

Roll up, roll up and donate your furniture...

Our new shop in Bridgnorth was officially opened on 4th March 2013. In attendance were the Patron of Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin and Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire Mr Algernon Heber-Percy who cut the cake (bottom right with the Mayor) and the Mayor of Bridgnorth Norman Cottrell, who cut the ribbon (see right). Martin Woods, Shrewsbury's Town Crier (bottom left) was on hand to announce the launch in his usual commanding way. The shop on Whitburn Street is a part of a new joint partnership between ourselves and the national Age UK charity.



On sale are typical charity shop goods such as clothes and bric-a-brac but also a wide range of quality furniture and AGE UK mobility / household aids. Also on site on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday mornings, you will find our Trading Manager if you would like to enquire about our insurance and utility products; and in the long term, Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin intends to have a regular staffed advice centre there.

If you are in Bridgnorth, please do take time to have a browse

Recycle your unwanted furniture and electrical items too (free collection for some areas) by donating them – telephone (01746) 769273 – Age UK Furniture Shop, 14 Whitburn Street, Bridgnorth WV16 4QN. All items must be in saleable/good working order condition and a fire label attached to upholstered furniture.



Volunteering: What does it mean to the Volunteer and Age UK?

by Darren Jones – Admin Support Volunteer for the 'Help at Home' team, Age UK STW

Volunteering is an excellent way of helping others, reaching out to the wider community, and at the end of the day you feel you have done something that is worthwhile! There are, of course, a number of reasons why people choose to volunteer. For me, working for the 'Help at Home' team, I get the satisfaction of knowing that at the end of the day I have done something worthwhile; not only helping the Team with administration (an integral tier of work for any organisation to ensure that its services run efficiently), but also helping the wider elderly population of Shropshire. I am, personally, currently looking at my long-term career options and volunteering is helping me to: keep up with, build on and learn new skills; build confidence and meet a whole network of new people. Whatever the reason, volunteering is certainly something very satisfying to do and you know you are helping an organisation that very much relies on the work of volunteers in order to carry out its full range of services. With the current financial climate of budget cuts and times of austerity it is even more important that charitable organisations have a strong, dedicated and reliable force of volunteers to assist paid staff and make finances stretch just that little bit further and I am very happy to be a part of this.

Donations made easier!

We now have the facility for cash donations to be made over the telephone or via the internet using a bank debit or credit card. We rely heavily on donations to ensure our work providing advice, support and a little sparkle in older people's lives is able to continue.

If you would like to make a donation, you can do this in a number of ways:

- Send a cheque payable to Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin to 3 Mardol Gardens, Shrewsbury SY1 1PR or your local office;
- Pop in to 3 Mardol Gardens in Shrewsbury - and browse our information library at the same time;
- Go to www.ageuk.org.uk/shropshireandtelford/how-you-can-help and input your card details here (securely);
- Or call us on 01743 233123 and ask for Gina Spencer, Jeannie Wong or Viv Edwards and provide your details over the phone.

ALSO, if you are in receipt of **Help at Home services**, you can pay your invoice via the internet at www.ageuk.org.uk/shropshireandtelford/our-services/help-at-home or by calling Jeannie or Viv to make a telephone payment.

All donations are gratefully received and are used wholly on our work in Shropshire and Telford to enhance and improve the lives of older people.

KUSHDIL FUNDRAISER

The volunteers at Kushdil, the only Asian ladies' day centre in Telford, held a fantastic fundraising event at the Hadley Community Centre on 6 January 2013. It was a ladies only night consisting of entertainment, dancing and Asian cuisine, and a magnificent £2,400 was raised. The event was attended by over 500 local residents and all the monies raised will go towards holding a religious Sikh carnival on 21 April, which is the first of its kind to take place in Telford.

Pictured (left) San Sekhon (Kushdil Day Centre Treasurer and Volunteer) with Heather Osborne (Chief Executive Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin).



