

Who am I



- 1) I've achieved many things in my life
- 2) I live in Shropshire
- 3) I go weeks without contact with family or friends

Answer: Thousands of local older people



**the gift of
friendship appeal**

The Gift of Friendship appeal is raising money to make life less lonely for local older people

Will you help?

We need more befriending volunteers...
We need to provide more social activities...
We need to raise money to achieve this...

Please help by raising money or volunteering

**STOP PRESS: IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT SOME
OF OUR SERVICES CLOSING – SEE BACK PAGE**



ADVOCACY WELCOMES A 'NEW' MEMBER OF STAFF TO THE TEAM!

Our Advocacy team is pleased to announce a new recruit this year with Sharon Williamson. Sharon has been working for Age UK STW in Whitchurch for 8 years helping and assisting people with problems by providing information, advice and booklets and making referrals to all parts of the organisation.

After applying successfully for the job, Sharon is now working for the Advocacy team for two days a week and she is already settling into her new role! She really enjoys working with older people to resolve problems and with the skills and knowledge she has built up already at Whitchurch, she is sure to be a success.



Join us for our annual 'Afternoon of Entertainment' variety show The Swinging 60s at Oakengates Theatre Tuesday 19th May 2015, 2pm to 4.30pm



**Beatles Tribute
Bollywood Music and Dance
Comedy duo
Audience Sing Along with Wrockwardine Wood Arts Academy Choir and Redhill Primary School
Raffle**

**Tickets £5 in advance
Available from**

**Bella Sohi, Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin,
Meeting Point House, Southwater Square, Telford TF3 4HS
Tel: 01952 201803 Ext 002
Email: bella.sohi@ageukstw.org.uk**

Registered charity no 109445

A great afternoon of entertainment!

Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin is holding its variety show - an 'Afternoon of Entertainment' - again this year.

The theme is the Swinging 60s and to entertain us we welcome Two Beatles Tribute Band, Bollywood Dancer Nachda Sansaar and Comedians 'Dandy' Glynnis & Allan Briscoe. Choirs from Wrockwardine Wood Arts Academy and Redhill Primary School will also be leading us in a 60s sing-along.

There will also be a raffle with great prizes and refreshments.

Heather Osborne, Chief Executive of Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin, said 'This is an event that we organise every year and it is a great afternoon out. Please come along and be a part of it'.

If you would like information about booking tickets for the show please contact Bella Sohi on (01952) 201803 ext. 002 or email bella.sohi@ageukstw.org.uk

Single Tier State Pension

There has been a lot of information and reform on pensions recently and the State Pension is undertaking a single tier reform from April 2016.

Understanding the Single Tier State Pension Reform

From the 6th April 2016, the government aims to introduce a single tier pension which will aim to make the State Pension easier to understand.

To qualify for the new pension you must have been born:

On or after 6 April 1951 if you are a man

On or after 6 April 1953 if you are a woman

Usually you need to have at least ten qualifying years of your National Insurance record to qualify for a State Pension.

So what is a qualifying year?

A qualifying year is a year in which National Insurance Contributions have been paid by the person claiming State Pension. There are a variety of ways someone can make National Insurance Contributions. Many do it through work, including self-employed people, but contributions can also be made through sickness pay, unemployment benefits, carers benefit and child benefit. People can also pay National Insurance Contributions voluntarily.

How much will I be paid?

The State Pension rate for April 2016 will not be decided till autumn 2015 but it is estimated that the rate will be between £152.00 and £156.00 a week. For the purposes of this article we will assume the rate at £153.00 a week. It is important to note that if you qualified for more state pension under the old rules when you reach retirement after 6 April 2016, you will receive the higher amount instead.

**For a Pension Forecast you could always call the Pension Service on
0845 3000168.**

If you reach retirement after 6 April 2016 you will get 1/35th of the single tier pension rate for each year you paid NI contributions.

For example, if we assume Mr X paid 20 years in NI contributions and we assume the single tier rate as £153.00 a week then Mr X would get £87.43 a week.
i.e. £153.00 (single tier rate) divided by 35 = £4.37 x 20 = £87.43.

It is important to note that you can only claim for a maximum of 35 years in National Insurance Contributions. Even if you have paid in more years, you will not qualify for any more additional State Pension.

What if you get a small amount of State pension or no State Pension at all?

People in this situation may be able to claim Pension Credit. An enquiry can be made by calling the Claim Line on 0800 99 1234. Age UK STW offers some very good information and advice on whether you may qualify for Pension Credit. This is available upon request.



Boating Offer for Community Groups

The Lyneal Trust provides canal and canal side holidays in the beautiful North Shropshire borders for people with disabilities, illness or injury, or any other vulnerability, and their family, friends and carers who may accompany them. The Trust operates a Partnership scheme through which organisations can have use of the Trust's facilities for up to four days a year for an annual cost of £100.

