, knit loads - you'll be making a huge difference either way. When you've run out of wool-power, or floorspace, drop your hats to us at the address below or if you like we can collect them!

We have also started a Zoom '**Knit and Natter**' group, details of which are on the back page. All abilities welcome—or just come for the natter!

All the money we raise from the Big Knit will stay in Stockport to help combat loneliness – so those little hats really do make a big difference!

Future copies are available on our website www.ageukstockport.org.uk or by signing up to email info@ageukstockport.org.uk (you may unsubscribe at any time)

Monthly News - March 21

Age UK Stockport Update

February saw rates of coronavirus in Stockport continuing to fall gradually, although still higher than the national average at 178.6 per 100,000. There was good news with the continuing success of the vaccination programme, and in Stockport more than 80,000 people had been vaccinated by mid-February.

8th March will bring the start of the Governments Covid-19 Response Spring plan; a Roadmap out of the current lockdown that starts with the return of schools – although little else will change until the 29th March. Age UK Stockport will be following the Road Map and recovering and returning services at the rate permitted.

? Question ?

We don't intend to just return to the pre Covid normal—we plan to take all the many things we have learnt from the last 12 months to see how we can do things better than ever. Some obvious ones are the increasing importance of finding ways that everyone can benefit from some digital activity, and the new awareness around hygiene and infection control which we will be keeping up with.

We would love to hear your thoughts – please send any ideas on lessons from the last year or things you think we can do differently - so we can use them as we plan our AUKS roadmap to recovery. Email us at info@ageukstockport.org.uk or send to our address, or if you would like to talk it through with someone ring 0161 480 1211.

For now - remain vigilant and stay safe.

Concessionary Passes



From the 1st February last year if you wanted to continue to use your concessionary pass to travel off peak on trams and trains in Greater Manchester you needed to pay an annual £10 fee; these are now starting to expire, but plans are in place to encourage people **not to travel to renew their pass.**

Instead, anyone who bought the £10 add-on in early 2020 and who needs to travel for a legally permitted reason will still be able to use their pass, without renewing, until **31 March 2021.**

TfGM is continuing to encourage people to stay at home to help protect the NHS and save lives. So the move is to minimise unnecessary trips on public transport to TfGM Travel-shops or Pay Point stores during lockdown.

Passholders that haven't previously paid, but do need to make essential journeys, will still need to pay £10 to add tram and train.

You can find more information on [TfGM website](https://www.tfgm.com)

Do You Know March 21st is Census Day!



"Census 2021
ensures my
voice matters"

making it count for Stockport!

Households across Stockport will soon be asked to take part in Census 2021.

The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

It will be the first run predominantly **online**, with households receiving a letter with a unique access code, allowing them to complete the questionnaire on their computers, phones or tablets. But note below.

"A successful census will ensure everyone from local government to charities can put services and funding in the places where they are most needed," Iain Bell, deputy national statistician at the Office for National Statistics, said.

"This could mean things like doctors' surgeries, schools and new transport routes. That's why it is so important everyone takes part and we have made it easier for people to do so online on any device, with help and paper questionnaires for those that need them."

Census day will be on March 21, but households across the country will receive letters with online codes allowing them to take part from early March.

The census will include questions about your sex, age, work, health, education, household size and ethnicity. And, for the first time, there will be a question asking people whether they have served in the armed forces, as well as voluntary questions for those aged 16 and over on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Results will be available within 12 months, although personal records will be locked away for 100 years, kept safe for future generations.

If you need help or can't do the census online you can request a paper copy through the census website or by telephoning the number on the information you get through the post. For more information, visit [census.gov.uk](https://www.census.gov.uk)

Digital Buddies

We are being asked to do more and more on line so if you are interested in learning, you might want to find out more about 'Digital Buddies'. Age UK Stockport and Sky are working together to match people up with one of Sky's trained volunteers (Digital Buddies) who will contact you by telephone each week to help you learn to make the most of using your computer, tablet or Smartphone.

They can help you to stay connected to others or help you learn how to use the internet so you can access a range of information and also services or shop online for food and so much more!

For more information call us on 0161 480 1211

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56 Wellington Street
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Telephone: 0161 480 1211

Email: info@ageukstockport.org.uk

Website: www.ageukstockport.org.uk

Stockport Storytellers



Stockport Storytellers started as a Culture Champions project in the first quarter to 2020 called 'Memories of Stockport'. People aged 50+ were invited to get together at Stockport Library to write stories about their memories of their earlier years in Stockport. Each author was then videoed narrating their stories and this was combined with images from the times and places to make a film.

It was hoped this would be taken around Care Homes and Community Centres and be shared to stimulate and encourage conversation, and also generate further interest in Creative Writing; perhaps culminating in an anthology of stories. COVID 19 prevented that but the group kept going and evolved into Stockport Storytellers.

