

# PIGEON POST

Keeping you informed & involved  
July/August 2025



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## Welcome



As I write this, I'm sitting in front of two fans, the blinds drawn, and a huge bottle of water by my side - and I still feel like I'm on fire! The summer sun can be relentless, so please make sure you keep cool, stay hydrated, and avoid going out during the hottest parts of the day.

If the heat is playing havoc with your sleep, turn to page 15 for some handy tips on how to stay cool at night.

Also in this issue, we're delighted to feature a fascinating interview with Anna, a former costume designer who has travelled the world creating spectacular outfits for ballet, dance, and theatre.

Read about our inspirational exercise class regular June who is now one of the faces of Age UK's national Act Now, Age Better campaign – all thanks to her fantastic energy and positive attitude.

And a big congratulations to one of our Handyperson clients Hilary who has been awarded an OBE for services to the community.

So pour yourself a cold drink, find a shady spot, and enjoy your copy of Pigeon Post

Helen Newman  
Chief Executive  
Age UK Barnet

"For one human being to love another;  
that is perhaps the most difficult of all our tasks,  
the ultimate, the last test and proof,  
the work for which all other work is but preparations."



~ Rainer Maria Rilke



## NUTRITION BITES A SALAD A DAY KEEPS THE DOCTOR AWAY...

Salads are an easy way to fill at least half your plate at each meal with a variety of fruit and vegetables – particularly in the summer when there's such an abundance of seasonal vegetables in the shops. "Research has shown that people who eat a diet more dominant in plant foods remain healthier as they age," says dietitian and volunteer Kato. "This is because of the protective chemicals, fibre, vitamins and minerals they contain."



**Get creative and build your own salads following a few basic rules.**

1. A whole grain such as bulgur wheat, couscous, wholegrain rice, freekeh, or bulgur
2. Fresh or roasted vegetables, and/or fresh or dried fruit
3. A source of protein such as cheese, feta or halloumi, fish such as smoked mackerel or canned tuna, pulses such as chickpeas or lentils, or meat such as left-over chicken
4. Toasted nuts or seeds
5. A dressing

Here are some recipes for inspiration – if you are cooking for one, the leftovers all keep well in the fridge for 3-5 days when stored in a sealed container.

### Chicken salad (serves 2)

Arrange the leaves of one gem lettuce on 2 plates. In a large salad bowl, place 8tbsp of cooked brown/red/black rice, 150g cooked chicken cut into bite-size pieces, 2 medium chopped tomatoes, ¼ diced cucumber, 2 diced spring onions, 1 finely chopped yellow pepper, 1 diced canned pineapple ring, ½ diced apple (rubbed with lemon juice), 4 finely chopped dried apricots, ½ tsp sultanas, and 1tbsp flaked almonds. Mix together ½ tbsp olive oil, 2tsp white wine vinegar, black pepper, and 1tbsp Greek yoghurt. Dress the salad with the vinaigrette and spoon on top of the lettuce leaves.



### Warm spring salad (serves 2)

Boil 8 baby potatoes in simmering water until tender, drain and cut in half. Steam 1 cup frozen peas, 1 cup frozen broad beans and 125g fine green beans until tender, about 5 minutes. Drain and set aside. Finely slice ½ red onion, and gently fry for 2 minutes in 1tbsp olive oil. Add peas and beans to the pan and toss, then add potatoes. Take off the heat, add a mix of 1tbsp olive oil, 1tbsp red wine vinegar, salt and pepper and toss well. Scatter 150g rocket or watercress on 2 plates, top with vegetables and drizzle with remaining dressing.

### Mackerel salad

Toast 75g whole almonds in a dry pan on low heat until brown. Whisk together grated zest and juice of 1 lemon, 1tbsp apple cider vinegar, 1tbsp Dijon mustard, 3tbsp olive oil, ¼ tsp sugar, salt and pepper to taste. In a bowl, add 2 small fennel bulbs, trimmed and thinly sliced, 2 unpeeled apples, cored and diced, 1tbsp chopped capers, and 1 bunch each chopped dill and parsley. Break up 200g smoked mackerel fillets. Gently mix all the ingredients and dress with the vinaigrette.



### Couscous salad (serves 2)

Add 200ml boiling vegetable stock to 150g wholegrain couscous, cover with a plate and leave for 5 minutes. Whisk together 4tbsp olive oil, 3tbsp lime or lemon juice, 2 minced garlic cloves, 2tbsp chopped mint, ½ tsp sugar. Fluff the couscous with a fork and stir in a can of drained chickpeas. Add half the dressing. Cut 300g courgettes in slices and halve 300g cherry tomatoes. In a pan, heat 1tbsp olive oil and gently fry first the courgette, and then the tomato with 1tsp dried oregano. Add to the salad bowl. Cut 250g halloumi cheese in strips and in the same pan, fry for 1-2 minutes until light brown. Top the salad with the cheese and drizzle with the remaining dressing.

