

## **ALMOST 1 MILLION OLDER PEOPLE CUTTING BACK ON FOOD TO PAY UTILITY BILLS**

In the last two years, almost a million older people have had to cut back on food shopping to cover the cost of utility bills, according to new research by Age UK. The Charity is warning that the cost of living is forcing many of the poorest pensioners to cut back on their food shopping and seek out other ways to buy cheaper food and pay for other day-to-day essentials.

Many pensioners live on low, fixed incomes and have been hit hard by the rising cost of food and energy over recent years. Living on a low income long-term can have a range of impacts but for many older people this often results in a restriction in choice and a daily struggle to make ends meet. For many older people, food budgets can often be seen as a flexible outgoing that can be cut back on if urgent needs arise. As part of older people's efforts to economise and save, findings for the Charity reveal:

- 1.6 million older people go from shop to shop to find the cheapest food
- More than 1.6 million shop for food in the reduced section or wait for food to be discounted at the end of the day
- 1.4 million older people grow their own vegetables to save money
- Over 500,000 older people rarely eat meat because of the price
- More than 155,000 older people skip meals to save money
- In addition, data from across 150 local Age UKs show a 360% increase in the number of enquiries about food banks from April 2013-March 2014.

Eating and good nutrition is especially important for those in later life and is often overlooked resulting in lower quality of life and health care problems. Official figures show that the very poorest pensioners spend less than £27 per week on their total food budget. Age UK STW feels that cutting back on food or traipsing from shop to shop shouldn't be an acceptable 'norm' of everyday later life. Good quality food is vital to an older person's health and wellbeing and should not be compromised by the pressures of other household bills.

Age UK STW asks all those who are struggling to make their money stretch to take the plunge and check what they could be entitled to. Many older people are unaware of the help that's available or are reluctant to make a claim because they don't realise they will be entitled to anything. We have a new free Pension Credit guide which is specifically designed to help older people on a low income claim the extra money to which they are entitled and a specialised Benefits Team to help and support you.

**WE OFFER A FREE, HIGH QUALITY INFORMATION & ADVICE SERVICE FOR  
OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES, FRIENDS AND CARERS. WE HAVE  
INFORMATION GUIDES AND FACT SHEETS ON A WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS.**

**CONTACT US ON (01743) 233123 OR YOUR LOCAL OFFICE – LISTED ON THE  
BACK PAGE**



## ENJOY YOUR RETIREMENT GILL!

It was with sad hearts that we said our goodbyes to Gill Cartwright, our services development officer in the north of the county, who retired in December last year. Gill was the longest serving staff member of the organisation having transferred out of the council into what was then Age Concern in 1997 and prior to that supporting our work when we were the Older Peoples Welfare Committee.

Gill was instrumental in the setting up of a number of our day centres and other activities for older people in the north of the county and worked tirelessly to support them all and help keep them going. She was also a key person in helping to support our Whitchurch office and in developing the Information & Advice service we run from there. Thankfully we don't have to say goodbye to Gill entirely! For many years Gill has been one of our stalwart Llandudno Holiday volunteers, giving her time, wisdom and energy to help plan and host our annual holiday. Ellesmere Day Centre took Gill out for a farewell lunch earlier this year; a great time was had by all and Gill was presented with a bouquet of flowers and a gift. Trustees, staff, day centre volunteers and members want to thank Gill for all her hard work and wish her every happiness in her retirement.

### **AGE UK STW VOLUNTEERS CHRISTMAS BUFFET LUNCH – FRIDAY 5 DECEMBER 2014**

The venue is Greenhouse Meadow – the home of Shrewsbury Football Club. The doors will be open from 12.15pm when mulled wine or orange juice will be available. The buffet will be served at 1pm followed by mince pies and tea/coffee. Not only does this event give us a chance to say thank you but it provides a wonderful opportunity for volunteers to meet other volunteers from the many different services we provide.