Stockport Storytellers write a fiction short story every week on different subjects and themes, then meet on Skype every Thursday to give a friendly constructive critique of each other's stories and discuss them. They describe themselves as a 'friendly bunch, who support and encourage each other'.

They have a website: <http://www.stockportstorytellers.keepingusttogether.org.uk/> where they showcase their stories. The film, Memories of Stockport is also on there and they are also adding their latest stories regularly, some of which are videoed.

The group always welcome new members from the over-50's, living in the Borough of Stockport. The only other criteria being a love of writing and the commitment to attempt a short story every week.

They can be contacted via the website or by email; stockportstorytellers@outlook.com

Thank You to Sky Cares



Sky Cares chose Age UK as their charity of the year last year and they have been true to their commitment and have been supporting us throughout the pandemic. They helped us to deliver shopping during the first lockdown and others, and at Christmas they sent fantastic gifts and helped us deliver other gifts that others had provided.

For Valentines Day their catering teams produced 400 sweet treat boxes for Stockport residents, with many getting 'thinking of you' cards to go with them.

They are also supporting us by some staff becoming 'Digital Buddies', matching their trained volunteers with people who need help digitally to make the most of using their computer, tablet or Smartphone.

'THANK YOU'
to everyone at Sky for making a difference!

£75m of Unclaimed Pension Credit in GM



It is estimated that 43,000 people across the Greater Manchester region could be eligible to benefit from £75 million unclaimed monies.

Pension Credit is a benefit for people over State Pension age. It tops up your income if you're struggling to make ends meet.

If you are entitled to Pension Credit it could also get you access to additional financial benefits including a free TV licence for over 75s, housing

benefit and council tax support, and money towards home insulation.

If you would like a free check to see what you are entitled to please get in touch with our **Information and Advice** team on **0161 477 1213** or visit the benefits calculator on the Age UK website <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/benefits-entitlements/benefits-calculator/>

Mayoral and Local Elections 6th May 21

There are local and Mayoral elections happening on 6 May 2021, including elections that were postponed from May 2020.

The electoral commission has said polling stations will be safe places to vote in these elections, but if you can't or don't want to go to the polling station you can vote by post or by proxy. You need to register to do this.

The deadline to register to vote is midnight on Monday 19 April.

If you would like to vote by post, you need to complete a postal vote application form. You can download this form [here](#). You then need to send your completed form to the electoral services team at your council. For Stockport residents you can contact your local electoral registration team, via online form at <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/contact-elections>

By telephone on **0161 217 6026** or at Stockport Town Hall, SK1 3XE

The deadline to apply for a postal vote is 5pm on Tuesday 20 April.

When you're ready to return your postal vote, take it to the post box yourself or ask someone you know and trust to post it for you, or you can contact your local authority to ask if they can collect it from you.

Your postal vote needs to be with your local authority by 10pm on polling day, 6 May 2021 to be counted.

If you can't post your postal vote back in time, you can take it your polling station or to your local authority on polling day.

Energy Top Up Scam

Electricity users are being warned about a doorstep scam where victims are offered discounted credit for their top-up electricity meters. Victims have paid for discounted electricity top-ups, but later found the money did not reach their energy suppliers and had to pay for the electricity again.

Energy companies have launched a national campaign urging people to 'Top up Safe' by only buying electricity prepayment through official channels and not to buy credit for their meters on the doorstep.

To report a fraud, call **Action Fraud on 0300 123 204** or report it online at <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/>

Zoom Dates For Your Diary

Tuesdays 9th & 23rd March 2021 11.00am to 12.00pm



Join us for a "virtual coffee morning" via Zoom, if you are feeling disengaged or isolated or you just need a bit of company, you can get together with others for a friendly chat. To sign up for this event please click on the relevant date below

[Positive Smiles Tickets, Tue 9 Mar 2021 at 11:00 | Eventbrite](#)

[Positive Smiles Tickets, Tue 23 Mar 2021 at 11:00 | Eventbrite](#)

Wednesday 31st March 2021 11.00am to 12.00pm



Join us for a Knit and Natter. Don't worry if you can't knit, you can just come along for the natter! One of the aims of the group will be to knit some of the little woolly hats to go on the Innocent Smoothie bottles and raise funds for Age UK Stockport, but the main aim is to have a natter and get people connected!

[Knit & Natter Tickets, Wed 31 Mar 2021 at 11:00 | Eventbrite](#)

Follow the links to get the tickets or visit our website for a full list of events

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/stockport/activities-and-events/campaigns/>

If you have any problems or need help please give us a call.

Age UK Stockport is a registered charity 1139547