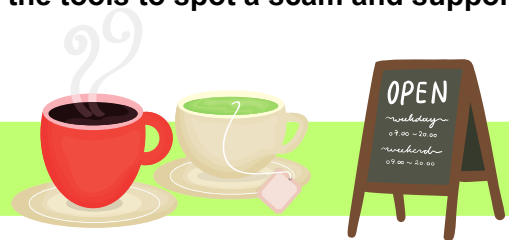


## 7 tips from our scams awareness team on avoiding common scams

1. Avoid the phone call trap – when scammers pretend to be from the bank, the police, or even family members.  
**Advice:** Never give your PIN number or transfer money because someone told you to over the phone. Always hang up and call back using a number you trust.
2. Look out for 'too good to be true' letters or texts – for instance, prize draws, "unclaimed inheritance" letters, or suspicious text messages promising refunds.  
**Advice:** If it seems too good to be true, it probably is. Real organisations don't ask for money to release a prize.
3. Be aware of courier scams when scammers claim to be from the police or bank and send a "courier" to collect your bank card or cash.  
**Advice:** Neither the police nor your bank will ever send someone to collect your card.
4. Ask yourself – is the person ringing on your door bell genuine? Or could they be rogue traders, fake charity collectors, or people asking to "check your meter" without ID.  
**Advice:** Don't open the door to anyone you don't know. Use a door chain or talk through the letterbox. Ask for ID and call the company to check.
5. Think before paying anyone - scammers often ask for gift cards, cash, or bank transfers.  
**Advice:** Only pay people you know and trust – never with gift cards, vouchers, or via a link in a message.
6. Be extra cautious after changes in legislation or new Government announcements - scammers will try to take advantage. For instance, after the news that the Winter Fuel Payment will be restored for millions of older people, scammers are pretending to set up their Winter Fuel Payment - and stealing their banking details.  
**Advice:** Remember, if you're contacted out of the blue, never give over any personal information.
7. Phone a friend or family – speak to family, friends, or a trusted organisation if you're unsure.  
**Advice:** There's no shame in asking. Better safe than sorry!

For more advice on scams prevention, please contact Joyce and the Age UK Barnet scams awareness support team on 020 8432 2217. A member of the team can give you a one-to-one session and review your regular activities. They can give you the tools to spot a scam and support you if you have been a victim of a scam.

## COFFEE MORNINGS



**COFFEE MORNINGS:** Join us for a cuppa and a friendly chat at one of our new coffee mornings which are held between 10.30am to 12 noon around the borough except Mill Hill library which is 11.00am to 12.30pm.

**North Road Community Centre**, 230 Burnt Oak Broadway, Edgware HA8 0AP. Tues 15 July, Tues 12 Aug–Community Energy Talk, 16 Sept.

**All Saints Church**, Church Walk, Childs Hill, NW2 2JS. Thurs 17 July–Age Friendly Talk, Thurs 14 August–Scams Talk, Thurs 11 Sept.

**Lane End Medical Centre**, 2 Penshurst Gardens, Edgware HA8 9GJ. Wed 16 July–Scams Talk, Wed 20 Aug, Wed 17 Sept–Age Friendly Talk.

**Kingsley Court**, Tayside Drive, Edgware HA8 8RE. Wed 30 July–Age Friendly Talk, Wed 27 Aug, Wed 24 Sept–Scams Talk.

**Mill Hill Library**, Hartley Avenue, London NW7 2HX – 11.00am–12.30pm. Thurs 3 July–Scams Talk, Thurs 7 Aug–Age Friendly Talk, Thurs 4 Sept

**Ann Owens Centre**, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT. Sat 26 July, Sat 30 Aug, Sat 27 Sept

For further info call Tamara on 0208 1297619 or email [tamara.kocsubej@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:tamara.kocsubej@ageukbarnet.org.uk)

**All coffee morning will be followed by Bingo (apart from Kingsley Court) - FREE to play, prizes to be won!!**





Age UK Barnet exercise goer June is a poster girl for Age UK's new Act Now, Age Better campaign which encourages people to make lifestyle changes now to help age well and live later life in better health.

We were delighted that June was chosen to take part in the campaign, which aims to shift public attitudes around ageing and spark a national conversation about what it really means to grow older. The campaign kicks off with a focus on the importance of staying active — a key part of maintaining health and independence.

The idea is every step, pedal stroke, paddle, dance move, and even bit of housework counts - which is the way June lives her life: "I don't use a car anymore; I have to carry shopping. And that is weight training, if you like, without using actual weights. It's all good exercise," says June, 80, who also attends our Wednesday dance-based exercise class in East Finchley and our yoga sessions, "I worked as a health visitor for 16 years in my career in Northampton, and so I'm aware of how important exercise is. I've always been fairly active, but I think since coming to London I'm doing a lot more, just by virtue of where I am and what facilities that are here - and the classes that Age UK Barnet offers."

As life expectancy rises (78.8 years for men and 87.8 for women in the UK), the campaign highlights how lifestyle choices — not just genetics — play a major role in how well we age. With the right habits and support, more of us can look forward to living not just longer, but better.

Watch out for June in Age UK national's campaign throughout the year!



## CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

## MBE for services to the community



**Congratulations to Mrs Hilary Halter, East Finchley resident and Age UK Barnet Handyperson client, who is 91 years young and has just been awarded an MBE for services to vulnerable people. Hilary runs discussion groups on a variety of subjects, mainly in care homes across London, for the past 27 years.**





## SUDOKU

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### Across

- 4 Closer (6)
- 8 Prohibited (5)
- 9 Abandon hope (7)
- 10 Frenzied (7)
- 11 Confess (5)
- 12 Naval vessel (9)
- 17 Group of singers (5)
- 19 Light-fingered people (7)
- 21 Clique (2-5)
- 22 Free of obstructions (5)
- 23 Sunder (anag) (6)
- 24 Dismal (6)

### Down

- 1 Postpone (3,3)
- 2 Scold (7)
- 3 Spectre (5)
- 5 Rapture, bliss (7)
- 6 Kingdom (5)
- 7 Something uncommon (6)
- 9 Adorned (9)
- 13 Dickensian miser (7)
- 14 Mediterranean holiday area (7)
- 15 Combat (6)
- 16 Fish-eating bird of prey (6)
- 18 Academy award (5)
- 20 Become liable for (5)

## WORD SEARCH - SILENT LETTERS

T H G I N K U T I R W K N  
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## CROSSWORD

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## RECIPE TIME

# CHORIZO, ORZO & SWEETCORN SUMMER STEW



### Ingredients

- 1 tsp olive oil
- bunch of spring onions, sliced, green and white parts separated
- 1 red pepper cut into small cubes
- 50g chorizo cut into small cubes
- 1 garlic clove crushed
- 75g orzo
- ½ tsp smoked paprika
- 200g can sweetcorn drained
- 1 large tomato chopped
- 350ml low-salt chicken or vegetable stock
- ½ small bunch of parsley chopped
- ½ lemon zested and juiced



### Method

Heat the oil in a deep frying pan and fry the white parts of the spring onions, the peppers and chorizo for 8 mins, until the peppers are soft and the chorizo is just golden.

Stir in the garlic, orzo, paprika, sweetcorn and tomato, and fry for 2-3 mins more. Pour in the stock. Bring to a simmer and cook for 8-10 mins, stirring often, until the orzo is tender. Stir in the parsley, the green parts of the spring onions, and the lemon juice and zest.

## HEALTHY BANANA BREAD



### Ingredients

- low-fat spread for the tin, plus extra to serve
- 140g wholemeal flour
- 100g self-raising flour
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 300g mashed overripe bananas
- 4 tbsp agave syrup
- 3 large eggs beaten with a fork
- 150ml pot low-fat natural yogurt
- 25g chopped pecan or walnuts (optional)



### Method

- Step 1
  - Heat oven to 160C/140C fan/gas 3. Grease and line a 2lb loaf tin with baking parchment (allow it to come 2cm above top of tin). Mix the flours, bicarb, baking powder and a pinch of salt in a large bowl.
- Step 2
  - Mix the bananas, syrup, eggs and yogurt. Quickly stir into dry ingredients, then gently scrape into the tin and scatter with nuts, if using. Bake for 1 hr 10 mins-1 hr 15 mins or until a skewer comes out clean.
- Step 3
  - Cool in tin on a wire rack. Eat warm or at room temperature, with low-fat spread.

Studies show that regular exercise helps us fall asleep more quickly and improves sleep quality and, according to Johns Hopkins Center for Sleep, people who engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise may see a difference in sleep quality that same night. This might mean an exercise class or fast walking, but it could mean a 30 minute bout of gardening or housework.

### Why sleep helps exercise: how does it work?

Morning or afternoon exercise supports better sleep but intense evening workouts may delay melatonin and disrupt sleep for some people.

According to Johns Hopkins researchers, moderate aerobic exercise increases the amount of slow wave sleep you get. Slow wave sleep refers to deep sleep, where the brain and body have a chance to rejuvenate. Exercise also enhances melatonin levels, a hormone that regulates your sleep-wake cycle and it lowers stress levels, a major cause of sleep difficulties, and improves overall mood.

### Bedtime stretch routine



#### 1. Seated Forward Fold

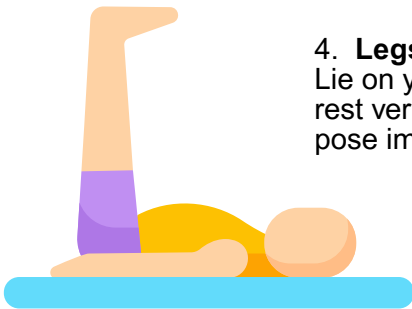
Sit on a chair with feet flat on the floor. Slowly lean forward, letting your arms dangle toward the floor. Breathe deeply and hold for 20–30 seconds. This stretch eases lower back tension and signals the body to relax.

#### 2. Ankle Rolls

While seated or lying down, gently roll each ankle in slow circles—10 times in each direction. This improves circulation, especially if you've been less active during the day.

#### 3. Deep Breathing with Shoulder Rolls

Inhale deeply while lifting your shoulders up to your ears, then exhale as you roll them back and down. Repeat five times. This helps release tension and quiet the nervous system.

