

August 2017

# NEWSLETTER



All the latest news from Age UK Cheshire East

## Extending the hand of friendship

Call out to do something to help the 1.2 million older people who are chronically lonely

Age UK marked National Friendship Day in August by asking people to reach out to the millions of older people who are chronically lonely.

In recent years, loneliness has made the headlines more often. National initiatives such as the Jo Cox Commission have been set up to raise awareness of the problem and help people to understand what they can do to help. New Government figures show that the proportion of adults feeling often or always lonely remains unchanged in recent years. Age UK's own research shows that this is a widespread, national issue affecting millions of people, and have estimated that 1.2 million older people in England are chronically lonely, and 200,000 older people have not had a conversation with friends or family for an entire month.

For older people who are feeling lonely and young people alike, there is a lot of research which suggests that intergenerational friendships can be very beneficial. Yet in the UK these friendships aren't very common - only 46% of people aged 16-24 say they talk to their neighbours, compared to 87% of those aged 65-74.

The simple act of stopping for a quick chat can brighten up an older person's day, particularly if that's the only conversation they're likely to have, so please don't be shy, smile and say hello and chances are you'll both feel better for it.



### Tips for getting to know your older neighbours

- **Start a conversation!** Look in on any elderly neighbours or relatives you may have not seen for a while, and strike up a chat
- **Stay cool!** Although the best weather may now have gone, keep an eye out for extremes of temperatures and make sure your neighbours don't get overheated
- **Accompany someone to an event—** it can often be daunting to go to a local event on your own, so why not offer to accompany someone to such an event.
- **Offer to help with a bit of gardening—**the garden can often overwhelm people, particularly in summer when the grass and weeds grow so fast. Offer to help with simple chores, even with tasks such as wheeling the green bin out for the binmen.
- **Hold a local event—**why not get together with other people in your street or community and arrange something for your local area. It's a great way to get to know people in your street, and also a way to encourage others who may get lonely to come and join you and strike up a conversation!



For information about any of our services, including those we provide to tackle loneliness, please visit our website at [www.ageukce.org](http://www.ageukce.org) or telephone 01625 612958

# Tales from the sub-continent

## Celebrating the life of older people in India

Our Campaigns and Fundraising Manager, Stef Underhill, recently undertook a once in a life time sabbatical break from her work here to travel the world. Now safely back in Macclesfield, and in the lead up to International Day of Older Persons (1<sup>st</sup> October), we thought it would be interesting to share with you an insight into the lives of older people in one of the most populated countries in the world – India, as seen through Stef's eyes on her travels!

Now home to 1.2 billion people, India is projected to overtake China in the next decade to become the world's most populous country. The UN projects that by 2050, there will be over 323 million people over the age of 60 living in India – that's the current population of the whole of the United States.

Like the UK, a rapidly ageing population is set to become one of the biggest social issues of the future in India. Despite its recent economic growth, the living conditions of many older Indians remain poor, with less than 11 percent having a pension of any sort and most working to a late age but still earning insufficient income to support themselves and their healthcare.



A mix of generations enjoying a family day out together in Agra

Despite facing many challenges, you couldn't escape the heartfelt smiles and the warm and welcoming nature of older people in India. Age is certainly celebrated in India and the contribution of older people within the local community and the huge level of respect is noticeable.

Intergenerational ties are strong with several generations often living together in one home. Elders are often supported by younger relatives but remain head of the household, their wisdom celebrated and the first people to go to for advice. In addition, they seem to play a large part in their grandchildren's lives.

Regardless of financial, health and social strains, older people in India seem to have an abundance of wealth in other forms – faith, culture, family and nature. You can't escape the feeling of contentment, inner peace and the fact older people are so clearly integrated into family and society.

Travelling across India enabled us to get a much better understanding of the lives of ordinary Indian people, often away from the well trodden tourist routes. At 'Ganga Aarti', a devotional ritual that uses fire as an offering, facing the holy river Ganges, we were welcomed by an older couple who treated us like family, offering their guidance throughout the whole ceremony.