Your Local Sustain Support Service

Our support services help you to have the skills and experience to be able to live independently in the community. Individual and group support is available to help you to develop your own networks and friendships.

Homesafe is a service for older people supporting them to maintain their own homes, support with financial matters, support with access to other services, and encouragement with involvement in community networks

Other services include:

- Support for people with physical disabilities
- Domestic violence outreach and refuge accommodation
- Young people's services including homelessness
- 'Turning Lives Around' support for people of working age

This service is available to anyone in Shropshire

For more information or to make a referral call Severnside Housing on 0845 234 24 24

Fond Farewells



Last December was a sad time for us as we said goodbye to not one but three stalwarts of the organisation who all took retirement.

Tom Lerwill (Benefits Officer) joined us in 2004 and during that time helped to secure over £10m pounds in benefits for older people in the county. Anyone who has met Tom will know how passionate he was about helping older people to increase their incomes and he did a great job of it - as the figures show!

Gaynor Evans (Advocacy Officer) retired after working for the charity for 16 years. Gaynor was instrumental in building up and developing the Advocacy service into the highly respected and valued service that it is now. During her time with the organisation the service supported over 10,000 people with a whole range of issues many of which were causing great distress.

Jackie Willetts (Home from Hospital Coordinator) was with us for 7 years based in the south of the county and developed our Home from Hospital service which supports older people coming out of hospital. Jackie worked as part of our team based in Ludlow and did many things far and above her role including fundraising and finding those little extra things to help older people like key safes and slippers.

All three have left a strong legacy behind them; we miss them all and wish them luck in their retirement.

And a warm welcome...

To **Nikki Crump** who has joined us as our new Benefits officer. Nikki has many years experience working in the benefits field and a strong commitment to working with older people. She has settled well into the team and her experience is already proving useful; we are glad to have her on board. 😊😊😊

Breaking News!



Our new **A-Z of Services for Older People** should be available from the end of the month! This booklet is incredibly useful to older people, their families, professionals and anyone who has the welfare of older people at heart. It covers the whole of the county and to obtain a copy please telephone or call into your local office or visit our website – contact details on the back page of this newsletter.



MEET OUR CHAIR – ANNE WIGNALL

‘Age Concern has been close to my heart since 1977 when, as a student, I ran the York University Age Concern group and visited a wonderful lady who made me cheese sandwiches and took me for long walks around York racecourse. I remember organising a tea-party at one point – and seem to recall rather a lot of balloons!

My husband Brendan and I moved to Shropshire 17 years ago with our two young children, Catherine and Hugh, now both at university: where does the time go? In 2009 I became a befriender and volunteered at Ellesmere Day Centre, where I met some lovely people, before joining the Board as a trustee that same year. I originally started out as an English teacher before working for several national charities, having been bitten by the charity bug, and trained as a counsellor whilst the children were small. Over the following years I served on the boards of seven national charities, including the RSPCA where I was Vice-Chair, and with Cruse Bereavement Care.

Although every charity is different, I hope I have been able to bring something of value to Age UK STW. I have been Chair since last September, so am still learning, but never cease to be amazed by the range and complexity of the work that is carried out across our county. I have tried to meet as many staff and volunteers as I can and I have been inspired by the passion, skill and commitment that you bring to your work. I feel privileged to be part of an organisation that, despite funding challenges and a growing demand for our services, seeks to maintain those services and develop new ones to improve the quality of life for older people.

As Chair of the Income Generation committee, I am particularly keen to help raise the profile of Age UK in the county and to attract sufficient funding to allow our services to shine. We have recently set up the North Shropshire Supporters group, which raised over £8000 in its first year, and we would like to follow this up with fundraising groups in the rest of the county. If you know anyone who would enjoy organising fun events – from coffee mornings, to pub quizzes, from themed dinners to fashion shows - PLEASE let us know.

Age UK STW is full of fantastic people doing fantastic work and I would like to thank every one of you for what you contribute to that success. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible and would be delighted if you would come up and introduce yourselves’.