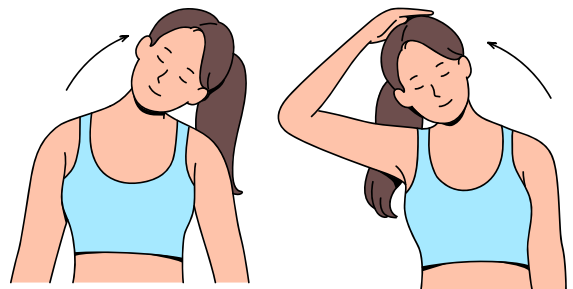


#### 4. Legs-Up-the-Wall (if comfortable)

Lie on your back near a wall and gently swing your legs up so they rest vertically against it. Stay here for a few minutes. This calming pose improves blood flow and reduces swelling in the legs.

#### 5. Gentle Neck Stretches

Tilt your head slowly from side to side, holding for 5–10 seconds each way. Avoid pushing or forcing—keep it soft and soothing.



Try these exercises as part of a calming bedtime routine—perhaps after a warm drink and before reading or meditation. Your body (and your sleep) will thank you.





**Each month former journalist Ed Newman has a lovely chat with a Barnet resident and shares their story with the rest of us. This time Ed speaks to former costume designer and globe trotter Anna Watkins.**

Anna Watkins has travelled the world in her life acquiring and designing costumes for opera, ballet and theatre. It was only failing eyesight that brought her renowned career to an end in recent years but, even now, she is still fascinated by taste and can still spot what looks good.

It was a career that saw her work with notable people from the arts like Sir Kenneth MacMillan and Mikail Baryshnikov and in several places across the USA, Japan, Korea, Australia, Belgium and Latvia, as well as this country. Now retired, but still very active and creative, Anna lives at the pioneering New Ground Co-Housing complex in Hlgh Barnet. It was there that Anna welcomed me for a chat about her professional life, the all-female community she lives in and what she intends to leave to medical science.

"I was very lucky in my career," Anna admits to Pigeon Post.

"I started off at Camberwell Arts School where I studied textiles. Then, I moved to the Slade School of Fine Art where I learned about theatre design. I was there for a long time but I still didn't think I knew anything when I left. That's why I ended up getting the most junior of jobs at the Old Vic's costume department. The pattern of my career was established; I'd become a freelance and I was ducking and diving from then on.

"It wasn't long before I was offered a job in New York, followed by another one the next year. Then, I moved to the Houston ballet, San Francisco and later Seattle. I was like a sponge learning so much from the people I met in all those places. My job as a costume supervisor meant I was given a budget and was in charge of manufacturing, including dying fabrics and making shoes. Ever since I was a child going to jumble sales, I've always been a very good shopper, visiting markets and buying cheap items for the productions. It could be very hard work and often I'd be up all night troubleshooting to make sure everything was sorted out before opening night.

"Sometimes, a production would be transferred to another country and it would be my job to make sure everything was in place. That meant getting the original costumes to fit a new cast. Everything was recycled, it was all cloak and mirrors as we called it.

"When you're concentrating on the costumes, it's easy to forget the performers – you'd recognise a body but not know a name. Over time, I realised how important it was to make a connection with those singing or dancing on the stage. It's important they feel good in a costume if they're going to produce their best. It's a horrible life going on tour sometimes – they're young, vulnerable and a long way from home. So, I often found myself acting like a mother to many of them over the years."

In 2000, Anna took a job with the Boston Early Music Festival, even though at first she thought it would be an impossible job with the available budget. She would eventually become the company's costume designer and that meant she only produced what she knew the company could afford, making a lot of things herself. Anna's growing reputation meant she was involved in productions in London, Paris, New York and across the world. Then, in 2016, she received the prestigious Franco Abbiati award for her work on the Janacek opera Jenufa in Bologna. That was also the year when she moved into New Ground, the first senior co-housing community in the country.



*Anna today*



"I first joined the group back in 2009," Anna recalls. "We met up in Belsize Park once a month to discuss our values, our ethos and the idea of living together in one place. I learned a lot about the others in that time and knew that I was going to go with this band of sisters wherever they went. In 2014, I sold my house in Streatham and moved to Alston Works in Barnet where I could keep a close eye on the building of New Ground.

*Anna during her time as a costume designer with choreographer Kenneth MacMillan*

"We finally moved into the building in December 2016 and we've spent the nine years since watching the garden grow and getting to know each other. I can have hermit tendencies but it's good to have other people around. People do have complaints occasionally but that's just like any family. You have 22 sisters and everybody will have their favourites but you kind of love them all. It's still a work in progress but the basic philosophy of women over fifty working together and helping each other is at the heart of everything. There are loops people have to get through if they want to live here because we don't want people to end up saying 'I didn't know it was going to be like this.' That's why it's important we get to know people first and decide whether they will fit in here."

"It's not always easy for me because of my failing eyesight, which eventually meant I had to retire because, as a fashion designer, you need to be able to see what's on stage. Thankfully, I had a lovely assistant who described everything for me. I don't go to the theatre much now but I do enjoy the cinema, sometimes going several times a week."