Stef Underhill, our Campaigns & Fundraising Manager



The Ganga Aarti ritual



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During our time in Northern India, we saw locals using the Ganges for a whole range of activities – agriculture, meditating, bathing, praying, transportation and even scattering the ashes of loved ones.



The beautiful rolling hills of Munnar in South India with thousands of acres of tea plantations. India is one of the largest tea producers in the world, although it is estimated that around 70% of the crop is retained in India for domestic consumption. Pictured (left) are tea pickers on their way to work, aiming to collect 30 kilograms of tea leaves per day, earning the equivalent of £3. Whilst some companies provide pensions for their employees, many don't and there is no state provision of pensions meaning many older people can easily fall quickly into poverty without work.

Throughout India's history, religion has been an important part of the culture of the country. Whilst about 80% of the population practices Hinduism, there are a number of other main religions too. Religious diversity and religious tolerance are established in India both through law and custom, with the Constitution of India declaring the right to freedom of religion to be a fundamental right. Pictured here are three older men in Delhi, arriving at the Jama Masjid Mosque for evening prayer.



And finally, after a long day, an older man (pictured left) enjoys a moment of solitude by the Chinese fishing nets as the sun goes down in Fort Cochi. Kerala seemed more relaxed than Northern India, with people living a seemingly quieter and slower pace of life. Many people make their living by selling fresh fish, spices and fruit along the waterfront, they might even cook fish for you at their stall and hand it to you on a palm leaf to eat. Throughout our travels we were met with immense kindness and it really struck me how older people in India appear central to community & family life.

At Age UK Cheshire East, we actively celebrate the contribution that older people make to enrich the lives of the communities we live in, and will once again be supporting this year's United Nations International Older Persons Day with a series of events on the day and the days leading up to and around the 1 October. For 2017, the theme of the United Nations' International Day of Older Persons is **"Stepping into the Future: Tapping the Talents, Contributions and Participation of Older Persons in Society."** This year's day is about enabling and expanding the contributions of older people in their families, communities and societies at large, something we here at Age UK Cheshire East very much support and promote!

# Something old, something new

## Charity wedding shop to open in Knutsford

A brand new wedding showroom is coming soon to Knutsford, selling dream dresses at discount prices.

From strapless to lace, 1920's to new, you will soon be able to find your fairy-tale wedding dress at our shop in the heart of Knutsford.

Adding to King Street's charming mix of shops, staff at Age UK Cheshire East are busy transforming space on their first floor to make way for a dedicated bridal department, selling a large collection of new and pre-loved wedding dresses at low prices.

The rails are filling up fast with a beautiful selection of second hand and vintage bridal wear donated by generous members of the local public, along with new pieces provided by bridal shops.

There is a wide range of fabrics, sizes, colours and designs, with some dresses dating back to the early 1900's. Other garments are new and never worn, donated by local bridal shops after they have been discontinued.

The wedding showroom will not only be a place to find the perfect wedding dress, there will also be a good selection of formal wear for men, women and children alongside a variety of accessories, props and decorations for the big day.

Shop Manager Caroline says: We're so excited to open the doors to our Wedding Showroom and to help people find something special for their big day. The quality of the bridal wear we receive is incredible and many of the dresses that are given to us still have the original price tag on.

Not only are you saving lots of money, but your donation will make a huge difference for older people in Cheshire East. All income generated from our wedding showroom will support services for local older people - it's win, win!



**A range of wedding accessories as well as dresses will be available for sale**



**Our Wedding Showroom will be officially opened on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2017 and access to the wedding showroom will be by appointment only from Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2017. Appointments can be made with Caroline, Shop Manager by calling 01565 654283.**

## About us...

We are a local charity, providing a wide range of services to older people in Cheshire East. All the funds we generate are spent on delivering services locally. Our aim is to improve the later life of the people of Cheshire East. The main focus of our work is:-

- Support for people living with dementia
- Tackling loneliness
- Free Information & Advice
- Lifestyle support
- Men in Sheds
- Help in the Home



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**[www.ageukce.org](http://www.ageukce.org)**



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