## **New Premises for Shrewsbury Trading**

Those of you who visit our Shrewsbury office will know how busy and hectic it can be at times. In particular, as our Trading activities have got busier and busier, people are often waiting for quite some time to be seen and reception can become quite crowded. As a result we have been looking for options to expand or relocate some of our activities and we now have an opportunity to relocate our Trading office into the Riverside shopping centre. We hope this will help to alleviate some of the space and crowding issues; it is also a super location for passing trade and we intend to also be open on a Saturday morning which will give people the option of an extra day to visit us. Over the years our trading income has become much more important to us as it helps to fund many of our charitable activities that we have no funding for. We hope in this new venture to be sharing the space with another charity A4U which will give us the opportunity to work together to support more local people.

**Keep a look out for us in the coming months! We hope to be in our new premises soon and look forward to seeing you there.**

### **SHROPSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL FUEL BUYING SCHEME**

The Rural Community Council's popular fuel-buying scheme has re-launched offering an even higher standard of service and better value for money. The scheme encourages households in rural communities to purchase their heating oil together. Members benefit from cheaper fuel by being part of a group that can negotiate cheaper bulk-buying rates. Since its inception, over two years ago, members have accessed the most competitive heating oil prices in Shropshire, with some reporting savings of up to 5 pence per litre. The scheme is open to individuals, businesses and community buildings in Shropshire. Join today and see how much you could save. Annual membership fees apply.

*For more information call 01743 342167 or email [oil@shropshire-rcc.org.uk](mailto:oil@shropshire-rcc.org.uk)*

# GIFT OF FRIENDSHIP APPEAL UPDATE



## Summer Fundraising

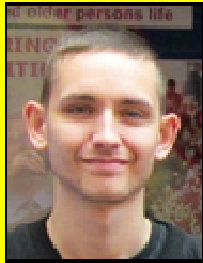
### Flower Club

Atcham Flower Club has donated £1000 to the appeal following a very successful fashion show. Pictured centre is Rebecca Rees, Atcham Flower Club with Appeal Patron Martin Brookes MBE DL, Anne Wignall, Chair Age UK STW (left) and Chief Executive Heather Osborne (right).



### The Big Chinwag

Thank you to everyone who held or supported local Big Chinwag events. The Big Chinwag was a national initiative all about getting people together and raising money to reduce loneliness locally. A grand total of £733 was raised for the appeal.



### Jamie to do London Marathon!!

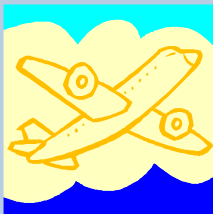
Jamie Sterry from our Help at Home team will be getting his running shoes out soon to start training for the London Marathon in 2015. If anyone would like to sponsor Jamie please contact the Shrewsbury Office on 01743 233123.



## Local company sponsor a befriender

Pugh's, a Shrewsbury based independent funeral director, has kindly agreed to sponsor a befriender for a year. The £250 will help support one volunteer and ensure over 45 visits to someone who otherwise might go all week without seeing family, friends or neighbours. It is hoped that other companies may offer similar support to help us reduce waiting lists and help more people who are experiencing loneliness and isolation.

## HOT OFF THE PRESS...HOT OFF THE PRESS...HOT OFF THE PRESS... The sky's the limit!



As we went to press people were signing up for a fundraising opportunity of a lifetime - a Sponsored Aerobatics - which includes thrilling manoeuvres such as 'stall turns' and 'loop the loops'! The challenge is to take place later this year at Sleep Airfield, and is being organised by Des Clorley by kind permission of Shropshire Aeroclub.

**The Gift of Friendship appeal – making life less lonely for local older people. If you would like to help raise money to increase services such as befriending and social activities, for which there are currently waiting lists, please contact Ruth or Lyn on (01743) 233123**

## AGE UK STW – NORTH SHROPSHIRE OFFICE



**Are you aware that Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin has an office base in the North of the County?**

Well we do! And it is based at Unit 2 Heritage Centre, 12 St Mary's Street, Whitchurch, SY13 1QY, telephone 01948 665317. The office is open Tuesday to Friday 0900 until 1300 and manned by Sharon Williamson who is a qualified Information & Advice Staff Member. Jenny Smith, Service Development Officer, also works out of the office and she is responsible for the Day Centres in North Shropshire. In the past 12 months there have been over 1500 phone enquiries and 620 visitors – so some of you do know where we are!