This gives the opportunity for families or groups of up to 12 people connected with that organisation to enjoy a day on the Llangollen Canal aboard the Shropshire Lad at no cost to themselves with an experienced helmsman, if needed, to ensure that the day can be enjoyed by all. The Shropshire Lad is a 45 foot disabled friendly canal boat with toilet facilities, a galley with fridge and hob and a covered bow area.

The Partnership arrangement also enables groups to enjoy the Trust's landscaped gardens at Lyneal Wharf, near Ellesmere, which provide the perfect setting for a picnic or barbecue with the added benefit of fully equipped cottages providing kitchen, washing and toilet facilities. If more than four trips a year are required, these can be reserved for an additional £25 per trip.

If your local group would be interested in joining the Lyneal Trust Partnership Scheme, please contact Ian Payne at ianpayne79@yahoo.co.uk and further information can be found at <http://www.lyneal-trust.org.uk/>

Jamie's Marathon challenge draws near!

There's nothing like a challenge – and Jamie Sterry certainly has one of those as he makes the final push with his training for the London Marathon. On 26 April, Jamie, an Age UK STW Help at Home Coordinator, will be running the 26 miles in aid of the Gift of Friendship appeal.

Jamie said, 'Before I started working at Age UK I had little knowledge of the effect loneliness has on so many older people; it was a bit of a wake up call!!! Having spoken to many lonely older people in my time here I thought this would be a great opportunity to make a difference. It's going to be a huge challenge but I know it's worth it. If anyone would like to sponsor me, please visit my page <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/JamieSterry> or you can sponsor me by sending a cheque to or visiting the Shrewsbury office.'



Good luck Jamie!!

SAND - Shropshire's Pride

This is a new regular feature in Pass It On – reporting back on the activities of SAND – a Shropshire-based initiative supported by Age UK. SAND (Safe Ageing No Discrimination) is looking at the hopes, fears, experiences and expectations of older and old lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people accessing health and social care services.

Sexuality and gender identity are hugely important to how we see ourselves and how we present ourselves to others. If LGBT people do not feel comfortable or safe then they cannot talk about their life experiences, their families or their feelings. They may also be missing out on vital health and social care.



SAND is also working to improve access to information for LGBT people. For example, potential housing options in later life, and those solicitors who provide sensitive services to make wills and arrange Lasting Powers of Attorney. Our approach is to make existing services more open, receptive and responsive to some of the particular issues which may affect older and old LGBT people.

We are planning a few events for 2015 which will include, sometime in the summer, an information session about housing when we will be inviting LGBT people to come along. We also plan a return of our massively successful 70's fundraising disco later in the year which extends an invitation to our friends and 'straight allies'. Exciting times ahead!

You can contact SAND or pick up information via Age UK STW or at lgbtsand@gmail.com and, if you use the internet, you can find out more on our website: <http://lgbtsand.wordpress.com>



We collect furniture!

Please donate your unwanted furniture, clothes and bric-a-brac and help someone in later life.

To arrange furniture collection please call the number below.

Telford Community Store

**Unit 5 Forge Retail Park, Telford
01952 291 569**

DAY CENTRE UPDATE – LOOKING TO THE FUTURE...

Our day centres have never been busier with waiting lists in many areas and need outstripping what we can offer. In addition more and more of our members are frail or have some level of dementia and need more support as a result. In June 2013 Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin initiated a two year project looking at the future development of its 40 day centres. We wanted to try to find out what members wanted from the centres in the future, and what support the volunteers needed given the changing and increasing demands. We are also aware that grant funding is becoming increasingly difficult to find and wanted to seek people's views on this.

- Questionnaires were distributed to members and we had a very positive **92%** rate of return.
- 39% of members have attended a day centre for 2-5 years; 28% for 0-1 year; 12% for 6-10 years and 11% for over 10 years.
- Reasons for attending a day centre included: an **'opportunity to socialise'**; it **'provides companionship'**; an **'opportunity to get out of the house'** and **'makes me feel less lonely'**.
- Members felt attending a day centre had improved their quality of life.
- Our volunteers were also asked their views and we had a 62% rate of return.
- Our amazing volunteers spent a total of 1,934 hours on day centre related activities throughout the 4 weeks prior to the questionnaire survey.
- Volunteers told us of some of the types of training or support they would like to help them give the best possible service to the members.

Evidence gathered from the questionnaire survey will now be used to inform and shape the next phase of the Project which will be initiating in the coming year and developing a **'Safe, Successful and Sustainable programme'**. The programme will be used by Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin to support their volunteers in delivering the best possible service to day centre members.