*Anna fitting a costume for Sleeping Beauty*



Sadly, some of the original residents of New Ground have died. It was a particularly emotional experience when it happened for the first time but it also led to Anna making a decision about what she wanted to happen after her own death.

"That woman donated her body to the School of Anatomy, which encouraged one of the others to do the same thing and they, in turn, inspired me to make my decision," says Anna. "I heard a programme on Radio 4 about it and it was wonderful to learn how the bodies are treated so respectfully. I'm a member of St John the Baptist Church in Barnet and I've already asked the vicar if it could be a funeral without a body on a Saturday afternoon so there can be a good choir!"

*Anna's design for Antiochus and Stratonica for Boston Early Music Festival, which was cancelled before any costumes were made*



1840

## Costume designs through the ages



1903



1914



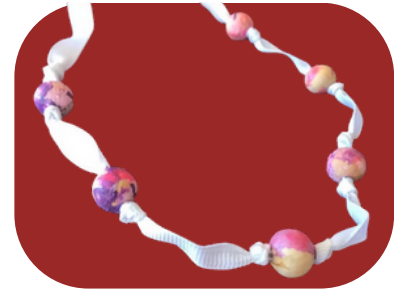
1930



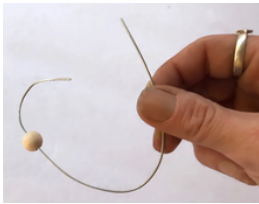
### WHAT YOU WILL NEED

wooden beads, lace,  
ribbon, thick string  
nail polish in at least 3 colors

wire  
big needle  
bowl for water



1. First step - get a container and fill it with tap water, cold water is fine.
2. Add drops of nail polish into the water. Shaking the polish before opening made the polish drip better.
3. Add more colors to the water. Three colours is a good amount to use



4. Run a wire through your bead and bend it so that it won't fall off.

5. Dip your bead on the wire into the nail polish water.  
6. Scoop up the nail polish color with your bead - but try not to scoop too much.

When you take your bead out, the nail polish should have attached itself to the bead in different spots giving it a marbled look.



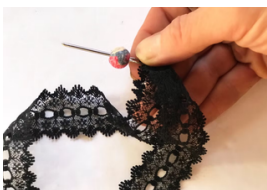
7. Wait about 30 seconds and pat down any polish that may have risen off the bead. The nail polish will stick to your finger if you don't give it a little time to harden up.

8. Place your beads somewhere they can dry.

Sticking the wire into a soft surface works well. That way you don't have to rest the bead on its side.



9. Decide what kind of trim you want to string your beads on and cut a good size length. Choices could be ribbon, lace, or cotton string.



10. Tie a knot close to the middle of your strand of trim.



11. Using a large-eyed needle, string your bead onto the trim.

12. String it up close to the knot you made.

13. Tie another knot to be placed on the other side of the bead.  
This takes some moving of your trim as you guide the knot to where you need it.



14. Tie another knot 1-2 inches down from your bead and two first knots.  
15. Repeat by adding a bead and another knot on the other side.



16. Continue to repeat the pattern until you've got the length you want, and are happy with the number of beads you have added.



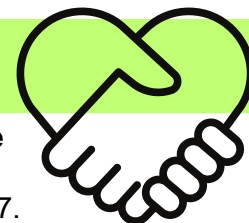
17. You can add a closing jewelry piece to the ends of your trim to make the necklace - or just tie the two ends in a bow.





## HOW CAN WE HELP?

## AGE UK BARNET SERVICES



- For advice about benefits, grants, housing and money concerns, phone our **Later Life Planning Service** on 020 8432 1417 or email [info@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:info@ageukbarnet.org.uk)
- For scams advice and support, call our **Scams Prevention Service** on 0208 432 2217.
- If you can't get out without help and would enjoy a regular chat with a friendly volunteer, try our **Befriending Service** on 020 8432 1416 or email [befriending@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:befriending@ageukbarnet.org.uk)
- Unable to get out to the shops and cannot shop online? We have a **Shopping Service\*** for people who need a light weekly shop For more info, tel 020 8150 0963.
- **Living Well Dementia Hub—dementia adviser service** and **day clubs\*** for people living with mild to moderate dementia and their carers. Phone 020 8203 5040. Our **Dementia Befriending Service** offers companionship - phone 020 8150 0967.
- Our **Stepping Out Service** for those who have early stages of dementia or confirmed memory issues, we offer short weekly walks with a volunteer. Phone 020 8150 0963.
- **Foot care\*** We offer basic nail-cutting (£15) at the Ann Owens Centre in East Finchley and, for people with diabetes, taking steroids or warfarin, we have nailcutting with a podiatrist (£20). For an appointment, phone 020 8203 5040.
- For essential jobs in the home please phone our **Handyperson Service\*** on 020 8150 0963. Some jobs such as changing a lightbulb are free of charge.
- **ADVICE CLINICS** in Chipping Barnet and Burnt Oak - for Barnet residents over 55 who might be struggling financially. The Age UK Barnet advice team will be giving benefits checks, pension credit checks and winter fuel payment advice.
- Chipping Barnet Library, Chipping Barnet Library, 3 Stapylton Rd, Barnet EN5 4Q - 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month.
- Burnt Oak Library, 99 Watling Ave, Burnt Oak HA8 0UB - 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays of the month - starting 28 July 2025
- The clinics are open from 10am-1pm and 2-4pm. To speed up process bring rent, service charge and bank statements. To book an appointment, please call us on 0208 203 5040 or email us on [support@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:support@ageukbarnet.org.uk)