## PLEASE LET US KNOW ABOUT YOUR CHRISTMAS EVENTS

Christmas can be a particularly lonely time for older people who do not have family or friends around them at this time of year. We know that there are over 10,000 older people in Shropshire who feel lonely and that 17% of older people are in contact with family, friends and neighbours less than once a month. As Christmas draws nearer Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin is working to help older people who are lonely both at Christmas and throughout the year. We want to be able to put older people in touch with events in their area that they can go along to on Christmas Day, or during the Christmas break. So if you are hosting a lunch for people on Christmas Day, or having a Christmas party or event over the holiday period, please let us know so that we can put older people who could benefit in touch with you.



**If you can help, or you want to find out more, please get in touch with us.  
We look forward to hearing from you.**



## Shropshire Older Peoples Assembly gives its views on the new Care Act

Shropshire Older Peoples Assembly held a very successful public consultation event in June on the new Care Act and the changes to adult social care in Shropshire. The meeting was held at the Guildhall in Shrewsbury with about 40 attendees. Members heard a presentation by Andy Begley (Shropshire Council) on the council's proposals for changes to adult social care and how they propose to manage the significant reduction in social care funding. There was a question and answer session which allowed members to raise questions and discuss the issues. The second part of the meeting was led by Andy Glyde from the national Age UK Campaigns Team who talked through the proposals under the new Care Act for eligibility for social care. Members then split into groups to work through the consultation questionnaires and these views will be fed back into the national consultation by Age UK. You can access the presentations and notes from the meetings on our website at [www.ageuk.org.uk/shropshireandtelford/news--campaigns/campaigns/shropshire-older-peoples-assembly](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/shropshireandtelford/news--campaigns/campaigns/shropshire-older-peoples-assembly). To find out more, go on the mailing list or join, please contact Bridget Mollekin, Shropshire Seniors on 01743 244640 email: [office@shropseniors.org.uk](mailto:office@shropseniors.org.uk).

**WHY NOT COME ALONG TO THE NEXT PUBLIC MEETING?**

**Wednesday 21 January 2015 – Venue to be arranged – 'Long Term Conditions'**



## OPEN DAY AT TELFORD – THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2014 INCLUDING FREE HEARING TEST!

As we go to press we are in the planning stages of organising an Open Day at Meeting Point House on Thursday 20 November 2014 from 10am to 3pm. The aim of the day is to inform members of the public about the range of services we provide in Telford & Wrekin. Other organisations that we work closely with will also be there with stalls and displays. There will be a wide range of information available, a Benefits Advisor to talk to on a one-to-one basis as well as staff from our Trading office providing the opportunity to have a free hearing test.

Age UK Shropshire Telford and Wrekin offers a range of quality and reliable products and services designed for the needs of the over 50s:

- Car, Home, Motor Breakdown, Travel Insurance
- Gas & Electricity
- Mobility and Healthcare products
- Funeral Plans
- Personal alarms
- Hearing Aids



Our dedicated trained Arrangers, Robert and Paul, offer a one-to-one service in our offices at Meeting Point House, Telford Town Centre - telephone 01952 200010 or 01952 216715 - Monday to Friday 9.30am to 1.30pm.