If anyone would like to give their views and has not had an opportunity to do so, please contact Stewart Scull on (01743) 233123 Ext. 255



West Mercia Supplies presents...Community Link-Up Award winner!

We're delighted to announce that Deb Zaza has won the 'Make a Difference' Award in the Community Link-Up Awards 2014. Deb has shown outstanding dedication to her local Age UK charity, and should be commended for her commitment to cause. She became a befriender for Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin last year after deciding she wanted to do something useful with her spare time.

Although Deb makes the visits in her own time, she has used the West Mercia Supplies 'Volunteer Time' policy to take time out of work to attend courses needed to become a befriender. Deb is a true inspiration and a fantastic example of how volunteering can really make a difference to someone's life.

Congratulations!



Use your voice, take action, be heard



The vision of Age UK is a world where everyone is able to love later life. Living longer is a cause for celebration, as is our vibrant and diverse older population.

Age UK toured the country with the 'Age UK Sofa' to hear from older people about what they think would make the UK a great place to grow older.

They also told us what they thought the priorities of the next Parliament should be for older people today and tomorrow.

To hear their views and add your voice, visit www.ageuk.org.uk/votelaterlife or contact your local Age UK office or join the Shropshire Seniors General Election Hustings Meeting on 16 April at 10.30am at the Barnabas Centre, Shrewsbury - Tel: (01743) 244640 for details

Update on Age UK's diamond drop in service...

The Diamond Drop Ins in Telford are proving very popular and we have waiting lists at both our centres. We have now moved our Horizons Drop In from Lightmoor to Morton Court in Dawley to give us a more accessible location in South Telford with excellent facilities and much needed extra space. We are also opening a third Diamond Drop In centre at High Mount in Donnington on Wednesday 22 April which will meet fortnightly on Wednesdays between 2pm and 4pm. Our other Diamond Drop In centres are at The Uplands, Bicton Heath, Shrewsbury; Forrest Way, Monkmoor, Shrewsbury and Yorkfields, Oswestry. All the Drop Ins provide a fortnightly get together to support the carer as well as the person that they are caring for by giving them an opportunity to relax and chat (and maybe have a hand or neck massage); a welcoming and friendly environment to provide support and information; an opportunity to get to know others and share experiences in a relaxed atmosphere; and the chance to take part in interesting activities and have fun.

The role of a volunteer working as part of these teams is very rewarding. If you are interested in joining one of our teams we would love to talk to you. Have you got a skill that that you would like to donate to a Drop In to lead an activity? This could be playing an instrument, singing, telling a story, demonstrating your hobby, chatting about a motor bike or car that you have restored or it could be art or craft related.

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 anymore information, please contact Neil Brookes on 01743 233123 ext. 252.



Hilary Knight receiving a cheque for a donation to the Diamond Appeal from Juliet Young and the Get Your Wiggle On team

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Age UK Services Closing

We all know we are living in difficult times and this is the case for Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin as much as any other charity. We have been proud that, despite financial cuts from statutory bodies in the past, we have managed to keep the majority of our services going but unfortunately, due to continued lack of funding, we are no longer able to do this.

We have also just lost a significant amount of funding from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in Telford and I am sad to announce that we have to close the following services from April this year:

- Counselling Service (Shrewsbury)
- IT Classes (Shrewsbury)
- Dementia Befriending Services (Telford)
- Dementia Support service funded by the CCG in Telford
- Living well services funded by the CCG in Telford
- Our Intergenerational Project (Telford)

We will do our level best in all cases to find alternative support for anyone who is affected by these closures and wish to send a heartfelt thank you to all our wonderful volunteers and staff who have supported these services for many years.

It is a very sad day indeed.

If you require further information please contact our offices.

Heather Osborne, Chief Executive

HOW TO GET HOLD OF US IN SHROPSHIRE

Age UK Shropshire Telford & Wrekin
3 Mardol Gardens, Shrewsbury SY1 1PR

Reception Tel: (01743) 233123

Help at Home (Direct Line) Tel: (01743) 233788

Advocacy Service (Direct Line) Tel: (01743) 357748

Riverside Shopping Arcade, Shrewsbury

Reception Tel: (01743) 588500

Insurance Service (Direct Line) Tel: (01743)290586

Volunteer Recruitment Tel: 01743)588570

North Shropshire Office Tel: (01948) 665317

Age UK NESIT Co-ordinator Tel: (01630) 650850

Home from Hospital, Ludlow Tel: (01584) 878046

Telford Office Tel: (01952) 201803

Information Line Tel: (01952) 216018

Insurance Tel: (01952) 200010

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

www.ageukshropshireandtelford.org.uk

OR EMAIL US

enquiries@ageukstw.org.uk