**\*There is a charge for this service**

## EVENTS

### COME ALONG FRIDAYS (2-3pm)

A programme of engaging talks and musical performances at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane N2 8LT. Free to attend – but donations welcome! Fancy lunch too? Join us earlier at 12.45pm for a delicious home cooked two course meal - for only £8. To book your place for the lunch club and/or any of the events, please contact Louise on 07379 331807 or email [activities@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:activities@ageukbarnet.org.uk)

### Your money your way - Monday 14 July (9.30am - 1.30pm)

at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT. A morning of talks to help you manage your money as you age. Talks about making a will and power of attorney, paying for care and spotting a scam. Also advice for people on low income and how to use the benefits calculator. There'll be information stalls and free refreshments. To register, email [teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or phone her on 07502 989 403

### Talk: Why do we forget? Wednesday 16 July - 6.45pm (for 7pm start) to 8pm.

The Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, East Finchley N2 8LT. Professor Catherine Loveday will reveal: - why are some things more memorable than others, - why can't we forget things we want to forget - how we can protect against forgetting what we really need to remember. Plus memory boosting tips! FREE but donations welcome! To register, call Teresa on 07502 989 403 or email [teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk)

### New Memory Matters course - starts Tuesday 22 July 2025

Our next four-week Memory Matters course takes place at Finchley Fire Station, 227 Long Lane, London N3 2RP. The course offers science-backed practical solutions for people who are noticing memory changes or have had a recent dementia diagnosis. Pick up strategies to support and strengthen memory. Morning and afternoon sessions. Free to join but booking is essential - just email: [Memory.Matters@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:Memory.Matters@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or call Yianni on 020 8129 7624.

**Writer Lee Janogly, an 85 year old semi-retired fitness instructor and author, shares the conversational highlights of her regular meet-ups with a group of good friends. This time, the pain of selling the family home when the estate agent doesn't love your house as much as you do.**



"It ain't no fun gettin' old," said Gloria, adopting a Dolly Parton twang, and sinking into a chair with an audible groan. Still recovering from a recent hip replacement operation, we permitted the violation of our 'no old-person groaning' policy on this occasion.

"I just can't manage the stairs anymore," she went on. "It's one thing living in a big, old family house when you're bringing up four kids, but it's really got too much now that I'm on my own."

We sympathised. Since Gloria's husband died eight years ago, we knew she had been struggling with the upkeep of her house because, as with all old houses built in the 1930s, things kept going wrong with ill-fitting draughty windows, decrepit boilers and leaking roofs. Three of her adult children lived abroad, leaving one daughter and a very helpful son-in-law to deal with their mother's increasing dependency.

"Anyway, I've finally put the house on the market," said Gloria. "I contacted the local estate agent and they sent round this 'valuation expert' – who looked like he was barely out of nappies – to give me an idea of how much it's worth."

"You should get a good price for your house," said Laila, "there are couples with young families who desperately need properties with access to a park and with good schools in the area."

"You would think so," agreed Gloria. "I said I'd heard buyers were keen on places in such good condition that they could just move straight in, and he agreed – then implied it was a shame this wasn't one of them."

"And when I pointed out some special features like the hatch from the kitchen going through to the dining room, he said that's the first thing they would knock through to make the area into a 'family room' – whatever that is! He also sneered at my beloved gas cooker and said any buyer would want to modernise the kitchen and would install a seduction knob."

"A WHAT?!" we cried.

"I think Gloria means an induction hob," said Nancy. "I had one put in when I re-fitted my kitchen. They are brilliant and so easy to keep clean."

"He ignored all my lovely decorative touches," said Gloria "and just wanted to know if I had underfloor heating – as if! – and what time the sun came into the garden. Then he valued the house at a ridiculously low price and left."

"You mean you haven't got a swimming pool in the garden or a fully equipped gym in the basement," exclaimed Sheila. "You're obviously living in a slum, girl!"

"Tell you what," suggested Laila, "why don't we all sell up and move in with you. Then we could turn your house into a community for elderly women."

We all agreed this was a good idea. "I could do the cooking," said Deely, causing a slight imperceptible shudder to permeate the group. It was well known that Deely refused to be called by her given name, Delia, because of her incompetence in the kitchen.

Nancy hastily changed the subject, "What shall we call our new commune?"  
The conversation then disintegrated into our usual nonsense:

'Dotage Manor'

'The Incontinental'

'House of the Rising Stannah'

'The Senility Centre – armoured-Zimmer division'

'Home for the Mentally Bewildered – maximum security wing.'

And so on...