**PUT THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY AND TELL FAMILY & FRIENDS!**

## How will you survive this winter?

Although last winter was quite a mild one, who knows what this winter will bring? Meanwhile energy bills are going up, and some older people, especially those who live in older, badly insulated homes, can struggle to pay their bills, or to keep rooms at the right temperature to look after their health. It is better to think about winter now, rather than wait until the weather gets really cold, or there is an emergency situation. Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin can help:

- We can carry out a benefits check to make sure an older person is getting all the help they need to pay their bills.
- We can signpost people to where to get support and advice on making their home as energy efficient as possible.
- Age UK STW has small grants available for older people on a low income to help with fuel bills or repairs to heating systems.
- We can offer advice about other organisations and charities who may be able to help, either with grants or more practical help.
- Age UK can also offer general advice on keeping warm through our “Winter Wrapped Up” booklet and free thermometers to check those room temperatures.

**If you know someone who may benefit from some help,  
please ask them to get in touch with us – local contact  
details are listed on the back page**

# Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin Living Well Activities

Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin was very fortunate last year to secure a pot of funding which enabled the Living Well Project to maintain its existing activities and add a few new ones. Our exercise classes (which include EXTEND, Latin Steps – Dance Exercise and Zumba Gold) have been running for some time now but these activities are more attractive to women than to men and we knew that we were failing to reach a large section of the community who would not only benefit from regular exercise but would also enjoy the social side of meeting new friends.

To try and address this problem we invited a group of men to meet up with us and suggest activities that would interest them. As a result we started Walking Football sessions last October and now have an enthusiastic and committed team of players who not only meet on Thursday mornings come rain or shine, but have been out and about supporting and playing with teams in other parts of the county.



For those of you who don't live in Shrewsbury, the Senior Saints Walking Football Team meets at The Venue, Oswestry - contact Shelly on 01691 684840. And, recently started, there are sessions at the Maurice Chandler Sport and Leisure Centre, Market Drayton - contact Sue or Sarah on 01630 638508.

There are plans for early evening Walking Football sessions to run at Shrewsbury Town Football club; for more information please contact Jessica Lightwood 01743 289177.

Earlier this year we were also able to start Fitness Sessions for Men at the United Reformed Church in Shrewsbury on a Wednesday afternoon. These friendly, informal weekly sessions are open to all abilities and aim to improve strength, co-ordination and balance.

## We welcome new members to all our activities.

Keeping well is not just about physical activity and for various reasons exercise classes don't suit or appeal to everyone. Staying mentally stimulated and socially active by keeping up with old friends or meeting new ones is equally as important for our health and wellbeing. The support of a network of friends can make life seem less lonely for those who find themselves alone or far from family.

## We are pleased to be able to offer a variety of activities where you can learn a new skill, meet people with similar interests and form new friendships.

There are two reading groups in Shrewsbury that meet monthly and for the last year we have had a very popular singing group which we hope to be able to continue later this year. We have also organised sewing projects, craft workshops, afternoon teas, tea dances and our annual Afternoon of Entertainment at The Place, Oakengates. Our newest activity is 'Stitch and Mix' a social craft group for those who enjoy hand knitting, crochet, hand sewing and a chat. This group meets fortnightly at Poppies Restaurant in Shrewsbury where members take along something they are currently working and share skills, solve problems and pick up tips while enjoying a cup of tea.

Last but not least are our very popular Pub Lunch clubs which meet in Telford, Shrewsbury, north and south Shropshire. This is a perfect way to meet up with and get to know people in your local community. Each club meets once a month at a local venue where you can enjoy a reasonably priced lunch which includes a main course, dessert, and tea/coffee. If you would like any more information about the Living Well Activities, including the contact details for the Pub Lunch Clubs, please ring Susan Stefiuk on 01743 233123 ext. 225 or email [susan.stefiuk@ageukstw.org.uk](mailto:susan.stefiuk@ageukstw.org.uk). For Living Well Activities in the Telford area please contact Bella Sohi on 01952 201803 ext. 002.



# Newport Shropshire Trussell Trust Foodbank

Newport Foodbank is one of the 400 foodbanks set up by the Trussell Trust charity and is a community project supported by the local churches, Rotary and the Lions. Although the foodbank is supported by the Trussell Trust through training and ongoing advice, it is run by very willing and enthusiastic volunteers from the town.