Community & Care Coordinators

We are excited to be involved in a new project being led by the Clinical Commissioning Group for Shropshire (the replacement for Shropshire County PCT). This project has seen the creation of *Community & Care Coordinators* – non-clinical individuals working as part of GP practice teams across Shropshire. Twenty-four Practices have signed up for the project and we are employing several of them – *Julie Gildie* is supporting the two Ludlow practices and Craven Arms, *Becky Kelly* is working with Riverside and Claremont Bank practices in Shrewsbury and *Angie Jebb* is doing a weekly session for Ellesmere practice.

The role is to work with people who may have a long term condition, who may be frail & vulnerable or are seen to be at risk of regular hospital admission. The C&CC will provide coordination of voluntary & statutory organisations around these patients needs and link them into existing community networks. The emphasis will be on identifying needs that may not be met by statutory organisations – such as the NHS or Social Services - and then using knowledge of the voluntary sector to meet those needs. The overall aim is to improve wellbeing and to prevent isolation and loneliness – and in so doing reduce the number of people admitted to hospital unnecessarily.

The project ran, initially, for 6 months but has now been extended for another year; if successful it is hoped to roll it out across all Shropshire GP practices from April 2014.

WELFARE REFORM

Are you missing out? Check before it's too late!

We have all heard about the changes that have been proposed by government but how do they affect older people? Are you claiming what you're entitled to? Age UK estimates that about 1 in 3 of those eligible for pension credit are still not claiming it! There are a lot of myths about which can put older people off claiming benefits including:

“There's no point in making a claim, I've already been told I don't qualify”

However, benefit rates and rules change, as can your finances. Even if you weren't eligible in the past it's worth making a new enquiry every year.

“I own my own house or have some savings, so I won't get anything”

Owning your own home or having some savings doesn't rule you out. Your home is disregarded and the savings limit may be higher than you think.

“My income's too high or I have a private pension. I can't possibly be eligible for anything”

Not all benefits are means- tested. Disability benefits, which can help you if you have care needs or difficulty getting around, don't take income and savings into account.

There are two parts of Pension Credit - you may be eligible to receive one or both of them.

Guarantee Credit tops up your weekly income to a guaranteed minimum level. Everyone who has reached women's retirement age (currently 61 years 6 months) and over can claim an income of at least £145.40 a week if they are single, and £222.05 a week for a couple. These figures may be higher for pensioners with health problems or who are carers.

Savings Credit is extra money for older people who have an income higher than the Basic State Pension or a small amount of savings. It is for men and women who are aged 65 or over who have income over these amounts by approximately £45 - £60.

Currently mixed age couples (one under and one over 61 years 6 months) can claim on the age of the oldest partner **but this is about to change**. When Universal Credit is introduced later this year the younger will have to claim Universal Credit, which will be less money than Pension Credit. However mixed age couples already claiming Pension Credit will remain on it.

So if you think you may be able to claim Pension Credit, it would be a good idea to check it out now.

Rob Smith, our Information & Advice Manager, urges all older people to check their entitlement. He says “Even if it is only a small amount it is worth claiming as it can help you pay for other things, such as rent, council tax and help with heating and health costs, and it may also help you to be able to claim other benefits”.

There are a lot of reforms and there will always be lots of questions. Age UK Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin will help people with their benefits queries in whatever way they can, so if you do have any questions please call us on (01743) 233123.

STATISTICS, STATISTICS, STATISTICS!