**Lee's very funny book, 'Getting Old, Deal with It' is published by Mensch Publishing.**





How can you tell if someone's memory problems are a normal part of ageing – or a sign of dementia?

When neuropsychologist Professor Catherine Loveday noticed her mum becoming more forgetful, she knew she had to say something. Fortunately, her mum was open to the conversation and receptive to the science-backed lifestyle advice that Catherine had picked up in her 30 years of memory research. Fifteen years later, and living with Alzheimer's Disease, Catherine's mum is still living at home and enjoying a good quality of life. Here Catherine shares advice and tips from the latest episode of her podcast Mempatthy.

Forgetfulness is often a normal part of ageing. "It's quite typical to find it harder to retain new information, learn new skills or recall names," says Catherine. "We might also notice ourselves getting slower at multitasking or needing more time to complete everyday tasks."

You might also notice that you remember events from years ago more easily than things that happened last week – this too is part of the natural ageing process.

So, when should you be concerned?



#### Warning signs to watch for

- Getting lost in familiar places
- Repeating questions or stories within 5–10 minutes, with no memory of doing so
- Struggling to follow the plot of a book or film
- Difficulty with everyday tasks, like handling money or planning a meal
- Personality or mood changes
- Neurological symptoms such as tremors or visual disturbances

#### Starting the conversation

If anyone you know is showing any of these warning signs, try to find out if they might be open to a discussion about it - the earlier the better, as people will have more insight at this stage and be more likely to agree to see their GP. "Reassure them that the earlier they find out what's going on, the more they can do to help preserve their independence and quality of life," says Catherine.



#### Getting assessed

The best course of action is to see your GP for an initial assessment. Remember, it might not be dementia - sometimes, memory problems are linked to other issues like infections, hearing loss or side effects from medication.

Even if nothing serious is found, a memory check provides a helpful baseline for the future. **And if your GP is dismissive, don't give up – be insistent. You know the person best!**

#### Lifestyle changes

Before a diagnosis, research has shown that there's lots you can do to support memory and maintain brain health – for instance, keeping to a regular schedule, using reminders and calendars, keeping the brain active with puzzles and games as well as eating well, exercising and connecting with others in groups and activities.

And even after a diagnosis, these lifestyle changes can slow down the progression of the condition.



#### Further information

To find out more about dementia and the lifestyle changes you need make to stay well you can watch episodes of Mempatthy wherever you get your podcasts. Topics covered include why sleep can become disrupted in people with memory loss, dealing with anxiety and how to respond when someone is convinced of something that didn't happen or cannot be true.

You can also contact our dementia advisers on 020 8203 5040 or email [info@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:info@ageukbarnet.org.uk)



## WHAT'S GROWING ON A BLOOMING GOOD DAY OUT



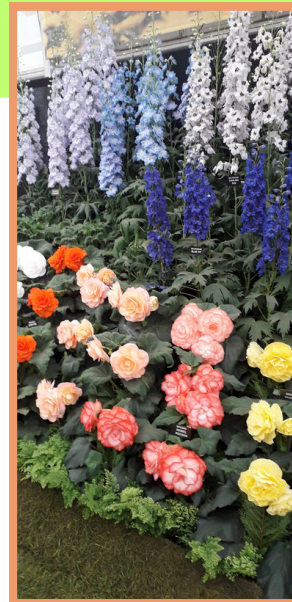
Since retiring, our gardening columnist Kevin loves spending time in the garden and his allotment. Each issue he lets us know what he's been up to and shares a few seasonal gardening tips. This time he shares his joy of garden shows after his visit to the Chelsea Flower Show.

Back in May I had the fantastic opportunity to visit the RHS Chelsea Flower Show - and what a treat it was! If you're a passionate gardener, a lover of design and creativity, or simply looking for an inspiring day out, Chelsea is the place to be.

Held annually in the beautiful grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea, it's the ultimate celebration of all things green, gorgeous, and gloriously imaginative.

I loved looking around the Great Pavilion, where specialist growers showcase spectacular floral displays and promote rare or unusual plants. But what really captures my imagination are the show gardens of all sizes, professionally designed spaces that highlight the latest in horticultural innovation and bold artistic flair. Chelsea features award-winning, professionally designed gardens that are both stunning and imaginative. They demonstrate the latest in horticultural trends, sustainable landscaping and artistic plant combinations that can spark ideas that can be adapted to any size outdoor space.

A crowd favourite was Monty Don's Dog Garden, a delightful and practical design celebrating the bond between pets and their people. This garden cleverly incorporated pet-friendly elements, such as robust plants and herbs like rosemary and thyme, shaded resting spots, and meandering paths shaped by a dog's natural movement. It was a great reminder that gardens can be shared and enjoyed by every member of the household - paws and all!



While the large show gardens always impress, my personal favourite this year was 'The Blue Mind Garden', which was awarded Best in Show in the Balcony and Container Garden category. This small but impressive space explored the calming influence of water on mental well-being - echoing the show's theme of wellness. Coastal-style planting of silver leaved plants, combined with clever use of sea shells (repurposed as tiles and pots) and reclaimed coastal materials created a soothing, reflective atmosphere. At its centre was a gentle water feature next to a still pool, designed to calm the senses and invite quiet contemplation. Polished, rippled stainless-steel panels on the back wall reflected light and plants, in beautiful, random ways, making the space feel larger, lighter, and even more interesting.