Since the foodbank opened in November 2013, many families and single people have received food parcels. The food parcels contain three days' worth of food and are nutritionally balanced. As a foodbank, the volunteers are not only committed to handing out good quality food, they also sit and chat to the client. Many clients are signposted to places where they can get help with benefits or maybe resolve debt issues. In order to receive a food parcel the client has to be referred by one of the referring agencies, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau or their doctor. The referring agent will give the client a voucher which is then exchanged for food. In theory, clients are entitled to three vouchers in a six month period, however, some clients in reality may require more especially if there are delays in accessing benefits.

Often public perception is that people who are 'on the scrounge' go to foodbanks or because 'they cannot be bothered to help themselves'. From our experience this is definitely not the case. Many people use the foodbank because they have no alternative. They have no money left to put food on the table after they have paid their bills. Our clients often feel ashamed and embarrassed about using the foodbank. Hopefully when a client comes to the foodbank this feeling of embarrassment disappears as the volunteers spend time talking to them and making them feel valued. It has been a privilege to support people in Newport and the surrounding villages who have needed our help and thank you to the local community for supporting us with regular donations of food.

**'Anyone can find themselves in a financial crisis, or just struggling to buy food and pay the bills. If you are in that situation do not despair as there is help out there'.**

For further information contact Jenny on 01952 810898 or email: [info@newportshropshire.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@newportshropshire.foodbank.org.uk)

## And a good time was had by all!

Every year Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin organises a holiday to Llandudno for older people who, for whatever reason, find it difficult to get away. The holiday, complete with great food, trips out and nightly entertainment was much enjoyed by 90 Shropshire older people and a small team of volunteer helpers in July this year.

The week's stay at the family-run Queen's Hotel on the sea front provides a wonderful base from which to explore Llandudno and a whole range of trips around the local area. The weather was good again this year and holiday makers enjoyed a ride on the Welsh Highland Railway as well as trips to Llanberis, Anglesey, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Betws-y-Coed and Caernarvon. Strolling along the promenade or up the pier and listening to the band was also very popular. The evening entertainment provided fun and laughter plus music and dancing to suit all tastes. The fancy dress competition was the highlight on the last night of the holiday.

We are always trying to reach more older people who find it difficult to get away on holiday. If you know someone who may like to come along next year, please tell them about it. If they need to pay for a carer to come along with them, or are finding it difficult to find the money for the holiday, we may be able to help, so please talk to us. Applications for next year's holiday will be sent out in March 2015; you can leave your contact details at any of our offices now in order to be sure of receiving an application form.



Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin is a local, independent, registered charity and donations received are used locally to support local people in our communities.

Your generous donations enable us to continue making life for older people more enjoyable, vibrant and fulfilling.

**We really do appreciate your donations !**

There are several ways to donate

◊ Via mobile phone:

text 'AGES33 £ 'amount' to 70070

◊ Writing a cheque payable to AGE UK STW

◊ Popping in with a cash donation

◊ Visiting our website [www.ageukshropshireandtelford.org.uk](http://www.ageukshropshireandtelford.org.uk), click on the donate tab to use your bank card or call 01743 233123

◊ If you are selling items on eBay, you can donate a percentage of your sale to us, by using the 'Advanced Sell' form



**Thank you !**

**HOW TO GET HOLD OF US IN SHROPSHIRE**

Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin	Tel: (01743) 233123	Help at Home (Direct Line)	Tel: (01743) 233788
Advocacy Service (Direct Line)	Tel: (01743) 357748	North Shropshire Office	Tel: (01948) 665317
Insurance Service (Direct Line)	Tel: (01743) 357749 or (01952) 200010	Age UK NESIT Co-ordinator	Tel: (01630) 650850
Bridgnorth Trading Office	Tel: (01746) 769273	Telford Office Information Line	Tel: (01952) 201803 Tel: (01952) 216018
		Home from Hospital, Ludlow	Tel: (01584) 878046

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