Some interesting facts and figures! We all know that the population profile of the country is getting older but did you realise by how much and how different Shropshire is from the rest of the country? In England there are currently 9 million people aged over 65 (16.9% of the population), and 1.2 million people aged over 85 (2.3% of the population). However by 2020 there will be 10.6 million over 65s (18.5% of the population), and 1.6 million over 85s (2.8% of the population). So in the country as whole we have an ageing population, but in Shropshire the figures are very different: - in Shropshire we have a much larger proportion of older people to start with, and in Telford & Wrekin a much younger profile that is now rapidly ageing. The figures speak for themselves:



In England the older population is predicted to rise by 18.5% by 2020. The figures for Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin are much higher! As you can see in the chart the proportion of older people is set to rise dramatically in Shropshire; in 2012 there were 66,000 older people aged over 65 and 9,000 aged over 85. By 2020 there are predicted to be 81,000 older people and 12,000 aged over 85; a massive rise of 21% in the next 10 years!!

In Telford & Wrekin historically the population has had a younger profile as many young families moved into the new town. However, the original new town population is now ageing and figures are set to rise from 25,000 older people aged over 65 in 2012 to 32,000 in 2020; an even bigger rise of 26% in the next 8 years, putting Telford & Wrekin's overall population profile more in line with the rest of the country.

It is good news that people are living longer and these figures show the need for services to support older people to remain independently in their own homes for as long as possible and to offer choices. Many older people live alone; by the age of 75 34% of men, and 61% of women live on their own. At Age UK we have a number of services to support older people, and to combat the loneliness and isolation that so many people experience. For more information, call your local office or (01743) 233123.

AND WHILST WE'RE TALKING STATISTICS...

Our reception in the Shrewsbury office is run by a team of twelve volunteers and one part-time member of staff – Heather Williams - who is there 9am to 1pm Monday to Friday. Some of the volunteers come in for one day a week, others a morning or afternoon.

We know we are busy and in 2011 we started to keep a record of our footfall which showed that we handled 11,353 enquiries. We thought that was pretty amazing but last year this increased to an incredible **16,086!!** We had 4,284 visitors and 11,802 telephone/email enquiries. We signposted 1,130 people to external organisations and the services we provide internally assisted 14,956 older people.

If you have a query, please visit us or call (01743) 233123 – we're happy to help!
Office open Monday to Friday 10am – 4pm/Telephones 9am – 4pm

Living Well Activities

Each year we try to offer new activities that will give people the opportunity to try something different. In 2012 we organised town history walks in Shrewsbury for the second year running. The walks were well attended despite the awful weather the most popular being the Ghost Tour in October. In November we ran a taster music making session led by musicians Penny Burns and Adrian Plant. A group of 15 met and sang some old familiar songs. Everyone enjoyed the session and the group have now formed a small choir and are meeting on regular basis. We also started a new Zumba Gold class in January at the Beaconsfield Club, Shrewsbury and led by qualified Zumba Instructor Wendy Southern. Zumba Gold follows the Zumba formula but is designed for the active older adult and done at lower intensity – so not so fast but just as much fun!

Men Needed!

We are planning to follow the successful example of Age UKs in other areas by starting Men in Sheds Groups across Shropshire. This project will be based on the Australian 'Men's Shed' model and aims to bring retired men together to share practical skills, develop further skills and make new friends in the familiar environment of a shed or workshop. To get us started we are running a pilot scheme together with the Shrewsbury Furniture Scheme, a local charity trading as Home Essentials from their warehouse in Monkmoor Road, Shrewsbury SY2 5TF. Home Essentials collects, repairs and restores donated electrical appliances, furniture and household goods before selling them on at affordable prices to people on low incomes or experiencing difficult times.



Can you spare some time to help us?



We are looking for men over 55 who have electrical, carpentry and minor furniture restoration skills and would like to be part of a group helping out at Home Essentials repairing, restoring and giving new life to items that can be used again by people in the local community. If you would like to get involved in this pilot project please contact Susan 01743 233123 ext. 225 email susan.stefiuk@ageukstw.org.uk.