### July/August tips - What I learned from Chelsea

**Create a cutting garden:-** Plant or sow fast-growing blooms like cosmos, zinnias, sunflowers, and sweetpeas. Then you can bring the beauty of your garden indoors.

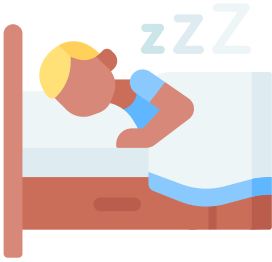
**Create a Mediterranean Corner:-** Bring those holiday vibes home. Use terracotta pots with drought-tolerant succulents, herbs, silver foliage and scented leaves. Try rosemary, thyme, oregano, and lavender.

**Design a Sunset Border:-** Focus on warm colours like orange, gold, coral, and deep reds. To celebrate the golden glow of long summer evenings. Add solar lanterns or fairy lights to enhance the evening magic.

**Create a relaxation spot:-** Add a bench, or comfy chair to a shady spot. Group pots of large leaved hostas or colourful fuchsias. Gardens are for enjoyment, not just chores.

## HEALTH

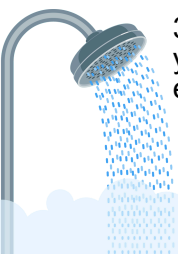
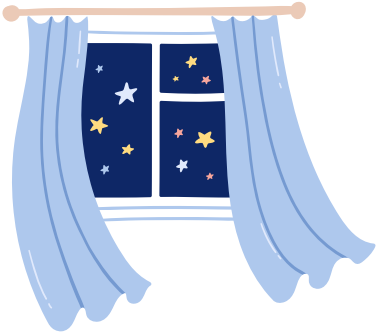
### HOW TO GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP IN THE HEAT



When the nights are muggy and your bedroom feels like an oven, getting a good night's sleep can be a real struggle. We asked the experts for practical, tried-and-tested tips to help you drift off – and stay asleep – in the heat.

1. Cool your room before bed - Open windows in the early morning or evening to let cooler air in, then close blinds or curtains during the day to block out the heat. Blackout curtains or thermal blinds can help keep rooms cooler too.

2. Choose the right bedding - ditch the duvet! Use a flat cotton sheet instead. Stick to lightweight, breathable fabrics like cotton or linen for both pyjamas and bed linen. Avoid synthetics, which trap heat.



3. Try a cool shower or foot soak – a luke warm (not cold) shower before bed helps lower your core temperature. Or, just soak your feet in cool water for 10 minutes – it's surprisingly effective.

4. Drink water in the day. Stay hydrated during the day, but avoid too much water right before bed to reduce night-time loo trips. You can keep a glass of water by the bed just in case.



5. Unplug unused electronics - chargers, TVs and lamps can give off surprising heat – switch them off to stop your room warming up.

6. Sleep low - If it's safe and comfortable, consider sleeping downstairs, as heat rises. Some people even pop a mattress on the floor temporarily during a hot spell.



## OLDER AND BETTER

### IT'S ALL IN THE MIND!



A study Psychology and Aging has found that as life expectancy increases, so does the age we think of as “old.” The study analysed data from over 14,000 people aged 40 to 85 and discovered that our idea of when old age begins isn't fixed - it changes with time, experience and attitude.



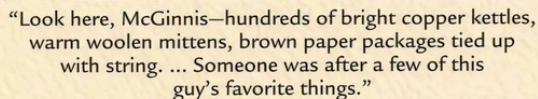
Researchers found that people in their mid-70s now see old age as starting nearly 3.5 years later than they did a decade earlier. People born more recently tend to see ageing more positively, and women generally place the start of old age later than men.

Even things like good health, feeling less lonely, and using technology confidently can make us feel younger for longer. In other words, your mindset and lifestyle may matter more than your birth year.

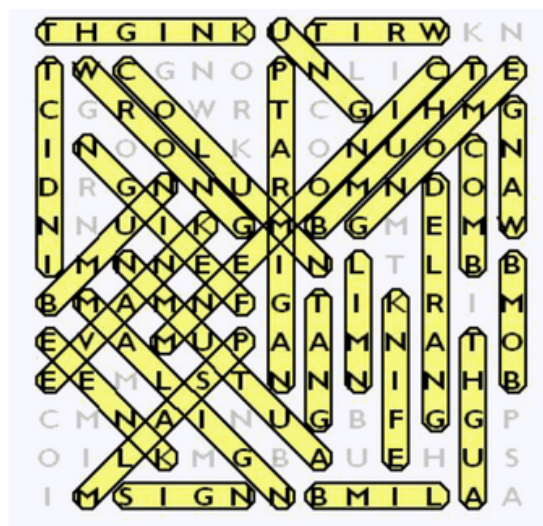


## AND FINALLY!

**Welcome to your senior years - Where life is a delicate balance between trying to stay awake and trying to fall asleep 🧐😏**



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