Dress a Girl Around the World

Starting in 2012 a group of ladies from various Living Well activities groups attended sewing sessions at Space to Sew in Shrewsbury and made very simple but pretty dresses for girls who live in poor areas around the world. In a recent session shorts were also made for the boys. The dresses the group made have gone to the Sanchat Charity which supports orphaned children in the town of Gilgil in Kenya. In February Alex Case, a representative from the charity, met up with the sewing group at a coffee morning and told us the history of how the charity started and brought with her pictures of the children and the orphanage. It was good to talk to Alex and to know that the dresses have reached the orphanage and in our small way we have helped to make a little girl smile. The group plan to continue working together to help the orphanage in the future.

Living Well in Telford

The current Living Well projects in the Telford area include a Creative Dance Class that meets on Thursday mornings between 11am-12 noon and a Book Club that meets on the 3rd Thursday monthly. Recently there have been two new Pub Lunch Clubs started: one at the Woolpack in Shawbirch meeting on the 1st Wednesday of the month and the other at Madebrooke Carvery meeting on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. All are welcome at our NEW Craft Club which has started at Lightmoor on a Monday afternoon 2.30 to 4.30pm. In partnership with the Wrekin Housing Trust a Tea Dance has also started on a Thursday afternoon 2–4pm at the Hall Barn in Madeley. This is an opportunity to get your dancing shoes on and get dancing to ballroom music, socialise with like-minded people, enjoy some music and have a cup of tea and biscuits. For more information on Living Well projects in Telford contact Bella Sohi on 01952 216018.

Number 3 is up and running...!!

Our third Diamond Drop In Centre has now opened at The Uplands Day Centre, Bicton Heath, Shrewsbury and is proving very popular. We are working in partnership with Marches Care Ltd and we use their purpose built dementia-friendly day centre as our venue, they also provide the most delicious cakes in Shrewsbury! The group has already met 6 times since early November and we have supported 71 people. The service provides support for both the person with dementia and their carer. We have organised reminiscence sessions, musical workshops and laughter yoga and have had lots of fun.

Our Drop In at Frizes Leasowe in Ketley Bank, Telford celebrated its first anniversary in October last year. We also have a Drop In at Bridgnorth and we are working on plans to open another centre in the Monkmoor area of Shrewsbury. The centres all meet on a fortnightly basis for two hours and provide a chance to get to know others and share experiences in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. They also provide members with support and information and an opportunity to take part in interesting activities, coordinated through our teams of trained and dedicated volunteers. Since we launched our new service, which was only 16 months ago, we have helped to support over 600 people across the 3 centres and our customer feedback tells us that the services is highly valued and helps the carers to cope with the illness.

A lot of people who are reading this will know someone who might benefit from our service. We particularly want to help people who are caring for their loved ones, but who may be feeling isolated, and in need of a little help and support. If you know anyone like this please encourage them to contact us. If you would like to find out more information about the Drop In Centre, would like to book a place, or you would like to volunteer a skill for a session, help out on a regular basis or make a donation to keep the service going into the future then please contact Age UK on (01743) 233123.

Our Whitchurch Office

Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin has had a drop in facility for older people in Whitchurch for over 25 years which is welcomed by older people who appreciate being able to have face-to-face contact. The office is open four mornings a week Tuesday to Friday 9am – 1pm and provides a wide range of information and advice, signposting to other services and insurance services as well as a monthly benefits surgery for older people to call in for checks and advice.

Did you know that we...

- Support 20 local older people at our day centres on a Tuesday and Thursday at Kingsway Court;
- Help 43 older people in Whitchurch to continue living independently through our Help at Home scheme;
- Refer a higher proportion of people for both benefits and advocacy than the rest of Shropshire.

Do call in to see us! 12 St. Mary's Street, Whitchurch SY13 1QY – by The Heritage Centre ☺

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 Age UK NESIT Co-ordinator	Tel: (01948) 665317 Tel: (01630) 650850
Insurance Service (Direct Line)	Tel: (01743) 357749 or (01952) 200010	Telford Office Information Line	Tel: (01952) 201803 Tel: (01952) 216018
Bridgnorth Trading Office	(01746) 769273	Home from Hospital, Ludlow	Tel: (01584) 878046

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